

- **Hello Trinity family! Today we are wrapping up our four week exploration of the JERUSALEM COUNCIL- the incredibly important turning point in the growth of the first generation church- event important for them, and JUST AS important for the church today.**
- **Revolution, Counter, Resolution- We have seen:**

† **The Revolution!** The miracle of the New Covenant: Through *faith alone* in the *Grace of Jesus Christ alone*, the brand new way of entering into, and daily living in, the *New Life* of a fully restored relationship with God, in union with Christ, made possible by *faith* in the resurrection and lordship of Jesus Christ.

† **The Counter-Revolution:** The old covenant strikes back! Faith in Christ isn't enough. All believers also must adhere to the tradition and law of the Mosaic Covenant. In today's world, the heresy of "Christ plus."

† **The Resolution:** "No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we (Jewish believer/insiders) are saved, just as they (Gentile Believers/outsideers) are." Acts 15:11

† **The Conclusion:** "Therefore, we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God!" Acts 15:19

- **If you missed any, go back and listen. SO NOW, we finish the story... but first: TO, PE, Aug 1...**

### **Acts 15:22-35- READ. 1,972 years later: Implications/ applications of Jerusalem Council: KEY QUESTION**

† As disciples of Christ living under the New Covenant- *the better hope by which we draw near to God-* how do we appropriately engage with the scripture written under the Old Covenant?

- **HUGE question- 3 key ideas. Already/Should/Need**

- What you already know: The Old Testament is a GIFT.

- **As NEW COV disciples of Jesus, we do NOT abandon the OT. OT is a precious gift revealing history, purposes, nature, character, work, and wisdom of God. Without what God did in creation and through Nation of Israel, which we have recorded in the full breadth of the Hebrew Bible- the OT... there would be NO NT. The OT is a gift to the people of Israel, to the Body of Christ, and to the world. We DO NOT SET IT ASIDE! THAT SAID:**

- What you should know: The Old Testament must be interpreted in context of the Old Covenant and the original recipients.

- **Obvious- The OT was not written to person in 21<sup>st</sup> century western culture possessing a modern/postmodern worldview. It was written first to ancient Israel, the Hebrews, as God revealed to them himself, plans, purposes, covenants and law.**

#### **EXAMPLE**

**Jeremiah 29:11** *For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

- **Specific statement- NOT a general promise for all humanity for all time. It is a promise to Israel, living in the time of Babylonian exile, under the conditional Mosaic Covenant, that God had a plan to restore and prosper them as the nation of Israel. This is not a promise that if we are faithful to God, if we figure out his plan for us, then we will prosper materially in this life. It is often, mistakenly, taught as such.**

- **OTHER EXAMPLE- 2 Chron 7:14... if my people, called by name, humble/pray/seek face/turn... then I'll hear from heaven, forgive, heal their lands....**
- **What then do we do with a passage like this? Is it just history with no meaning to apply now?**
- What you need to know: As disciples of Christ, we APPLY the Old Testament through the lens of the New Covenant.
- **Great question to ask when seeking to apply OT...**

What is the **conditional promise** of the Old Covenant Christ now provides by His **unconditional presence**?

- **Big concept- at high level, what we see happening in OT is pointing towards, working towards, what God would accomplish IN CHRIST.**

**2 Corinthians 1:20-22** *For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

- **Back to Jer 29:11.**
- **“PLANS I have for you”... How does NC describe God’s plan for our lives? What is God’s calling to us as His disciples. Walk by Spirit.**
- **“PROSPER YOU” What are God’s blessings promised to all believers in NC? No matter what prosperity gospel teachers say, God’s blessings in Christ are NOT material or temporary.**
  - **In OT, concept of God’s blessings WERE often circumstantial and temporary in nature. Crops. Protection. Prosper as a nation. These blessings would come and go with faithfulness of nation.**
  - **BUT NOW, in NC, the blessings of God, In Christ, ARE NOT TEMPORARY, and they are SPIRITUAL.**
- **THIS IS NOT TO SAY God isn’t at work in the present, and He is able to answer any prayer regarding our circumstances. BUT we are not promised God’s intervention in our circumstances in relationship to our own faithfulness and intensity of our prayer.**
- **KEY!! GOD’S GOODNESS- HIS BLESSING- IS NOT A FUNCTION OF HIM FULFILLING THE THINGS WE ASK HIM TO DO. God’s Goodness is ALWAYS, and was fully given on the CROSS, and NOW, because of Christ’s RESURRECTION, God’s great blessing is CHRIST’S PRESENCE. In the midst of whatever life brings, HE IS PRESENT, HE is our source of Life.**

**2 Peter 1:3-4** *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life (good, prevailing, peace, hope, joy) through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup> Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. **THAT IS THE BLESSING!***

- **Finally, JER 29:11: “Hope and a future” As disciples of Jesus, what is our hope and future? It is his power and presence through the Holy Spirit now, and hope that we will be with the Lord, and all believers, forever in eternity.**
- **CHURCH! HEAR- We have been given the miracle of all that is NEW IN CHRIST. BUT STILL... we love to dabble in the old. Sometimes, like the Israelites on the way to the promised land, looking wistfully back at the good old days of slavery in Egypt... we turn back to the old way. THREE EXAMPLES...**

## † Choosing the old when we have been given *The New*

### • The TEMPLE

- **In NC, there is no longer a temple- the presence of God, and the work of God, is no longer bound by a physical space. Instead, where is the temple? US!**

**2 Corinthians 6:16** *For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”*

- **And yet, we often think of the ‘sanctuary’ as the place where God is present (parking lot joke). HERE is where we worship God, once a week, in this holy place... NO... WE are the temple, Christ is present to us always, and our worship is every step of life.**
- **JUST AS there is no longer a Temple separated from reality of everyday life, NO LONGER...**

### • The PRIESTHOOD

- **In the OC, the priest was a special person/Class of person, uniquely consecrated to enter into the presence of God, and offer sacrifices to God, on behalf of the people who were NOT able to do this.**
- **Through the death and resurrection of Christ, ALL THOSE BARRIERS HAVE BEEN REMOVED, and THAT PRIESTHOOD NO LONGER EXISTS.**
- **HEAR!!! There is NO person, ANYWHERE, that has greater access to God, or is more able to enter into the presence of God, or worship God, THAN YOU- as a disciple of Jesus. YOU, WE, are the priests, just as ALL OF US IN CHRIST ARE THE SAINTS.**

**1 Peter 2:4-5, 9** *As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—<sup>5</sup> you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

- **But we turn back to the old way here. We like to elevate some of our spiritual leaders... they are the ones who are truly holy, they are the ones entrusted to do God’s work. In doing so, we can borderline idolize our leaders, while excusing God’s own call upon our lives. IN THE BODY we have different roles, different callings, but we ALL ARE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD, no longer ANY need for an intermediary between us and God.**

### • The TITHE

- **Have you ever been taught.. “To be obedient to God, you must give 10% of your income to the church. Any other giving is an offering beyond your tithe. This is God’s command from scripture.”**
- **NO, IT IS NOT. The entire construct of the tithe, as a percentage requirement to be given to the temple, and administered by the priestly class, IS OLD COVENANT. What is NC teaching? Be GEN!**

**2 Corinthians 9:6-8** *Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. <sup>7</sup> Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup> And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

- **We don't give because we HAVE TO, but because we DESIRE TO. WE ARE PART OF GOD'S KINGDOM, HIS WORK. I'm not going to be cheap when it comes to the desires of my greatest love!**
- **BUT someone may say- whoa! What about...**

**Matthew 23:23** *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.*

- **Who is Jesus speaking to here? THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF ISRAEL who were still under the OC. We are NOT- we give out of love, not law.**
- **BOILS DOWN TO THIS.**

† Reality! The moral and ethical law of the Old Covenant is no longer a resource to answer the question ‘*what is SIN?*’

*The Old Testament is a precious gift revealing the purposes, nature, character, and wisdom of God. It is no longer a source of rules and regulations the disciple of Christ must obey.*

- **When Paul and Barnabas delivered the councils letter- did we hear what it said?**
- **Remember, the question was “ARE WE REQUIRED TO OBEY THE MOSAIC LAW- almost totality of moral and ethical teaching of OT... Answer!....**

<sup>28</sup> *It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: <sup>29</sup> You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality.*

- **These requirements were not law, but principles of love for the sake of unity in a very diverse church**
- **BUT WAIT A MINUTE! Are you saying the 10 commandments are no longer valid? I didn't say that. SCRIPTURE SAYS THE TEN COM's are NO LONGER THE REASON FOR HOW WE LIVE. THEN WHAT IS? THE NEW COV!**

† Getting to the New! All of God's moral, ethical, and natural law is revealed within the New Covenant. Here, God is not after compliance, He is after our **HEARTS!**

**Matthew 5:27-28** *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ <sup>28</sup> But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

- **Reality! All this we are seeing- this doesn't lower the bar of our obedience to God, it RAISES THE BAR.**
- **In the NC, our motivation is not law, but LOVE.**
- **Why not kill? Violates love. Why not steal, lie, covet? Violation of Love! STANLEY: In the law there are many places to hide. Pick and choose. Rationalize. Code minimum approach to life.**
- **BUT IF THE STANDARD IS GOD'S LOVE, there is no place to hide.**

**John 13:34** *Jesus: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*

- **Let my thoughts, words, actions toward others be motivated by and expressive of God's love for me!**

- **THAT WILL CHANGE A LIFE. FAMILY. NATION.**
- **THIS is transformation the law can never do, and it is impossible without the SPIRIT.**

- In the NC, our source of righteousness is the SPIRIT, not our best effort.

**Galatians 5:16** *So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will **not gratify** the desires of the flesh.*

**2 Corinthians 3:6** *He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter (law) but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

- **It all comes down to this.**

- In the NC, the essence of sin is not failure while trying, it is the failure to LOVE.

**Romans 13:9** *The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”*

- **This is the power of the NC. Long live the revolution!**