

The Covenant of Peace

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1 Introductory

Ezekiel 34:25-28 (YLT): "And I have made for them a covenant of peace, And caused evil beasts to cease out of the land, And they have dwelt in a wilderness confidently, And they have slept in forests. And I have given them, and the suburbs of my hill, a blessing, And caused the shower to come down in its season, Showers of blessing they are. And given hath the tree of the field its fruit, And the land doth give her increase, And they have been on their land confident, And they have known that I [am] Jehovah, In My breaking the bands of their yoke, And I have delivered them from the hand of those laying service on them. And they are no more a prey to nations, And the beast of the earth devoureth them not, And they have dwelt confidently, And there is none troubling."

The covenant of peace, a divine promise shimmering with hope, ushers in a vision of a world where harmony and prosperity reign. Rooted in ancient scriptures and echoing through the ages, this sacred agreement invites humanity to embrace a higher purpose under the guidance of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, as prophesied in Ezekiel 34. By cultivating a deep connection with the Creator and embodying the principles of love, compassion, and responsibility, we join hands with the Good Shepherd on a transformative journey towards healing our world and ourselves. As we traverse this path of unity, environmental stewardship, and shared abundance, the covenant of peace serves as a beacon, illuminating the way to a world that reflects divine wisdom and gentle guidance.

The "covenant of peace" is mentioned in Ezekiel 34:25, where God promises to establish a lasting covenant with His people, ensuring their safety and well-being. This covenant involves the removal of harmful animals from the land, the provision of fertile

and productive land, and the establishment of a secure and peaceful environment.

2 Jesus and Covenant of Peace

The covenant of peace in the Old Testament, particularly in Ezekiel 34:25-31, refers to God's promise to rescue His people, provide them with fertile and productive land, and establish a secure and peaceful environment. In this context, God also promises to place a shepherd over His people:

"I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd." (Ezekiel 34:23, NIV)

Although the verse refers to "David," it is commonly understood by Christians as a prophecy about Jesus, who is a descendant of David and considered the promised Messiah.

In the New Testament, Jesus is seen as the fulfillment of this prophecy. He is often referred to as the "Good Shepherd" who lays down his life for his sheep (John 10:11)

The teachings of Jesus emphasize values that align with the covenant of peace, such as love, compassion, forgiveness, and service to others. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) provides a clear example of how Jesus teaches his followers to live in a way that promotes peace and well-being:

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9, NIV)

"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:44-45, NIV)

By following Jesus' teachings, believers participate in the covenant of peace, helping to create a secure, peaceful, and flourishing world.

In summary, the relationship between Jesus and the covenant of peace is that Jesus, as the Good Shepherd and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, teaches and models the values and actions necessary for believers to participate in the establishment of a secure and peaceful world in accordance with the covenant of peace.

3 The Provisions

The provision of fertile and productive land and the establishment of a secure and peaceful environment are key aspects of the covenant of peace described in Ezekiel 34. This covenant promises blessings for God's people, including abundance, protection, and security. Here are some relevant quotes from both the Old and New Testaments that describe these conditions:

Isaiah 11:6-9 (ESV): "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."

Leviticus 26:3-6 (ESV): "If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. Your threshing shall last to the time of the grape harvest, and the grape harvest shall last to the time for sowing. And you shall eat your bread to the full and dwell in your land securely. I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid. And I will remove harmful beasts from the land, and the sword shall not go through your land."

Revelation 21:1-4 (ESV): "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a

loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.'

These verses describe the blessings and conditions of the covenant of peace, emphasizing the provision of fertile and productive land, as well as a secure and peaceful environment, for God's people. In the New Testament, this vision is ultimately fulfilled in the new heaven and new earth described in Revelation 21, where God's presence ensures complete peace and security.

4 Fulfilling the Covenant

To fulfill the covenant of peace, followers are expected to commit to a relationship with God, follow His commandments, and contribute to a secure and peaceful environment. Both the Old and New Testaments provide guidance and principles that can be applied by believers to achieve this goal.

Love God and others: Jesus emphasized the importance of loving God and loving one's neighbor as the foundation of His teachings (Matthew 22:37-40). By practicing love, compassion, and empathy, believers can help create a peaceful environment.

Cultivate spiritual growth: Jesus used the parable of the mustard seed to illustrate the transformative power of faith and the importance of nurturing growth, both spiritually and in the natural world (Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19).

Practice stewardship of resources: The Bible instructs believers to care for the earth (Genesis 1:28). Followers of Jesus can take responsibility for managing resources wisely, reducing waste, and promoting sustainable practices, including creating and maintaining food forests or other regenerative agriculture initiatives.

Support sustainable agriculture: Leviticus 25 emphasizes the importance of allowing the land to rest and recover. Jesus' followers can advocate for and support agricultural practices that preserve ecosystems, maintain soil fertility, and promote biodiversity.

Build and plant sustainably: Jeremiah 29:5 encourages sustainable living by instructing Israelites to build houses, plant gardens, and eat their fruit. This guidance can inspire believers to engage in sustainable practices, such as planting gardens and creating food forests.

Share knowledge and resources: Followers of Jesus can help others learn about sustainable practices by sharing knowledge and resources within their communities, following the principle of generosity found in Proverbs 11:25.

Advocate for justice and righteousness: The Bible calls for justice and righteousness (Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:6). Believers can work towards the covenant of peace by advocating for policies and practices that support environmental stewardship, sustainable agriculture, and the creation of food forests.

Foster community collaboration: Jesus emphasized the importance of fellowship and community (Acts 2:42-47). His followers can work together with like-minded individuals, organizations, and faith communities to establish and maintain food forests or other sustainable projects.

Pray for guidance and wisdom: Followers of Jesus can pray for guidance and wisdom in their efforts to promote the provisions of the covenant and care for the earth, as Jesus often withdrew to pray and reflect (Luke 5:16).

By embracing these principles and actions, followers of Jesus can work towards the fulfillment of the covenant of peace, contributing to a more secure, peaceful, and flourishing world that reflects the values of love, compassion, and responsibility taught by Jesus and found throughout the Bible.

5 Eden

The word "Eden" has its origins in several ancient languages. The Akkadian term "edin" or "edinu" refers to a plain or steppe, and the Sumerian word "edin" denotes a fertile plain or well-watered region. In the Hebrew Bible, the word "Eden" (‘eden) is connected to the word (‘edhen), meaning "delight" or "pleasure."

In the biblical narrative, the Garden of Eden is depicted as a paradise created by God where Adam and Eve lived before their

fall. It represents a perfect place of harmony, abundance, and communion with God. The idea of a covenant of peace, particularly in Ezekiel 34, focuses on the spiritual restoration of God's people and the establishment of a secure, peaceful environment where God's presence is felt.

The connection between the Garden of Eden and the covenant of peace can be seen in the ideal conditions they both represent. Both Eden and the covenant of peace symbolize God's intention to provide a perfect environment for His people, where they can live in harmony, security, and abundance.

As for the responsibility of covenant keepers, we can look back at the story of Eden for insight. In the Garden, Adam and Eve were given the responsibility to "work it and keep it" (Genesis 2:15). This stewardship role entailed caring for the garden and its inhabitants. Similarly, under the covenant of peace, God's people are expected to uphold their responsibilities in their relationship with God and others, and to care for the earth.

The connection between Eden and the covenant of peace serves as a reminder of the importance of maintaining a right relationship with God and being good stewards of His creation. The covenant of peace, particularly as it relates to the teachings of Jesus, emphasizes the importance of faith, love, and spiritual growth. These qualities are essential for fulfilling the covenant and ensuring that God's blessings – both spiritual and physical – continue to manifest in the lives of believers. In this sense, the responsibility of covenant keepers is to live in accordance with God's will, love and serve others, and care for the earth as stewards of God's creation.

6 Anabaptist

Anabaptism, a Christian movement that emerged during the Reformation, emphasizes discipleship, voluntary adult baptism, and a simple, communal lifestyle. Many of these values align with what has been discussed in terms of fulfilling the covenant of peace. Anabaptists can contribute to the covenant by focusing on the following actions, which build on their core beliefs and values:

Discipleship and community: Anabaptists prioritize discipleship and living in intentional communities. They can use this foundation to collaborate with fellow believers and their wider community to implement sustainable practices, establish food forests, and promote environmental stewardship.

Simple living: Anabaptists emphasize a simple lifestyle that minimizes materialism and excess. By living simply, they can reduce waste, consume resources responsibly, and advocate for a more sustainable way of life, in line with the biblical call for stewardship (Genesis 1:28).

Nonviolence and peace: Anabaptists are known for their commitment to nonviolence and the pursuit of peace. They can extend this principle by advocating for environmental policies and practices that promote peace and harmony between humans and the natural world.

Mutual aid and sharing resources: Anabaptist communities often practice mutual aid, supporting one another through sharing knowledge, skills, and resources. This can be applied to promoting sustainable practices, such as planting gardens and creating food forests, in accordance with Jeremiah 29:5.

Adult baptism in Anabaptist tradition signifies a conscious, voluntary decision to follow Jesus and commit to His teachings, including those related to the covenant of peace. This personal commitment motivates Anabaptists to actively engage in actions such as environmental stewardship, sustainable living, and promoting peace. By choosing adult baptism, Anabaptists demonstrate their dedication to living out their faith and its principles in their daily lives, actively contributing to the fulfillment of the covenant of peace, through actions like environmental stewardship and advocating for policies that align with biblical teachings on justice and righteousness (Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:6).

In summary, Anabaptist values and practices align well with the actions and principles needed to fulfill the covenant of peace. By emphasizing discipleship, community, simple living, nonviolence, and mutual aid, Anabaptists can actively contribute to creating a more secure, peaceful, and flourishing world that reflects the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

Regular people can partake in the covenant of peace by embracing the principles and teachings of the Bible that promote love, compassion, responsibility, and care for the environment. Here are some practical ways individuals can participate in the covenant of peace:

Foster a relationship with God: Engage in regular prayer, meditation, and reflection to deepen your understanding of God's teachings and find inspiration to live according to the principles of the covenant of peace.

Practice compassion and empathy: Treat others with kindness, understanding, and respect, following Jesus' teachings to love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:39).

Live sustainably: Adopt an environmentally friendly lifestyle by reducing waste, conserving resources, and supporting sustainable products and practices.

Plant trees and gardens: Contribute to the creation of food forests or plant gardens in your community to promote biodiversity, improve air quality, and support sustainable agriculture, as encouraged by Jeremiah 29:5.

Share knowledge and resources: Educate yourself and others about the importance of environmental stewardship and share your knowledge and resources to help promote sustainable practices within your community.

Advocate for policies and practices: Support and advocate for policies and practices at local, national, and global levels that promote environmental stewardship, sustainable agriculture, and the creation of food forests.

Volunteer and collaborate: Participate in local initiatives or collaborate with like-minded individuals and organizations to establish and maintain sustainable projects, such as food forests, community gardens, or environmental education programs.

Encourage others: Inspire friends, family members, and colleagues to partake in the covenant of peace by sharing your experiences, insights, and commitment to living sustainably and promoting peace.

By actively engaging in these actions, regular people can contribute to the fulfillment of the covenant of peace and work towards a more secure, peaceful, and flourishing world that aligns with the teachings of the Bible.