



FAITH BIBLE COLLEGE

2 Timothy 2:15

*"Study to show thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needs not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth."*

BIBLICAL COVENANTS



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*"Leaders are those whose aroma lingers long after they have completed
the task and others who sniff it, wants to be like them"*

*"Leadership is not a title but a Function
& that Function pulls you to its Position
& the Position determines your Title"*

*Blessings & Graceful Studying
Professor Ronnie Moodley*

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INTRODUCTION

WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO STUDY BIBLICAL COVENANTS?

Larry Richards writes: "The notion of a covenant is unfamiliar today. But the concept of covenant is utterly basic to our understanding of Scripture. In Old Testament times this complex concept was the foundation of social order and social relations, and it was particularly the foundation for an understanding of humanity's relationship with God." ¹

Every believer should have a firm grasp of the glorious Biblical truths concerning covenant because it is central to the whole Bible. Before we were saved, we were covenant breakers, ignorant of God's covenant and His blessings.

- Romans 1:30-31 "They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They are forever inventing new ways of sinning and are disobedient to their parents. They refuse to understand, break their promises, and are heartless and unforgiving."
- Ephesians 2:12 "In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from God's people, Israel, and you did not know the promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope."

Now that we have been saved, we need to have our cultural mindset renewed so that we can have a clear understanding of the importance of covenants and our part in it. It is not merely enough to have a covenant with God but we need to understand the benefits that covenant brings. When we grasp God's absolute commitment to fulfill His covenant (Word) towards us we will be encouraged to confidently stand upon His promises without wavering or wondering whether God will in fact fulfill them.

We therefore study covenants because they:

- **Structure Scripture:** The Bible is clearly divided into two sections, the Old and the New Testament. Within these two divisions are two main covenants – the Old and the New Covenant. In order for us to be able to understand the people, the nations and the Coming of Christ, we need to understand that covenant plays an enormous role in the events of the Bible and ultimately why it has been structured as such.

¹ Richards, L: Expository Dictionary

- **Unify Scripture:** The Biblical covenants that we will be studying, especially those, which have been made between God and man unify scripture. Through each of these covenants, we are given a glimpse into the "why" and the "what for" until we ultimately understand its unity in the Life of Christ.

There is the same essence throughout the covenants, a formula which is found in every covenant. This formula is seen in the following scriptures: Genesis 17:7-8 "I will continue this everlasting covenant between us, generation after generation. It will continue between me and your offspring forever. And I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you. Yes, I will give all this land of Canaan to you and to your offspring forever. And I will be their God."

2 Corinthians 6:16 "And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people."

Revelations 21:3 "I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, the home of God is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them."

- **Interrelate All of Life:** The covenants provide an interrelation with all of life, both its work and its worship. From a covenantal perspective, work is just as spiritual as worship because it is sanctioned by God. The covenant of creation included both man's relation with man and with the work which he was to accomplish on earth. The Adamic covenant dealt with marriage and the Mosaic Covenant dealt with justice and administration of every day life.

WHAT BENEFITS CAN WE RECEIVE WHEN WE STUDY THE BIBLICAL COVENANTS?

By studying the covenants we are able to receive:

- **A deeper understanding of the Bible:** The whole Bible is based on God's covenant with man. From the outset of the creation of man in the Garden of Eden all the way through to the culmination of the Bible in the Book of Revelations we see that God made covenants with His children. The concept of covenants saturates the entirety of Scripture, as it becomes a crimson thread woven throughout the fabric of God's truth from Genesis to Revelation.

- **A greater knowledge of God and His very nature:** As we begin to study the scriptures in the light of covenants, we will come to know God more intimately in the process. Through the revelations of the covenants we are given a glimpse into the character of God – His holiness, His mercy, His justice.
- **An understanding of how God has dealt with man since creation:** God interacts with man based on covenant.
- **A better understanding of the New Covenant:** As we study the various types of covenants that are seen in both the Old and the New Testament, we will obtain a deeper appreciation of the New Covenant that we can be part of through Jesus Christ. We will come to know that because of His covenant of grace we are assured that we will always be the "beloved of God" in Christ Jesus.
- **The assurance, freedom and power that is found in the new covenant:** An understanding of Covenant will give us assurance of who we are in Jesus Christ. We will know what the covenant benefits are of the New Covenant and how each one of us can be partakers of these benefits.
- **An attitude of gratitude:** An understanding of God's Covenants will give us a deeper sense of gratitude for what God has accomplished for us in sending His Son to "cut" covenant.

Andrew Murray wrote: "Blessed is the man who truly knows God as his God; who knows what the Covenant promises him; what unwavering confidence of expectation it secures, that all its [covenant's] terms will be fulfilled to him; what a claim and hold it gives him on the Covenant-keeping God Himself. To many a man, who has never thought much of the Covenant, a true and living faith in it would mean the transformation of his whole life. The full knowledge of what God wants to do for him; the assurance that it will be done by an Almighty Power; the being drawn to God Himself in personal surrender, and dependence, and waiting to have it done; all this would make the Covenant the very gate of heaven. May the Holy Spirit give us some vision of its glory." 2

UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS OF COVENANT

1. WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF "COVENANT"?

A covenant is an agreement between two parties. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word "berith" is translated "will", "covenant" and "testament," and comes from the root word which means "to cut". Hence a covenant is a "cutting". Jeremiah 34:18-19 confirms this meaning when he prophesied and said, "Because you have refused the terms of our covenant, I will cut you apart just as you cut apart the calf when you walked between its halves to solemnize your vows. Yes, I will cut you apart, whether you are officials of Judah or Jerusalem, court officials, priests, or common people—for you have broken your oath."

The corresponding word in the New Testament Greek is "diatheke" which is used more than 30.

2. WHAT WAS THE DURATION OF A COVENANT?

Covenants in the Bible had differing durations. A covenant could be:

- **Everlasting:** There were some covenants that were made between God and man which were perpetual and never ending. Such a covenant can be seen in the covenant that was made between God and Abraham (Genesis 17:13)
- **Irrevocable (permanent):** These are covenants that are unchangeable and permanent. In this type of covenant God made promises to man that He had an obligation to fulfill regardless of how man would respond. For example: When God said to Abraham that he would be made into a great nation (Genesis 22:17) or when David was told that his seed would sit on the throne (2 Samuel 7:12).
- **Temporal:** This is the type of covenant that was subject to a specific length of time and was therefore not permanent. Although they had eternal implications these covenants were only made to span a certain period of time and therefore were limited in their duration. Such a covenant is the Mosaic covenant that was made between God and the people of Israel (Galatians 3:9)

- **Revocable:** These are covenants that can be cancelled at any time. In this covenant the fulfillment of the promises that are spoken are dependent upon the obedience of all the parties of the covenant. A type of this covenant is that of the Mosaic covenant. In this type of covenant one party can break or disannul the covenant by breaking the agreement

3. HOW CAN COVENANTS BE CATEGORIZED?

The covenants of God are grouped into two classifications. Those which are conditional and those which are unconditional:

Conditional covenants:

A conditional covenant is a covenant that is made bilaterally, meaning that it is a mutual agreement between two people or it is two-sided. These types of covenants are characterized by the implication of "if you will.... I will". In these covenants God promised to bless the person who was willing to obey the obligations that were set forth in the covenant. In order for the person to receive the blessings that were mentioned, obedience was required. Two of the eight covenants mentioned in the Bible are conditional. These are the:

- Edenic Covenant
- Mosaic Covenant

Unconditional covenants:

An unconditional covenant is a covenant that is made unilaterally or independent on one of the parties involved. It is a one-sided agreement. This is the type of covenant that is a sovereign act of God whereby He obligates Himself to bring to pass blessings for His people. In this type of covenant God says, "I will" and declares His determination to fulfill the promises regardless of the actions of man. These covenants are a result of the grace and love of God and therefore though they may contain requests, they themselves are not the basis for God fulfilling His promises. Six of the eight covenants in the Bible are unconditional. The unconditional covenants of the Bible are:

- Adamic Covenant
- Noahic Covenant
- Abrahamic Covenant
- Land Covenant
- Davidic Covenant
- New Covenant

WHO ARE THE PARTICIPANTS (PARTIES) OF A COVENANT?

The participants of the covenant were the person or people involved in coming together to make the agreement. In the Bible there were two different groups of people who were involved in making a covenant:

1. HUMAN COVENANTS

The human covenants were those covenants that were made between two people. These types of covenants can be divided into three groups:

Marriage Covenants:

- Genesis 2:22-24 "Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib and brought her to Adam. "At last!" Adam exclaimed. "She is part of my own flesh and bone! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken out of a man." This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one."
- Proverbs 2:17 "She has abandoned her husband and ignores the covenant she made before God."
- Malachi 2:14 "You cry out, "Why has the Lord abandoned us?" I'll tell you why! Because the Lord witnessed the vows you and your wife made to each other on your wedding day when you were young. But you have been disloyal to her, though she remained your faithful companion, the wife of your marriage vows."

Friendship Covenants:

Following David's defeat of Goliath he and Jonathan, son of Saul, formed a deep friendship which they sealed with a covenant. 1 Samuel 18:1-4 "After David had finished talking with Saul, he met Jonathan, the king's son. There was an immediate bond of love between them, and they became the best of friends. From that day on Saul kept David with him at the palace and wouldn't let him return home. And Jonathan made a special vow to be David's friend, and he sealed the pact by giving him his robe, tunic, sword, bow, and belt."

David reminded Jonathan of his covenant when Saul was seeking his life (1 Samuel 20:8) and it is clear that for some time Saul was ignorant of the arrangement (22:8). Later when David was fleeing for his life, he and Jonathan made a second covenant, presumably to the effect that he would be king and Jonathan his second in command (23:15-18). Following the death of Jonathan

David sought to show kindness to his son Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9:1-13) and protected him from the revenge of Gibeonites (21:1-9).

Political alliances:

- In Genesis 14:13 Abraham is noted to have had an alliance with Mamre, Eshtaol and Aner the Amorites chieftains among whom he was encamped. These allies assisted Abraham in the rescue of Lot (14:14-17, 24).
- Abimelech, the king of Gerar, approached Abraham and asked him to make a treaty to ensure peace and good will between their two nations. A second vow was made concerning water rights and this was witnessed by the exchange of seven lambs (Genesis. 21:22-32).
- In the book of Joshua, the Gibeonites deceived Joshua into making a covenant with them. However, once made it could not be broken (Joshua 9:3-27). In the time of David, the Lord brought a famine on the land as a result of Saul breaking this covenant (2 Samuel 21:1-3).
- In order to bring to an end the civil war between the houses of David and Saul, David and Abner made an agreement (2 Sam. 3:12-13).
- In order to avoid defeat, Asa bribed the King of Aram to break his covenant with Israel and establish one with Judah (1 Kings 15:18-19). Although the plan was successful Asa's actions brought condemnation from the prophet Hanani because he had relied on a human covenant instead of that with the Lord (2 Chronicles 16:7-10).
- When Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem in 597 BC he made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle his vassal king and changed his name to Zedekiah (2 Kings 24:17). Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar nine years later and appealed to Egypt for help (2 Kings 24:20 - 25:1; Jer. 37:5-10). This not only brought a swift response from the King of Babylon, but also brought condemnation from the prophet Ezekiel because Zedekiah had broken the covenant he had sworn in the name of the Lord (Ezekiel 17:11-21).

2. COVENANTS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

Not only were covenants made between man and man, but the most important covenants that we are going to study in this course are those covenants that were made between God and man. As discussed earlier, there are eight covenants that are made between God and man. Through the study of these eight covenants we see that God is a:

Covenant-Making God: When God deals with mankind, He does so in the form of a covenant.

- God established His covenant with Noah (Genesis 6:18).
- He made a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15:18; 17:2).
- God made a covenant with David (2 Samuel 23:5).
- He promised to make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah (Jeremiah 31:31-34).
- He has also made an everlasting covenant (Isaiah 55:3; 61:8).

When God initiated His covenant with a person or people, He did so as an extension of His eternal purpose. Thus, if we look at the Lord's call to Noah, we see that it was not the ark, but the covenant of God, that preserved Noah and his family during worldwide judgment. Noah was a component, a factor in a series of divine initiatives, which accomplished the Lord's predetermined plans. God established the covenant, designed the ark and brought the animals. The Lord even shut the door after Noah entered the ark.

Covenant-Keeping God: God reveals His faithfulness and trustworthiness in that He keeps the covenant that He makes. Once He has made a covenant He does not forget it nor become negligent of it. He always follows through with the commitments He has made.

- Deuteronomy 7:9 says, "Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and constantly loves those who love him and obey his commands."
- 2 Chronicles 6:14 says, "He prayed, "O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in all of heaven and earth. You keep your promises and show unfailing love to all who obey you and are eager to do your will."
- The psalmist wrote and said, "He gives food to those who trust him; he always remembers his covenant." (Psalm 111:5) and "He has paid a full ransom for his people. He has guaranteed his covenant with them forever. What a holy, awe-inspiring name he has" (verse 9).

When the Lord established His covenant with Abraham, twice a flaming torch passed through the halves of the animals Abraham offered in sacrifice. These two times that God passed through the animals, signified that God would keep His part of the covenant and He would keep Abraham's part of the covenant as well!

Covenant-Revealing God: In order for man to be in covenant relationship with God He must reveal the covenant to man, openly declaring the promises and terms. Apart from God taking the initiative and revealing His covenant to man, man would be ignorant of the availability of covenantal relationship with Him.

- Psalm 25:14 "Friendship with the Lord is reserved for those who fear him. With them he shares the secrets of his covenant."
- Deuteronomy 4:13 "He proclaimed his covenant, which he commanded you to keep—the Ten Commandments—and wrote them on two stone tablets."

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF A COVENANT?

In each of the covenant that we are going to be studying, we notice that there are certain elements that are similar in each covenant. These characteristics are:

Each covenant has participants involved:

As we have already seen, covenants are made between either man and man or God and man. In each of the covenants that we will be studying we will be looking at who the covenants were made between. Some of the covenants though made between God and a specific individual, in fact also hold meaning to a group of people. For example, the Adamic covenant though made with Adam was in fact made to the whole of the human race. The Mosaic covenant though made between God and the nation of Israel, in fact spoke to the whole Jewish nation.

Each covenant contained provisions:

In the Bible we see that covenants contained both rewards and promises of blessings as well as penalties for breaking the covenant. For example:

Rewards and promises of blessings: Leviticus 26:3-12 ""If you keep my laws and are careful to obey my commands, I will send the seasonal rains. The land will then yield its crops, and the trees will produce their fruit. Your threshing season will extend until the grape harvest, and your grape harvest will extend until it is time to plant grain again. You will eat your fill and live securely in your land. "I

will give you peace in the land, and you will be able to sleep without fear. I will remove the wild animals from your land and protect you from your enemies. In fact, you will chase down all your enemies and slaughter them with your swords. Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand! All your enemies will fall beneath the blows of your weapons. "I will look favorably upon you and multiply your people and fulfill my covenant with you. You will have such a surplus of crops that you will need to get rid of the leftovers from the previous year to make room for each new harvest. I will live among you, and I will not despise you. I will walk among you; I will be your God, and you will be my people."

Penalties for violating or abandoning it: Read Leviticus 26:14-39 and Deuteronomy 28:15-68.

Each covenant had a sign or seal:

The seal or sign of the covenant was a lasting reminder of the agreement that was made. This was an outward expression of the commitment that had been made between God and man and confirmed the covenant that was agreed upon. For instance:

- The rainbow was the sign of the Noahic covenant.
- Circumcision was the sign or seal of the Abrahamic covenant (Acts 7:8).
- The Sabbath was the sign of the Mosaic covenant (Exodus 31:16,17)

Each covenant was ratified by a sacrifice:

Psalms 50:5 "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

COVENANTS AND DISPENSATIONS

What is a dispensation?

"A dispensation is God's distinctive method of governing mankind or a group of men during a period of human history, marked by a crucial event, test, failure, and judgment. From the divine standpoint, it is a stewardship, a rule of life, or a responsibility for managing God's affairs in His house. From the historical standpoint, it is a stage in the progress of revelation." 3

3. Dispensationalism by Charles C. Ryrie

BIBLICAL COVENANTS

The word which is translated dispensation in the New Testament is “oikonomia” from which the English word “economy” is derived. The New Testament word is a combination of two words, “oikos”, which means “house”, and “nemo”, which means to “dispense, manage, or hold sway”. Thus, the word literally means house dispensing or house managing and relates primarily to household administration.

As we study each of the eight covenants it is also important to notice the changes of the dispensations that occur during or after each of them. Note however, that while God's dispensations may change, His covenants never change; and some are always in effect. With each dispensation we are able to trace the following as it relates and correspond to covenants:

- The beginning and ending of each of the covenants
- The responsibilities that were given to man during these covenants
- How man has failed in his responsibilities
- The judgements that occurred because of man's failure to fulfil the requirements.

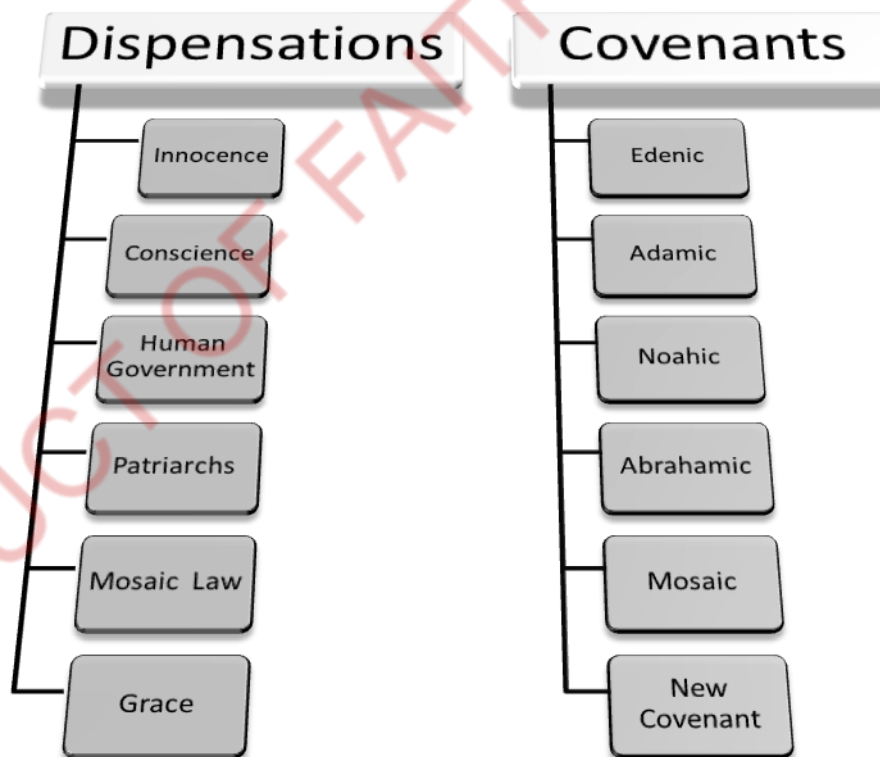


Figure: Dispensations in the light of Biblical Covenants

PART ONE

BIBLICAL COVENANTS – BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

There are eight covenants that God made with man that we will be studying during this course. These are seen in the chart below.

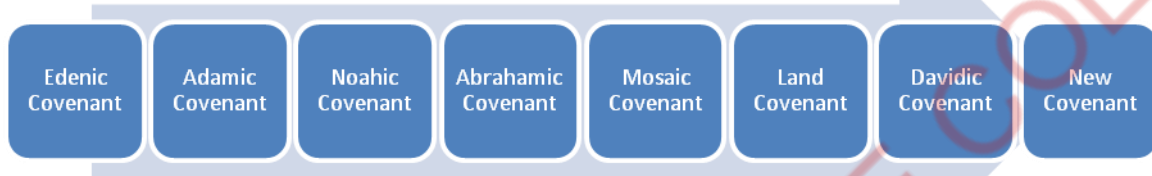
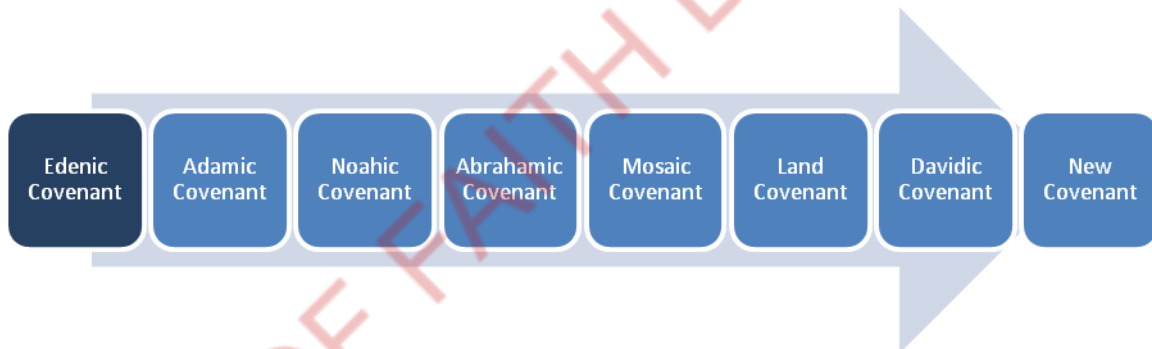


Figure: Covenants made between God and man

THE EDENIC COVENANT



WHY WAS THIS COVENANT NECESSARY?

In the opening chapter of the book of Genesis we see how God created the world in six days. God was involved as Father (Genesis 1:1), Son (John 1:1-3) and Spirit (Genesis 1:2) in preparing places for all the living creatures and particularly for man who had been made in a pattern similar to His own perfection, triune creation as a reflection of a triune creator. Unlike the animals that preceded him, Man was created to have a special relationship with God. The first chapter of Genesis gives the reader a hint of man's uniqueness in verse 27, for "God created man in His own image" (Genesis 1:27). Mankind, that is, man and woman (Gen 1:27), were created by God to share in God's creation.

CONDITIONAL COVENANT

The Edenic covenant is one of the two covenants that were conditional. This means that both parties needed to adhere to the terms and conditions of the covenant in order for the covenant to continue. If either one of the parties failed to follow the provisions, the covenant would be broken and the blessings would no longer be received by the participants.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Genesis 1:26-31 "Then God said, "Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all life—the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals, and small animals." So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them. God blessed them and told them, "Multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters over the fish and birds and all the animals." And God said, "Look! I have given you the seed-bearing plants throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. And I have given all the grasses and other green plants to the animals and birds for their food." And so it was. Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was excellent in every way. This all happened on the sixth day."

Genesis 2:16-17 "But the Lord God gave him this warning: "You may freely eat any fruit in the garden except fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die."

THE PARTIES OF THE EDENIC COVENANT

The Edenic Covenant was made between God and Adam. However, though this covenant had been made with Adam in the Garden of Eden, the scope of the participants was far greater as we see later in the different writings of the New Testament. In these writings, we see that in this covenant, Adam stood as the representative head of the human race. Thus the actions of Adam became attributed to the whole of humanity.

Romans 5:12-19 "When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. And though there was no law to break, since it had not yet been given, they all died anyway—even though they did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. What a contrast between Adam and Christ, who was yet to come! And what a difference between our sin and God's generous gift of forgiveness. For this one man, Adam, brought death to many through his sin. But this other man, Jesus

Christ, brought forgiveness to many through God's bountiful gift. And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but we have the free gift of being accepted by God, even though we are guilty of many sins. The sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over us, but all who receive God's wonderful, gracious gift of righteousness will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. Yes, Adam's one sin brought condemnation upon everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness makes all people right in God's sight and gives them life. Because one person disobeyed God, many people became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many people will be made right in God's sight."

PROVISIONS:

Though not explicitly stated, the promise of eternal life is inferred in this covenant. Genesis 3:22 "Then the Lord God said, "The people have become as we are, knowing everything, both good and evil. What if they eat the fruit of the tree of life? Then they will live forever!" Genesis 2:17 "... except fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die."

God provided everything necessary for human existence in the Garden of Eden when man was innocent of all sin. Part of the conditions of this covenant was responsibilities that Adam needed to do:

First: "be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28)

The earth was created for the purpose of being the habitation of man, and then man was created on the sixth day. Man was told to populate the earth; so the increase in population is part of his commission. The earth was to be filled with humanity.

Second: "subdue" (Genesis 1:28)

Previously, authority over the earth had been given to satan (Ezekiel 28:11-19). But when Satan fell, he lost his authority over this earth. That is the reason Genesis 1:2 described the earth as being covered by water and darkness being over the face of the deep. Hence, God began to form and fashion the earth anew to make it habitable for man, and this time He would give man the authority over the earth. Man was to subdue it; he was to use the natural resources and energies of the earth that God had provided for him.

Third: "dominion" (Genesis 1:28)

The earlier provision gave man authority over the earth as far as non living things were concerned. This provision extended man's authority over all living creatures. The entire animal kingdom on the earth, in the air, and in the sea was put under the authority of man. The first exercise of this authority was seen in man's naming of the animals (Genesis 2:19-20).

Fourth: Prohibition

There was only one simple prohibition, "...but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat."

Man's life in Eden was idyllic. Living in a perfect environment he had congenial employment and perfect companionship. Even God came and communed with him. Adam was appointed as a gardener and a guardian. He was told to dress and keep the garden as well as be fruitful and multiply and subdue the earth. The only condition was not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This prohibition was a test of his loyalty and love.

SIGN

The visible sign or token of the covenant was the tree of life. Of all the trees in the garden, only two were named and were placed "in the midst" of it. Of these two Adam was allowed to partake of only one, the tree of life. When he broke the terms of the covenant, God's judgment focused on withholding this tree from Adam. These facts indicate the tree of life to be the unique, tangible sign of the Edenic Covenant.

The sign of this covenant was that if they were to obey and not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, then man would be able to fellowship with God. Genesis 3:8-9 "Toward evening they heard the Lord God walking about in the garden, ... The Lord God called to Adam, "Where are you?" As long as man obeyed God he would enjoy fellowship with God.

SACRIFICE

Genesis 2:21-23 "So the Lord God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. He took one of Adam's ribs and closed up the place from which he had taken it. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib and brought her to Adam. "At last!" Adam exclaimed. "She is part of my own flesh and bone! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken out of a man."

Few people realize that Adam had to shed his blood in order to receive the gift of Eve. One of his ribs was surgically removed by God (Adam was put into a deep sleep), and the wound in his side was closed. The preparation for the fulfilment of the covenant involved Adam giving a part of his own life. Adam's recognition of this sacrifice is found in the statement that his bride was "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh".

The first bride and bridegroom of creation typified the bride and bridegroom of redemption - Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:23-33). In the same way that Eve came from side of Adam, so the Church has been formed as a result of Christ being pierced on the Cross of Calvary. Messiah laid down His life for His bride, the perfect church, the final act of which was when His side was pierced, and the last drop of His Blood was shed.

HOW WAS THE NATURE OF GOD REVEALED IN THIS COVENANT

Through the making of covenants with man, God reveals aspects of His nature and character. In the Edenic Covenant, there are three specific aspects of God's character that can be seen:

Firstly, God is the Creator

Psalms 33:6-9 "The Lord merely spoke, and the heavens were created. He breathed the word, and all the stars were born. He gave the sea its boundaries and locked the oceans in vast reservoirs. Let everyone in the world fear the Lord, and let everyone stand in awe of him. For when he spoke, the world began! It appeared at his command."

Psalms 139:13-16 "You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—and how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed."

Secondly, God is a Giver

Here in the beginning of the Bible we see God creating beautiful things – birds, fish, plants, trees, animals – all of which are given to Adam and Eve to enjoy. Therefore from the outset of the Bible we see that God reveals Himself to man as a Giver of Gifts. Throughout the Bible there is evidence to prove this:

- James writes and says, "Whatever is good and perfect comes to us from God above, who created all heaven's lights. Unlike them, he never changes or casts shifting shadows." (James 1:17)
- Paul tells us: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).
- John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."
- Jesus said, "If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him." (Matthew 7:11)

Thirdly, God is a God of Fellowship

God desires to fellowship with us. He made man so that He could have someone to fellowship with. The Greek word for fellowship has the meaning of sharing in something with someone. In the Garden of Eden we see evidence of God's fellowship with man when He called to Adam and said, "where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). Paul wrote and said, "God will surely do this for you, for he always does just what he says, and he is the one who invited you into this wonderful friendship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:9).

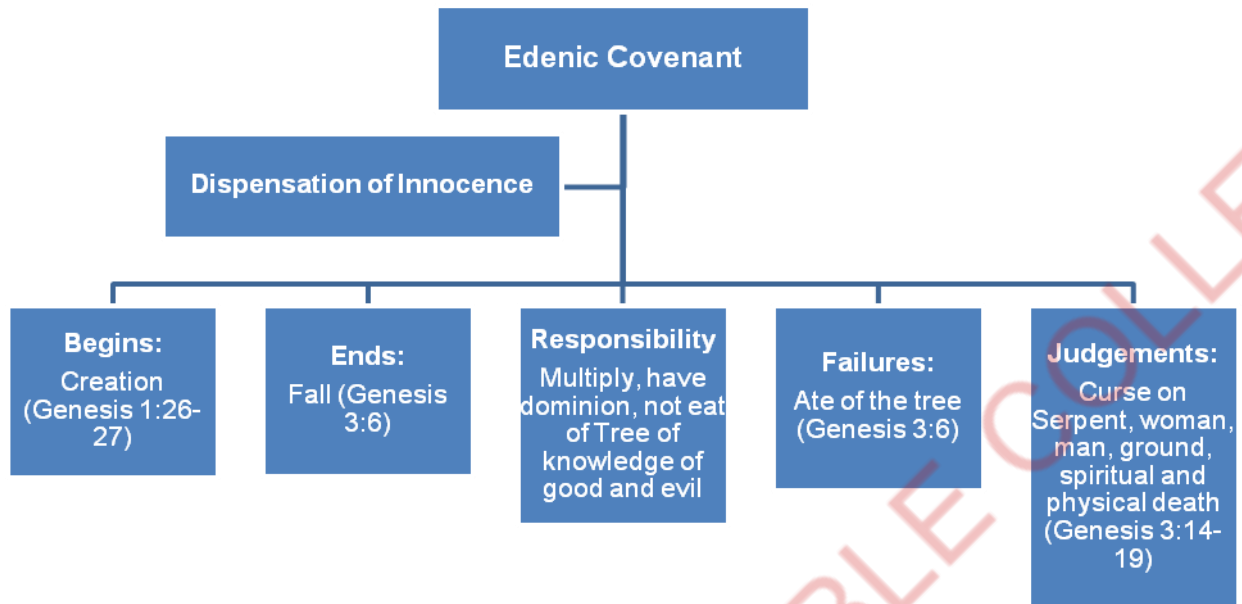
DOES THIS COVENANT CONTINUE TODAY?

No, due to the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, because of its conditional nature, this covenant was broken and therefore no longer continues to this day.

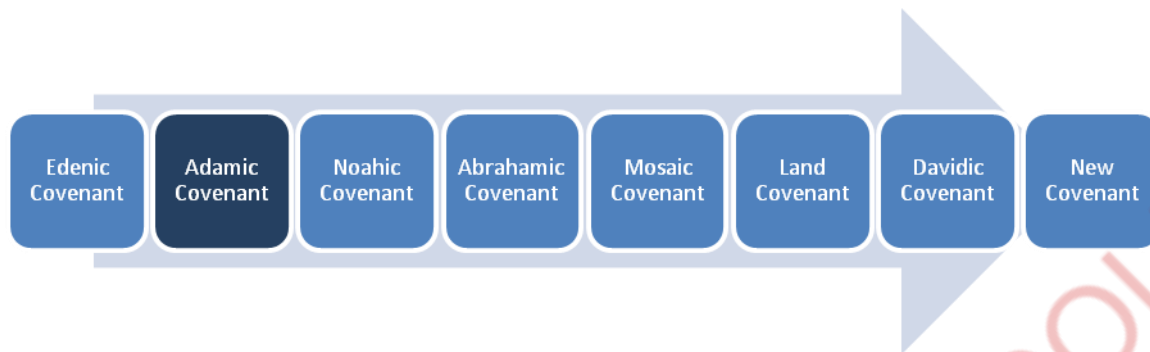
DISPENSATION OF INNOCENCE

The Edenic Covenant falls under the Dispensation of Innocence and Freedom. This name emphasizes that Adam and Eve were innocent of any sin or of the sin nature at this time. They were not slaves to sin. This covenant stands unique as it is the only covenant made with man before the entrance of sin.

BIBLICAL COVENANTS



THE ADAMIC COVENANT



WHY WAS THIS COVENANT REQUIRED?

Genesis 3:6 "The woman was convinced. The fruit looked so fresh and delicious, and it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. Then he ate it, too."

The Edenic Covenant was a conditional covenant, conditioned upon obedience. In order to keep the blessing of the Edenic covenant it was required of man to be obedient to the condition to not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Therefore when Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit, the Edenic covenant was broken and terminated by God (Genesis 3:14-19, and 3:21-24).

The temptation to break the covenant came from Satan as he attacked the terms of the covenant. His aim was to break the covenantal relationship between the Creator and the creature by deceiving man into violating the covenant. He knew this would rob man of the blessings and put him under the curses of the covenant. Satan's attack was upon the covenantal God and the covenantal man, but his approach was to attack the covenantal language.

Genesis 3:1-6 records the serpent's tempting of the woman and their progressive undermining of the words of the covenant.

1. The serpent questioned the Word, "Yea, hath God said..." (Verse 1)
2. The woman added to the Word, "...neither shall ye touch it..." (Verse 3)
3. The woman weakened the Word, "...Lest ye die." (Verse 3)
4. The serpent lied against the Word, "...Ye shall not surely die:" (Verse 4)
5. The serpent misinterpreted the Word, "...ye shall be as gods..." (Verse 5)

At this point, being deceived by the serpent, the woman partook of the forbidden fruit and gave to Adam also. This unbelief and disobedience broke their covenantal relationship and brought them under the curse of the covenant.

Hosea 6:7 ""But like Adam, you broke my covenant and rebelled against me."

The results of the fall of man were: man's covenantal relationship was broken, his character was corrupted by the entrance of sin, his dominion was lost and he and his offspring came under the dominion of sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:45-49; Romans 5:12).

This set the stage for the revelation of the Adamic Covenant. God came in grace to fallen man seeking to restore him back to a covenantal relationship with Him. This Adamic Covenant was the beginning of unfolding of the covenant of redemption. Upon the foundation of the Edenic Covenant the Adamic Covenant constitutes the most comprehensive prophecy that God ever gave to mankind, in that it encompasses all successive covenants of redemption. It is a "Seed" covenant to the others which follow.

UNCONDITIONAL COVENANT

The Adamic Covenant is one of the six unconditional covenants that were made between God and man. In this covenant God declared His purpose to man and revealed that the fulfilment of this covenant was going to occur regardless of the response of man towards Him. This does not mean that man makes no response but man's response doesn't leave the fulfilment of the covenant in doubt.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Genesis 3:14-19 "So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you will be punished. You are singled out from all the domestic and wild animals of the whole earth to be cursed. You will grovel in the dust as long as you live, crawling along on your belly. From now on, you and the woman will be enemies, and your offspring and her offspring will be enemies. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Then he said to the woman, "You will bear children with intense pain and suffering. And though your desire will be for your husband, he will be your master." And to Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate the fruit I told you not to eat, I have placed a curse on the ground. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. All your life you will sweat to produce food, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return."

PARTICIPANTS

Both God and Adam are involved in this covenant in which Adam again represented the whole human race. Thus the judgment on Adam is the judgment on all humanity. Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard."

PROVISIONS

The provisions and promises that God makes in the Adamic covenant are those that set forth the plan of God to bring redemption to man so that the promises of the Edenic covenant could once again be experienced by man. Without man's redemption, no one would be able to experience the eternal life that had once been one of the provisions of the Edenic covenant, no one would be able to experience the same fellowship that Adam and Eve had when they were in the Garden of Eden – where they could meet with God and fellowship with Him.

In this covenant we notice that God speaks of a curse which would come because of the disobedience of man, a promise of a future redemption and the results of the broken Edenic covenant.

THE CURSE:

- **UPON THE SERPENT**

Genesis 3:14 "So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you will be punished. You are singled out from all the domestic and wild animals of the whole earth to be cursed. You will grovel in the dust as long as you live, crawling along on your belly."

The natural serpent:

The natural serpent which was used as a tool of Satan is irrevocably humiliated to the dust of the earth. There are three provisions concerning the serpent.

Firstly, he was cursed above all other creatures of the animal kingdom. All creatures now fell under a curse, but there was a special curse upon this one member of the animal kingdom. Normally, an animal was not held morally responsible for its actions. However, if it caused any harm to man, then it is held responsible (Genesis 9:5). Animals were created for the benefit of man, and when this principle is violated, it then incurred the judgment of God.

Secondly, the serpent was to crawl on its belly. This shows that originally the serpent moved in an erect position.

Thirdly, dust shall be the serpent's food. Though snakes do not literally eat of the dust, this is a Hebrew idiom meaning to be especially cursed (Micah 7:17).

Satan – The “old serpent”

The curse however did not only apply to the natural “serpent” but extended beyond the natural serpent to the Devil himself who is “that old serpent”. Revelations 12:9 “This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the Devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels.” Revelations 20:1-3 “Then I saw an angel come down from heaven with the key to the bottomless pit and a heavy chain in his hand. He seized the dragon—that old serpent, the Devil, Satan—and bound him in chains for a thousand years. The angel threw him into the bottomless pit, which he then shut and locked so Satan could not deceive the nations anymore until the thousand years were finished. Afterward he would be released again for a little while.”

There are four provisions which are given in relation to Satan:

Firstly, there would be perpetual hatred between Satan and the woman (Genesis 3:15).

Secondly, this hatred was to culminate between Satan's seed and the woman's Seed, the Messiah.

Thirdly, the serpent would bruise the heel of the woman's Seed; this happened at the Cross.

Fourthly, the woman's Seed would crush Satan's head. This occurred initially with the Resurrection (Hebrews 2:14-15) but also spoke of a final crushing of Satan which would occur at the end times. Revelations 20:7-10 “When the thousand years end, Satan will be let out of his prison. He will go out to deceive the nations from every corner of the earth, which are called Gog and Magog. He will gather them together for battle—a mighty host, as numberless as sand along the shore. And I saw them as they went up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded God's people and the beloved city. But fire from heaven came down on the attacking armies and consumed them. Then the Devil, who betrayed them, was thrown into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

- **UPON THE WOMAN**

Genesis 3:16 "Then he said to the woman, "You will bear children with intense pain and suffering. And though your desire will be for your husband, he will be your master."

Eve and all women were made subject to three provisions:

Firstly, there would be a multiplication in sorrow and conception. We notice that through scripture there were many women who experienced an almost unbearable pain in not being able to conceive a child. For example: Sarah (Genesis 15-21), Rebekah (Genesis 25:21), Rachel (Genesis 29-30), Manoah (Judges 13), Hannah (1 Samuel 1) and Elizabeth (Luke 1).

Secondly, there would be multiplication of pain during giving birth. Before the Fall, she would have been able to conceive and given birth without too much pain, but this was no longer true. However, once birth takes place, there is joy (John. 16:21).

Thirdly, the wife was to be in subjection to the husband. This was already true before the Fall, but the new element was that she would now have the desire to rebel against that subjection and choose to try to rule him. It is for this reason that Paul spoke on the Christian wife being in submission to her husband. Ephesians 5:22-24 "You wives will submit to your husbands as you do to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of his body, the church; he gave his life to be her Savior. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives must submit to your husbands in everything." Colossians 3:18 "You wives must submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord."

- **UPON MAN**

Genesis 3:17-19 "And to Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate the fruit I told you not to eat, I have placed a curse on the ground. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. All your life you will sweat to produce food, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return."

Adam and all men were subject to two provisions in Genesis 3:17-19.

Firstly, the earth was cursed. Working was not something new with the Adamic Covenant. The difference was in the earth's response. Under the Edenic Covenant the earth was to respond readily to man's working and tilling. But now the earth would not respond so easily; there would be thorns, thistles, and weeds.

Secondly, man's work was to be characterized by hard labor. Working conditions under the Edenic Covenant were easy, simple, and enjoyable. Now, sweat was to characterize the work of man and labor was to be hard and toilsome.

- **UPON MANKIND**

Since Adam stands as the representative head of the human race, the judgment on Adam is the judgment on the whole human race. It is Adam, not Eve who is held responsible for the human condition.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 "So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, Adam, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man, Christ. Everyone dies because all of us are related to Adam, the first man. But all who are related to Christ, the other man, will be given new life."

The curse that is spoken to Adam and ultimately all of mankind was the introduction of death. The Bible speaks of death as being separation.

- Physical death spoken of in Genesis 3:19, is of the separation of the soul and the spirit from the body. Adam experienced physical death in Genesis 5:5.
- Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God. In Genesis 2:17 the Lord warned Adam that the penalty for disobedience would be death—"you will surely die." When Adam disobeyed, he experienced immediate spiritual death, which caused him to hide "from Lord God among the trees of the garden" (Genesis 3:8). Genesis 3:23-24 "So the Lord God banished Adam and his wife from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. After banishing them from the garden, the Lord God stationed mighty angelic beings to the east of Eden. And a flaming sword flashed back and forth, guarding the way to the tree of life." James 1:14-16 "Temptation comes from the lure of our own evil desires. These evil desires lead to evil actions, and evil actions lead to death. So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters."

THE PROMISE:

Genesis 3:15 "From now on, you and the woman will be enemies, and your offspring and her offspring will be enemies. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

The promise that God spoke of in this covenant was that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. This seed would crush, conquer and subjugate Satan and all the realm of his authority. This promise involved the:

- The chosen seed of Israel: Joshua 10:24 "Joshua told the captains of his army, "Come and put your feet on the kings' necks." And they did as they were told."
- Christ and His ministry: Romans 16:20 "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."
- The Church: Psalm 60:12 "With God's help we will do mighty things, for he will trample down our foes." Luke 10:19 "And I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you."

This "Seed" promise is progressively unfolded in the succeeding covenants and consummates in Christ and the Church.

RESULTS:

The consequences of their sin lead to Adam and Eve being removed from the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:24 "After banishing them from the garden, the Lord God stationed mighty angelic beings to the east of Eden. And a flaming sword flashed back and forth, guarding the way to the tree of life."

SIGNS

Genesis 3:21 "And the Lord God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife."

Having forfeited the seal (the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil) of the Edenic covenant, Adam and Eve received the coats of skin as tokens to them of their faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Adamic Covenant (Genesis 3:21).

Isaiah 61:10 "I am overwhelmed with joy in the Lord my God! For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom in his wedding suit or a bride with her jewels."

SACRIFICE

After Adam and Eve fell from covenantal relationship and their conscience was awakened and smitten with guilt, they sought to cover their own sin and make themselves acceptable to God and to each other. The man-made fig-leaf coverings (Genesis 3:7) were an attempt to make themselves righteous and acceptable before God.

The law of conscience led to the law of works. Romans 3:27 "Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on our good deeds. It is based on our faith." Ephesians 2:8-9 "God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it."

However, God judged self-righteousness to be insufficient. Isaiah 64:6 says, "We are all infected and impure with sin. When we proudly display our righteous deeds, we find they are but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall. And our sins, like the wind, sweep us away." It was therefore up to God to move in grace to deal with man's sin and provide an acceptable covering. In that man had broken the life commitment of the Edenic Covenant, and was deserving of death, death had to take place in order for his sin to be covered. Therefore from this covenant on we see that God introduced a substitutionary sacrificial death in order to cover man's sinfulness. This is implied in Genesis 3:21 when God clothed them with coats of skin, which had to have come from a slain innocent animal. Thus, based on substitution, Adam and Eve were clothed in the death of another. The innocent died for the guilty, and the sinless animal was sacrificed for sinful man.

This covenant sacrifice was the first of all animal sacrifices that pointed to the New Covenant sacrifice, the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:29,36; Hebrews 10:1-12).

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EDENIC AND ADAMIC COVENANT

When the Edenic Covenant was broken and was replaced with the Adamic Covenant, we see that there is one provision of the Edenic Covenant which was repeated in the Adamic Covenant, but the other provisions were not repeated:

- Under the Adamic Covenant, God did not tell the human race to be fruitful and fill the earth. This command was not repeated until the Noahic Covenant after God had killed off virtually the entire human race due to their wickedness.
- Under the Adamic Covenant, the human race was not given authority over the earth. This is because the devil had stolen the authority over the earth as a result of the Fall (when Adam and Eve sinned). John 12:31: "Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out." 2 Corinthians 4:4: "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." 1 John 5:19: "We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one."
- Under the Adamic Covenant, the human race was not given authority over every living creature.
- Under the Adamic Covenant, God repeated His command for the human race to be vegetarian (see Genesis 1:29, 3:18). This is the only provision from the Edenic Covenant which was also included in the Adamic Covenant. This command was canceled in the Noahic Covenant.
- Under the Adamic Covenant, the human race was no longer required to work the land in the Garden of Eden and take care of it. This is because they had been expelled from the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 3:22-24).
- Under the Adamic Covenant, the human race was no longer allowed to eat from any tree in the Garden of Eden (because they had been expelled from the Garden).

WHAT CHARACTER OF GOD IS SEEN IN THIS COVENANT?

In this covenantal relationship which God established with Adam and Eve, we can see that God is revealed as:

Firstly, a God of judgment

When Adam sinned, God judged their sin. He did not allow it to remain in His Presence. In understanding God as judge we come to see that God has the authority and right to punish people for not living according to the standards of His expected behavior. Psalm 96:13 "before the Lord! For the Lord is coming! He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and all the nations with his truth."

Secondly, a God of Redemption

The great mystery of the nature of God is that while strict justice calls for punishment, God who is full of mercy and grace, provides a means by which man's sins can be covered. Here we see that God is a Redeemer. A redeemer in the times of the Old Testament was a person who acted to free another person from danger and bondage. In this covenant that God made with Adam we see God's redemptive plan begin to unfold – where He promises to bring forth a Redeemer, the Seed of the woman.

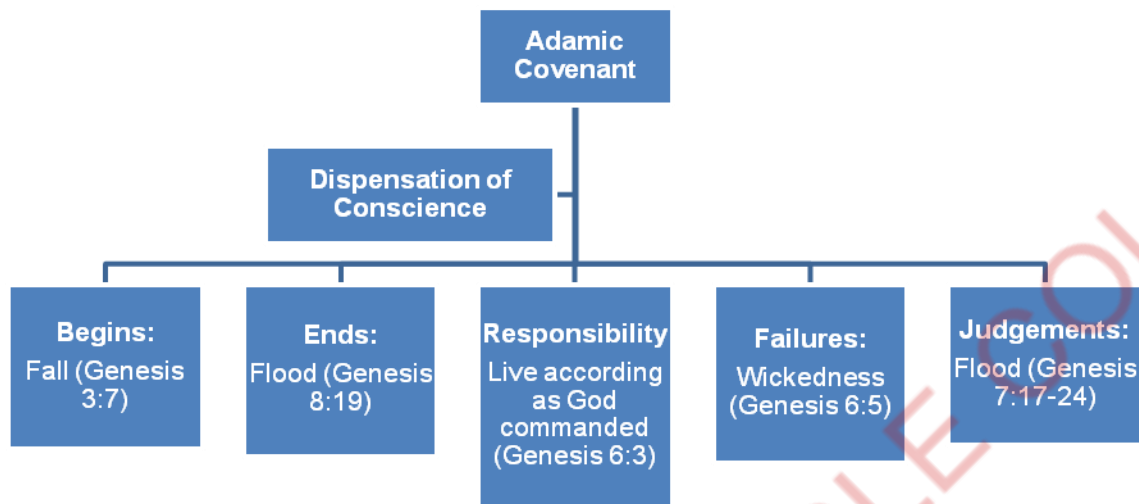
DOES THIS COVENANT EXIST TODAY?

The Adamic Covenant is unconditional and therefore has no penalty for those who break it. It therefore still applies even to this day.

CHANGE IN DISPENSATION

The second dispensation that is seen in the Bible is that of the Dispensation of Conscience or moral responsibility. Genesis 3:7 "At that moment, their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they strung fig leaves together around their hips to cover themselves."

Man's sin and rebellion against a specific command of God (2:16-17) marked a transition from theoretical to experiential knowledge of good and evil. Man became as God through a personal experience of the difference between good and evil, but also unlike God in gaining this experience by choosing the wrong instead of the right. Thus he was placed by God under the stewardship of moral responsibility whereby he was accountable to do all known good, to abstain from all known evil, and to approach God through blood sacrifice, here instituted in prospect of the finished work of Christ.



ASSIGNMENT ONE

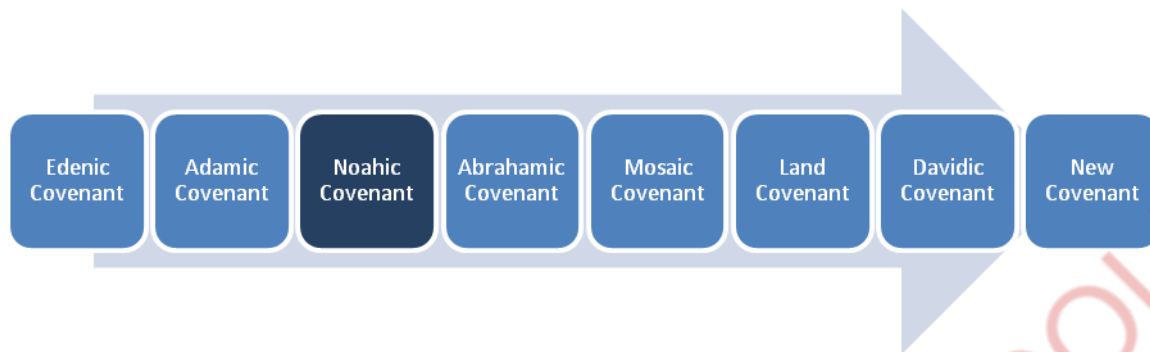
It is clearly seen that since the beginning of time man has tried to pay for his own sins. Looking at:

- The life of Adam
- The sacrifice of Cain and Abel
- The idea of penance
- The sacrifice of Christ
- The example of Paul in Philippians 3

Explain why the works of man cannot ever compare with the Sacrifice of Christ in bring about salvation for man.

In your essay be sure to compare the spiritual state of man and Christ and how the difference in their spiritual state makes it possible or impossible to cover sin. A sound biblically based answer is required for this essay.

THE NOAHIC COVENANT



WHY WAS THE NOAHIC COVENANT NECESSARY?

Divine Judgement because of sin:

Genesis 6:5-7 "Now the Lord observed the extent of the people's wickedness, and he saw that all their thoughts were consistently and totally evil. So the Lord was sorry he had ever made them. It broke his heart. And the Lord said, "I will completely wipe out this human race that I have created. Yes, and I will destroy all the animals and birds, too. I am sorry I ever made them."

Genesis 6:11-13 "Now the earth had become corrupt in God's sight, and it was filled with violence. God observed all this corruption in the world, and he saw violence and depravity everywhere. So God said to Noah, "I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. Yes, I will wipe them all from the face of the earth!"

The sin that began in the Garden of Eden spread wherever man went continuing to desire his own way rather than God's way. Over many years it had come to a point where God was sorry He ever created man and therefore proclaimed that He would bring destruction upon man in the form of a flood.

Preservation of life promised because of the Adamic Covenant:

Genesis 6:8-9 "But Noah found favor with the Lord. This is the history of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless man living on earth at the time. He consistently followed God's will and enjoyed a close relationship with him."

Genesis 6:18 "But I solemnly swear to keep you safe in the boat, with your wife and your sons and their wives."

In order for God's plan of salvation (Genesis 3:15) to be accomplished God had to preserve life so that the "seed" of Eve could bring forth the Messiah. It is in the context of the great flood that God, having compassion on Noah because of the manner in which he walked with Him, made covenant with Noah. Noah and his family therefore would be preserved through the flood and they could repopulate the earth.

WHAT DID GOD COMMAND NOAH TO DO?

God told Noah to build an ark (a huge boat) to save himself, his family, the animal and bird life from destruction. Noah received instructions as to the size of the ark and the materials to be used in the construction (Genesis 6:14-16). For nearly 100 years Noah built this ark in accordance with God's plan thereby giving man those years to repent of their wickedness. As Noah built this ark, he preached repentance to man. 2 Peter 2:5 "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;" and Hebrews 11:7 "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

After Noah had put all of the animals, fowl, cattle and creeping things (two by two, male and female) into the ark, God instructed Noah and his family to enter the ark (Genesis 7:1-3). After having done all that Noah was commanded to do (Genesis 7:5) "Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood" (v7). For approximately one year, Noah and his family remained in the ark (before the rain began, whilst it rained and then when the water was subsiding) and then God said, "Leave the boat, all of you. Release all the animals and birds so they can breed and reproduce in great numbers." So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives left the boat (Genesis 8:16-18)

The Noahic Covenant, found in Genesis 9:8-17 is the promise that God made to Noah and his descendants after the flood which destroyed the world.

AN UNCONDITIONAL COVENANT

The Noahic covenant was God's covenant with Noah. Man had no part in making it, or in keeping it. And man could not break it. Therefore it was an unconditional covenant because it did not depend upon anything Noah or his descendants had to do to fulfil the covenant.

It is a covenant of unconditional, unqualified promise where God says, "I will". The promise is based upon God's faithfulness alone. Because of God's faithfulness to always do what He says He will do, we can know today with certainty that there will never be another worldwide flood as there was in the days of Noah, no matter how wicked mankind becomes. Neither the wickedness nor the righteousness of mankind affects this unconditional covenant. There is no "condition" under which God will renege on His promise.

In this covenant we see that God obligates Himself to preserve man in the midst of judgment - without anything on Noah's part – without any commitment, pledge or guarantee.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Genesis 9:1-17 "God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, "Multiply and fill the earth. All the wild animals, large and small, and all the birds and fish will be afraid of you. I have placed them in your power. I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. But you must never eat animals that still have their lifeblood in them. And murder is forbidden. Animals that kill people must die, and any person who murders must be killed. Yes, you must execute anyone who murders another person, for to kill a person is to kill a living being made in God's image. Now you must have many children and repopulate the earth. Yes, multiply and fill the earth!" Then God told Noah and his sons, "I am making a covenant with you and your descendants, and with the animals you brought with you—all these birds and livestock and wild animals. I solemnly promise never to send another flood to kill all living creatures and destroy the earth." And God said, "I am giving you a sign as evidence of my eternal covenant with you and all living creatures. I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my permanent promise to you and to all the earth. When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will be seen in the clouds, and I will remember my covenant with you and with everything that lives. Never again will there be a flood that will destroy all life. When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth." Then God said to Noah, "Yes, this is the sign of my covenant with all the creatures of the earth."

PARTICIPANTS

This covenant was made between God and Noah even though it touched everything in God's creation. The Noahic Covenant was initiated and dictated by God. God initiated the covenant as an outward expression of His purpose revealed in Genesis 3:20-22. In Genesis 9 we can clearly see that the originator or source of the covenant was God alone:

- Genesis 9:11 says, "I solemnly promise never to send another flood to kill all living creatures and destroy the earth."
- Genesis 9:12 says, "And God said, "I am giving you a sign as evidence of my eternal covenant with you and all living creatures."
- Genesis 9:15 says, "and I will remember my covenant with you and with everything that lives. Never again will there be a flood that will destroy all life."

In terms of recipients, it is the widest of all the covenants. The beneficiaries of this covenant encompass a wider group of recipients than the other major covenants. Initially the covenant was established with Noah and with his descendants after him (Genesis 9:9). Obviously, since only Noah's immediate family was preserved through the flood, this covenant extended to all mankind who would subsequently populate the earth. But then God enlarged the list to include "every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth" (Gen 9:10). And lest there be any question as to the extent, He adds in v11: "and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood." In v13, God expanded the recipient list even further to incorporate a third element—the earth: "I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth."

PROVISIONS

PROMISES:

In this covenant God promised 5 things to Noah and his descendants:

- Firstly, God promised to keep them alive as they were going through the flood: Genesis 6:19 "Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. Genesis 7:23 "Every living thing on the earth was wiped out—people, animals both large and small, and birds. They were all destroyed, and only Noah was left alive, along with those who were with him in the boat."
- Secondly, God promised that He would never again destroy every living thing: Three times in chapter 8 and 9. God made reference of this promise. Genesis 8:21 "And the Lord was pleased with the sacrifice and said to himself, "I will never again curse the earth, destroying all living things, even though people's thoughts and actions are bent toward evil from childhood." Genesis 9:11 "I solemnly promise never to send another flood to kill all living creatures and destroy the earth." Genesis 9:15 "and I will remember my covenant with

you and with everything that lives. Never again will there be a flood that will destroy all life.

- Thirdly, God promised to not curse the ground again: Genesis 8:21 "And the Lord was pleased with the sacrifice and said to himself, 'I will never again curse the earth, destroying all living things, even though people's thoughts and actions are bent toward evil from childhood.'"
- Fourthly, God promised that the seasons and day/night would not cease: Genesis 8:22 "As long as the earth remains, there will be springtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night."
- Fifthly, God promised that there would never again be a global flood: Genesis 9:11 "I solemnly promise never to send another flood to kill all living creatures and destroy the earth." This does not mean that God will never again destroy the earth, however. He has promised to one day destroy the earth by fire on the Day of the Lord (2 Peter 3:10-11, Revelations 20:9, 21:1)

INSTRUCTIONS:

The covenant of Noah also reveals to us the instructions that God gave to Noah after he had come out of the flood:

- **Be fruitful and multiply:** Genesis 9:1 "God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, 'Multiply and fill the earth.'" Genesis 9:7 "Now you must have many children and repopulate the earth. Yes, multiply and fill the earth!"

The world Noah entered from the ark was significantly different from the world he knew before. God gave Noah the same kind of mandate He gave Adam in the beginning of creation (Genesis 1:28), since Noah essentially began all over again. Therefore God blessed Noah and his sons and reaffirmed their responsibility to populate the earth.

- **Subjection of the animal kingdom to man:** Genesis 9:2 "All the wild animals, large and small, and all the birds and fish will be afraid of you. I have placed them in your power."
- **The sacredness of human life is established.** Genesis 9:5 "And murder is forbidden. Animals that kill people must die, and any person who murders must be killed."

Whereas the covenant with Adam and his progeny was one of personal responsibility greatly multiplied and personal liberty greatly reduced, it was not like the covenant that God gave to Noah and his three sons. Personal liberty was greatly reduced by the institution of human government. Humans were given the duty of avenging blood for blood in the post-flood world. (Gen. 9:6)

Under the Adamic covenant we saw Cain murder his brother, but God reserved judgment of that act to Himself. Genesis 4:15 "The Lord replied, "They will not kill you, for I will give seven times your punishment to anyone who does." Then the Lord put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him." No man was allowed to avenge Abel.

After the flood, God made it a duty of men, and sometimes of beasts, to repay murder with the punishment of God-ordained remuneration in kind. Since man is made in the image of God, one who commits murder shows not only contempt for man but also contempt for God. Whatever sheds man's blood, whether man or beast, must be put to death. Genesis 9:6 "Yes, you must execute anyone who murders another person, for to kill a person is to kill a living being made in God's image."

- **Permission to eat animals but not their blood.** Genesis 9:3-4 "I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. But you must never eat animals that still have their lifeblood in them."

Even as Adam received instructions for eating (Genesis 1:29-30, 2:15-17), so does Noah. Yet now, Noah received specific permission to eat animals, permission Adam was not given (as far as we know). Perhaps this was because the earth was less productive agriculturally after the flood, because of the ecological changes. Therefore God gave man permission to eat meat.

God commanded Noah that if animals were eaten, there was be proper respect for the blood, which represented the life principle of the animal. Leviticus 17:11 "for the life of any creature is in its blood. I have given you the blood so you can make atonement for your sins. It is the blood, representing life, that brings you atonement." Leviticus 17:14 "The life of every creature is in the blood. That is why I have told the people of Israel never to eat or drink it, for the life of any bird or animal is in the blood. So whoever eats or drinks blood must be cut off." Deuteronomy 12:23 "The only restriction is never to eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat."

Why was Noah not able to eat the blood?

Blood is a symbol of the life of the individual and therefore cannot be eaten. The importance of the idea of blood in the Bible is shown by how often the word is used. It is used 424 times in 357 separate verses (in the New King James Version). Some examples of the importance of the blood in scripture can be seen in the following references:

- ❖ Blood was the sign of mercy for Israel at the first Passover (Exodus 12:13)
- ❖ Blood sealed God's covenant with Israel (Exodus 24:8)
- ❖ Blood sanctified the altar (Exodus 29:12)
- ❖ Blood set aside the priests (Exodus 29:20)
- ❖ Blood made atonement for God's people (Exodus 30:10)
- ❖ Blood sealed the new covenant (Matthew 26:28)
- ❖ Blood justifies us (Romans 5:9)
- ❖ Blood brings redemption (Ephesians 1:7)
- ❖ Blood brings peace with God (Colossians 1:20)
- ❖ Blood cleanses us (Hebrews 9:14 and 1 John 1:7)
- ❖ Blood gives entrance to God's holy place (Hebrews 10:19)
- ❖ Blood sanctifies us (Hebrews 13:12)
- ❖ Blood enables us to overcome Satan (Revelation 12:11)

SIGN

Genesis 9:11-13 "I solemnly promise never to send another flood to kill all living creatures and destroy the earth." And God said, "I am giving you a sign as evidence of my eternal covenant with you and all living creatures. I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my permanent promise to you and to all the earth."

As a sign of the covenant, God placed a rainbow in the cloud (Genesis 9:13, 14, 16, 17). Strikingly, the sign itself incorporated an element of the judgment; it was taken from nature itself. The "sign" of the rainbow is appropriate as it consists of the reflection of the rays of the sun in the particles of moisture in the clouds. The water which destroyed the earth caused the rainbow. Also, the rainbow appeared at the end of a storm thereby assuring man that the storm of God's wrath (in a flood) was over.

While circumcision (Genesis 17:11) and the Sabbath (Exodus 31:13-17; Ezekiel 20:12, 20), as signs of a covenant, were intended to remind man of God's covenant requirements, this sign is said to be for the purpose of reminding God (Genesis 9:15, 16). God said that the rainbow would cause Him to remember His covenant with man. The sign of the rainbow appears in several other places in

association with God's pending judgment, as if to indicate his remembrance that future judgment will come by a different means.

SACRIFICE

Genesis 8:19-21 "And all the various kinds of animals and birds came out, pair by pair. Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and sacrificed on it the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose. And the Lord was pleased with the sacrifice ..."

The first thing that Noah did when he had come out of the ark was to sacrifice to God. In this offering we see two things:

The importance of thanks:

Noah knew of the importance of offering to God the first of everything, the first fruits (Genesis 4), and a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for God's great goodness to him and his family. Noah understood the proper way to give thanks to God for the blessing of surviving the flood, by giving him the first born of the animals that were on the Ark. Think about the risk of Noah's sacrifice. After the Flood there was no animal life outside the Ark. And here was Noah taking some of "all the clean animals . . . and clean birds" that existed on the earth, and sacrificing them to God.

In this one sacrifice Noah acted in faith and complete trust in God that He would provide all that was necessary for them to live and multiply. He understood the scripture that Jesus spoke of to the crowds, "do not worry about your life, what you will eat (or drink), or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they?" (Matthew 2:25-26) Noah's sacrifice was an amazing act of faith! He believed God could take whatever creatures remained after his sacrifice and repopulate the animal kingdom throughout the earth. And it wasn't just a faith-filled sacrifice; you can see that it was a qualitative sacrifice; it was the very best Noah could give. That is why it was a "pleasing aroma" to God and that is why it touched His heart and moved His hand.

The importance of sacrifice for forgiveness:

Noah sacrificed some innocent animals, burning them on an altar he built. While the great flood destroyed most of the sinners from off the face of the earth, it did not destroy the root of sin that remained in the hearts of the children

of Adam. That is why Noah and his descendants had to continue offering to God sacrifices for sin.

Animal sacrifices were the foundation of the way of salvation that God had established for the Old Testament believers. When Adam and Eve sinned, animals were killed by God to provide clothing for them (Genesis 3:21). Cain and Abel brought sacrifices to the Lord. Cain's was unacceptable because he brought fruit, while Abel's was acceptable because it was the "firstborn of his flock" (Genesis 4:4-5). After the flood receded, Noah sacrificed animals to God (Genesis 8:20-21).

These animal sacrifices that were offered to God throughout the history of the Old Testament symbolized the Lamb who was to come and shed His own blood to pay the debt of sin for Adam's descendants. That is why, when Noah left the ark, the first thing he did was to shed animal blood, thus showing his children and grandchildren that the laws of God had not changed - that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) and "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin." (Heb. 9:22)

WHAT CHARACTERISTIC OF GOD ARE REVEALED IN THIS COVENANT?

Firstly, God is patient

Genesis 6:3-7 "Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years." The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air, for I am grieved that I have made them."

God purposed to wipe out the descendants of Adam from the earth because of their wickedness. However, God, in His mercy, intended to be patient with sinners for another 120 years to give them time to repent, so that they might not perish. When that limit was reached, God would judge everyone who refused to repent and accept His way of righteousness. God planned to be patient with sinners for a time and then judge them if they refused to repent. In this, we can observe two characteristics of God: His patience and His wrath. "But do not forget this one thing: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief." (2 Pet. 3:8-10)

Isaiah 30:18 "But the Lord still waits for you to come to him so he can show you his love and compassion. For the Lord is a faithful God. Blessed are those who wait for him to help them.

Secondly, God will judge sin

Once again in this covenant we see the aspect of God that will not tolerate sin forever. He will bring judgment for sin and therefore He judged mankind by bringing the flood. We see another example of God's judgment when we look at the example of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18)

Thirdly, God is gracious

1 Peter 5:10 "In his kindness God called you to his eternal glory by means of Jesus Christ."

The New Testament word "charis" means to show favour or kindness to someone. God was gracious towards Noah when He showed favour to him and chose him and his family to be the ones that would build an ark and be saved from the coming flood.

Grace is a vital biblical term which makes a basic statement about how God relates to human beings. Paul explains that the grace of God is intended to redeem believing sinners and to impute righteousness to them. Ephesians 2:4-8 "But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so very much, that even while we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's special favor that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ, and we are seated with him in the heavenly realms—all because we are one with Christ Jesus. And so God can always point to us as examples of the incredible wealth of his favor and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us through Christ Jesus. God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God."

DOES THIS COVENANT EXIST TODAY?

Genesis 9:16 "When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth."

Genesis 9:12 "And God said, "I am giving you a sign as evidence of my eternal covenant with you and all living creatures."

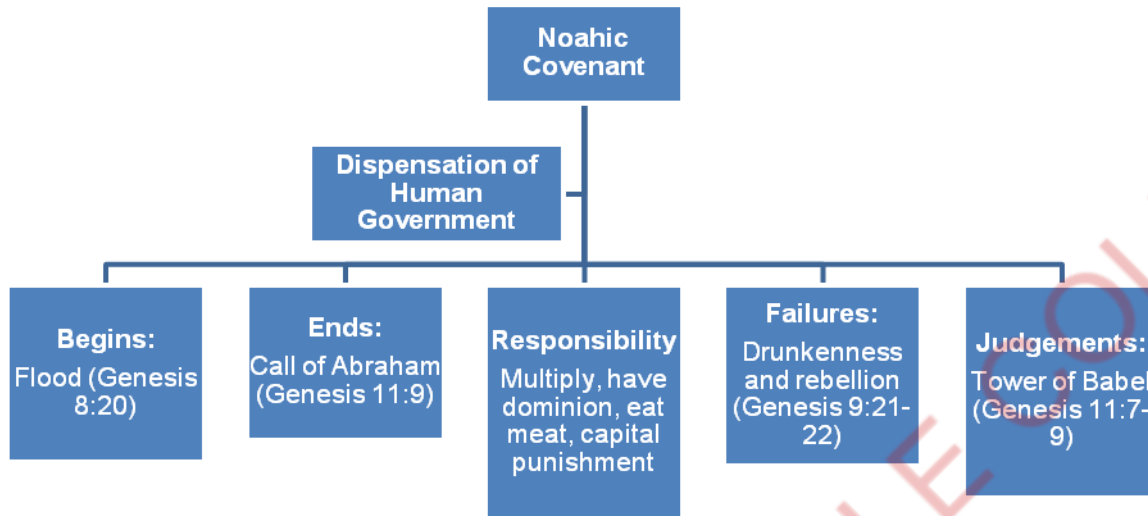
The covenant that God made with Noah and effectively with all successive generations was spoken of as an "everlasting covenant". This covenant with Noah is the first of five divinely originated covenants in Scripture explicitly described as "everlasting." The other four include the Abrahamic (Genesis 17:7), Priestly (Numbers 25:10 -13), Davidic (2 Samuel 23:5), and the New Covenant (Jeremiah 32:40). The Mosaic Covenant, though divinely initiated, is not described as everlasting.

CHANGE IN DISPENSATION

The third dispensation is that of Human Government. The second dispensation of God's rule demonstrated that mankind would not obey God on the basis of the human conscience. Thus, once the Noahic Flood ended, God started a new dispensation by instituting a new ruling factor. Since the fountainhead of all human corruption prior to the flood was the continued existence of the first murderer, Cain, God determined that never again would He allow murderers to infect the rest of mankind with their rebellious attitudes. Shortly after Noah and his family left the ark, God ordained capital punishment for murderers (Genesis 9:5-6).

Capital punishment requires a human government agency to investigate the murder, and then apprehend and try the murderer, and administer the sentence of execution. God commanded that the murderer's blood be shed by mankind. Thus, when God ordained capital punishment, He thereby instituted human government as a further restraint against the lawless rebellion of mankind.

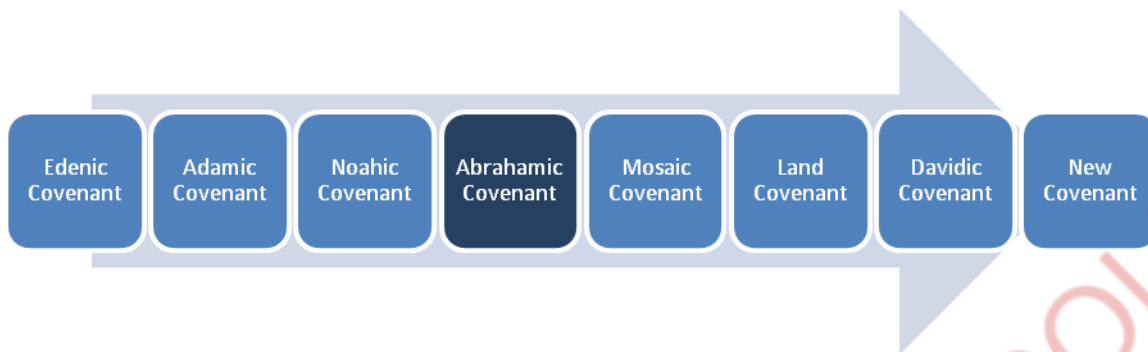
In Romans 13:1-7 the Apostle Paul indicated that human governmental authority derives its existence from God, that it was ordained for the purpose of restraining evil, and that it functions as the minister of God when it administers capital punishment. Human government, then, with its authority to administer capital punishment, was the new ruling factor that God instituted for the third dispensation.



ASSIGNMENT

In an essay debate the pros and cons of capital punishment. Do you believe that capital punishment should still be issued to those who are murderers? Do you believe that grace should be shown to another so that they can be given an opportunity to repent and change their ways? Justify your position on capital punishment using scripture to back your beliefs.

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT



WHY WAS THIS COVENANT GIVEN?

In the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis, the emphasis is how God dealt with the world as a whole. With each of the major events that took place during these chapters – the fall of humanity, the great flood and the Tower of Babel, the major thing that they have in common is how God dealt with mankind collectively. Now in the twelfth chapter, as we enter into the Patriarchal stage, we find that God narrowed down His dealings to that of a single nation which came about as a result of the obedience of one man, Abraham.

In the Adamic covenant we saw how God made a covenant to bring salvation to man by the means of the seed of the women. In Noah's covenant we saw how God, seeing that Noah walked justly before God, preserved the "seed" of the woman so that the Adamic Covenantal promises could be fulfilled. Here in this covenant we see how God continues to unfold His plan to bring forth the "Seed" of the woman by choosing Abraham to leave his country and become a new nation from which the Saviour would come.

Genesis 12:1-3 "Then the Lord told Abram, "Leave your country, your relatives, and our father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. I will cause you to become the father of a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and I will make you a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you."

Having faith in God, "...Abram departed as the Lord had instructed him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran" (Genesis 12:4).

UNCONDITIONAL COVENANT

Technically, the covenant with Abram is not found in chapter 12, but in chapters 15:18 and 17: 2-21 where the word covenant appears. It is there that the specific details of the covenant are spelled out. Here in chapter 12 the general features of the covenant are introduced. Therefore except for the original condition of leaving his homeland and going to the promised land (Genesis 12:1-3), the Abrahamic covenant is made with no conditions whatever. It is rather a prophetic declaration of God of what will certainly come to pass, and is no more conditional than any other announced plan of God which depends upon God's sovereignty for its fulfillment.

In this covenant, God made promises to Abraham that required nothing of Abraham. In this covenant there are no "if" clauses which suggest that there was anything dependent upon man before the promises and provisions would be fulfilled. The Abrahamic Covenant is confirmed repeatedly by reiteration and enlargement. In none of these instances are any of the added promises conditioned upon the faithfulness of Abraham's seed or of Abraham himself.

COMPARING NOAHIC AND ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

There are seven interesting points of comparison between God calling Noah out of the safety of the Ark to step out into an unknown world and God calling Abram out of the safety of Ur of the Chaldeans to step out into an unknown land.

Noah in Genesis 8:15-9:9	Abram in Genesis 12:1-7
1. Then God said to Noah (Gen 8:15)	1. Lord said to Abram (Gen 12:1)
2. Come out from the Ark (Gen 8:16)	2. Leave [go out from] your land (Gen 12:1)
3. So Noah came out (Gen 8:18)	3. So Abram went [out] (Gen 12:4)
4. Then Noah built an altar to Yahweh (Gen 8:20)	4. And Abram built an altar to Yahweh (Gen 12:7)
5. God blessed Noah (Gen 9:1)	5. God said: 'And I will bless you' (Gen 12:2)
6. Breed, multiply and fill the earth (Gen 9:1)	6. And I shall make you a great nation (Gen 12:2)
7. I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants to come [your seed] (Gen 9:9)	7. I will give this country to your seed (Gen 12:7)

BIBLICAL COVENANTS

The reason for the similarities between Abraham and Noah is that they are both New Adam figures.

In the following chart we are able to see the similarities between both Adam and Abraham

Adam	Abraham
Be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28)	I will make you a great nation (Genesis 12:2)
Place: Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8)	Place: Land of Canaan (Genesis 13:10)
God blessed them (Genesis 1:28)	And I will bless you (Genesis 12:2)
God caused a deep sleep to fall upon man (Genesis 2:21)	A deep sleep fell on Abram (Genesis 15:12)
Conflict between offspring (Genesis 4:1-16)	Conflict between offspring (Genesis 21:8-21)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE COVENANT

Genesis 12:1-3 "Then the Lord told Abram, "Leave your country, your relatives, and your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. I will cause you to become the father of a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and I will make you a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you."

Genesis 13:14-16 "After Lot was gone, the Lord said to Abram, "Look as far as you can see in every direction. I am going to give all this land to you and your offspring as a permanent possession. And I am going to give you so many descendants that, like dust, they cannot be counted!"

THE ASSURANCE OF THE COVENANT

Genesis 15:1-5 "Afterward the Lord spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, "Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great." But Abram replied, "O Sovereign Lord, what good are all your blessings when I don't even have a son? Since I don't have a son, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. You have given me no children, so one of my servants will have to be my heir." Then the Lord said to him, "No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own to inherit everything I am giving you." Then the Lord brought Abram outside beneath the night sky and told him, "Look up into the heavens and count the stars if you can. Your descendants will be like that—too many to count!"

THE RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT

Genesis 17:1-8 "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to make you into a mighty nation." At this, Abram fell face down in the dust. Then God said to him, "This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of not just one nation, but a multitude of nations! What's more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram; now you will be known as Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations. I will give you millions of descendants who will represent many nations. Kings will be among them! "I will continue this everlasting covenant between us, generation after generation. It will continue between me and your offspring forever. And I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you. Yes, I will give all this land of Canaan to you and to your offspring forever. And I will be their God."

Genesis 17:15-16 "Then God added, "Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai; from now on you will call her Sarah. And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings will be among her descendants!"

PARTICIPANTS

God is the One who initiated this covenant and who alone calls Abram to be the man from where the chosen nation would come who would eventually bring forth the Saviour.

Genesis 15:18 "So the Lord made a covenant with Abram that day and said..."

Evidence of God initiating this covenant with Abraham can be seen in that God's presence is symbolized by the smoking oven and the flaming torch that went between the sacrifice that Abraham had offered unto God (Genesis 15:17).

PROVISIONS

The Abrahamic covenant is presented three times in the book of Genesis with each revelation providing a fuller revelation of the covenant provisions and promises.

- Chapter 12 emphasizes the blessings of God upon Abraham, his family and eventually the entire world.

BIBLICAL COVENANTS

- Chapter 15 emphasizes the land, outlining the borders of the land that would be possessed along with an explanation as to the delay in the fulfillment.
- Chapter 17 emphasizes the seed, speaking of the Royal line which was to come from Sarah and not Hagar.

Therefore when we study the Abrahamic covenant we need to look at it in connection to three things – land, seed and blessing

	Land	Seed	Blessing
Genesis 12	Genesis 12:7 "Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "I am going to give this land to your offspring." And Abram built an altar there to commemorate the Lord's visit."	Genesis 12:2 "I will cause you to become the father of a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and I will make you a blessing to others."	Genesis 12:3 "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you."
Genesis 13	Genesis 13:14-15 "After Lot was gone, the Lord said to Abram, "Look as far as you can see in every direction. I am going to give all this land to you and your offspring as a permanent possession."	Genesis 13:16 "And I am going to give you so many descendants that, like dust, they cannot be counted!"	
Genesis 15	Genesis 15:18 "So the Lord made a covenant with Abram that day and said, "I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River— "	Genesis 15:5 "Then the Lord brought Abram outside beneath the night sky and told him, "Look up into the heavens and count the stars if you can. Your descendants will be like that—too many to count!"	
Genesis 17	Genesis 17:8 "Yes, I will give all this land of Canaan to you and to your offspring forever. And I will be their God.	Genesis 17:6 "I will give you millions of descendants who will represent many nations. Kings will be among them!"	
Expansion on the covenant	Palestine Covenant (Deuteronomy 30)	Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-13)	New Covenant (Jeremiah 31)
Fulfillment of the covenant	Yet to be fulfilled	Galatians 3:16	Galatians 3:8

There are three main features to the Abrahamic Covenant:

THE PROMISE OF LAND (Genesis 12:1)

Implicit in Genesis 12 is the promises of land that God would show Abram. God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldeans to a land that He would give him (Genesis 12:1). This promise is reiterated in Genesis 13:14-18 where it is confirmed and later in Genesis 15:18-21 we see that God gives Abraham the dimensions of the land promise. The land aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant is also expanded in Deuteronomy 30:1-10 which is called the Land or Palestine Covenant.

After the theme of the "Seed" as stated in the Adamic and Abrahamic Covenant and implied in the Noahic Covenant, the theme of Promised Land appears frequently. It appears 12 times in the book of Genesis alone. Here in this covenant God reveals to Abraham the general description of the borders of the promise land which later is elaborated upon when the nation of Israel conquered the enemy in Canaan some four hundred years after the time of the Patriarchs.

Why was Canaan chosen as the Promise Land?

It was neither a mistake nor chance that Canaan, the crossroads of the ancient world, was chosen to be the dwelling place of Israel. There is nothing particularly inviting about Canaan simply as real estate. To be sure, the Book of Joshua records that when the spies surveyed the land, they returned and reported that it was a rich land flowing with milk and honey. Idyllic descriptions of the land are common throughout the Pentateuch. Certainly, there were fertile areas in Canaan at the time of the conquest, and undoubtedly the land was more inviting then than it is today. But overall the climate of Canaan, then as now, was semi-arid and the ground is extremely rocky. Agriculturally, then this land was not seen as being prosperous.

But God's choice of Canaan as a land for Abraham was intentional and central to the redemptive mission for which Abraham was chosen. What was important about this particular piece of real estate was its geographic relationship to other lands. It was a doorway to the world, on the way to everywhere else. Bounded by the Mediterranean to the west and the vast expanse of the Arabian Desert to the east, Canaan is a natural bottleneck between Asia Minor, Asia, and Africa. It is no wonder that Canaan is the most travelled, most disputed, most fought over, and most conquered land in the history of the world.

Located astride the major trade route between Asia Minor, Asia, and Africa, the land of Canaan was ideally situated to serve as a focusing point for cultural exchange. It was God's intention that Canaan would serve as a staging area for the spreading of the Gospel to the heathen nations that surrounded Israel. When God spoke of the Promised Land, in His plan, was the central focus of the Bible, the salvation of mankind.

When we read the Book of Acts we see evidence of this act. The Early Church when they were persecuted by Saul, "...fled into Judea and Samaria" (Acts 8:1). Acts 8:4 says, "But the believers who had fled Jerusalem went everywhere preaching the Good News about Jesus."

When Saul was converted and began to preach He went on various missionary journeys. From the map below we can see how the position of the land aided in easy spread of the Gospel.



Figure: Paul's missionary journeys 4

4. http://www.ephesuskusadasi.com/images/paul_s_missionary_journeys.jpg

THE PROMISE OF THE SEED (Genesis 12:2)

The promise of a "seed" is not new in Genesis 12. The seed promise began in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15) which extended hope to all mankind that the problem of sin would be dealt with, removed and done away with. As a means toward the fulfillment of that promise, God now focuses on a particular individual. He chooses one person out of the nations that had developed from Noah's son Shem. God was now going to keep His promise to raise a seed of the woman through the line of the Shemite, Abraham. This seed, stretching back through Shem to Noah, from Noah to Seth, and from Seth to Adam, would be the divine vehicle for bringing redemption to the world, a vehicle that would ultimately bring forth a Messiah, a Savior.

God promised Abraham that He would make a great nation out of him. Abraham, who was 75 years old and childless (Genesis 12:4) was promised many descendants. This promise was amplified in Genesis 17:6, where God promised that nations and kings would descend from the aged patriarch. This promise (which is later expanded in the Davidic covenant) would eventuate in the Davidic throne with Messiah's kingdom rule over the Hebrew people.

Physical Offspring:

In spite of the fact that Abraham's wife Sarah was barren (Gen. 11:27-32), God promised Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation, a nation whose numbers would be as numerous as the dust of the earth (Gen. 13:16; 28:14).

Has this promise been fulfilled? In the physical sense, this promise came to pass in the nation of Israel. From Abraham came the nation of Israel which were set apart from the other nations of the world by the sign of circumcision of their natural flesh (Genesis 17:10-11). Biblical evidence supports the fact that this promise has been fulfilled:

- Genesis 46:3 "I am God," the voice said, "the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will see to it that you become a great nation there."
- Deuteronomy 1:10 "The Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars!"
- Deuteronomy 10:22 "When your ancestors went down into Egypt, there were only seventy of them. But now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky"

- Hebrews 11:11-12 "It was by faith that Sarah together with Abraham was able to have a child, even though they were too old and Sarah was barren. Abraham believed that God would keep his promise. And so a whole nation came from this one man, Abraham, who was too old to have any children—a nation with so many people that, like the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore, there is no way to count them."

The Messiah:

Acts 3:24-26 "Starting with Samuel, every prophet spoke about what is happening today. You are the children of those prophets, and you are included in the covenant God promised to your ancestors. For God said to Abraham, 'Through your descendants all the families on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you people of Israel, to bless you by turning each of you back from your sinful ways."

Has this part of the promise been fulfilled?

The original promise of the line of Messiah was given in Gen.12:3 "And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed". In the book of Galatians we see that this promise was fulfilled when the Gentiles were accepted into the kingdom. "What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would accept the Gentiles, too, on the basis of their faith. God promised this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you." (Galatians 3:8)

The promise of the Messiah to Abraham was not only promised in the covenantal relationship, but the role of Jesus, the Messiah in terms of His substitutionary death was explicitly defined to Abraham typologically when he offered up his son Isaac (Genesis 22:1-10, 13). Though the covenant had already been given in the early chapters of the book of Genesis, this account gives a greater understand of how the Seed would bring a blessing to the nations of the world. It is through this type – the Lamb – that we see that the blessing of salvation can be received by all.

Spiritual Offspring:

Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—Jews first and also Gentiles."

Acts 2:39 "This promise is to you and to your children, and even to the Gentiles—all who have been called by the Lord our God."

The goal of the seed promise goes beyond the birth of Isaac, the child according to the promise. It even goes beyond the birth of the nation of Israel (the larger concern of the Book of Genesis). It is through Abraham and his descendants that God plans to bring redemptive blessing to all the nations of the world, and that that redemption takes place only in Jesus Christ.

Abraham's immediate concern, when he received the promise, was not the Messiah. It is clear, from the rest of the chapter, that Abraham received the promise as a promise of reproductive fertility. What he heard was that he was going to be a father. He did not see Jesus; he saw Isaac. Yet the seed promise in Genesis 12 is more than merely a promise of reproductive fertility. God promised not merely that Abraham would be a father, that a seed would come from him, but that he would be the father of a nation.

- A nation is more than just people, a mere collection of individual persons, persons who share a common ancestor.
- A nation is a people bound together by geography, speech, religion, and culture.
- A nation is characterized by common descent, history, and experience.
- A nation shares a common political structure.
- A nation has a recognizable character and presence in the world beyond its individual citizens, a character that gives identity to its individual members, and in terms of which those members are known by others.

In short, a nation is a cultural force within the world. Abraham would be more than a father. He would be the progenitor of a political, cultural, and religious entity that would stand for the kingdom of God in the world.

By this calling of Abraham, God began the business of nation building, the formation of a nation that, unlike the people of Babel who sought a human presence without God, this nation would derive its character and reason for being from the redemptive purpose of God. Four key elements of nationhood appear here.

- With the seed promise, God inaugurates a common people, a population.
- The Abrahamic covenant also designates a territory, a geographical location.

- This covenant also indicates implicitly the new nation's leadership, some person or group who will provide direction and governance. As the Lord of the covenant, as the speaker of the divine word and King of creation, as Abraham's Redeemer, Yahweh himself is King over the nation that will come from Abraham's loins.
- Finally, God will furnish this nation a common rule, or constitution. Abraham and his descendants are called to walk in the way of the Lord, to keep covenant (Gen. 17:9; 18:19). The specifics of this rule will await its expression in the law at Sinai.

This nation that would come forth as part of the spiritual offspring spoken of in the "seed" would come as a result of the circumcision of the heart through Christ. Romans 4:16-17 "So that's why faith is the key! God's promise is given to us as a free gift. And we are certain to receive it, whether or not we follow Jewish customs, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who brings into existence what didn't exist before." Galatians 3:29 "And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and now all the promises God gave to him belong to you."

The promise of a seed included:

- The promise of a son (Genesis 15:3-4). We see the fulfilment of this promise in the birth of his son, Isaac (Genesis 18)
- A multitude of nations (Genesis 17:4). We see the fulfilment of this in the establishment of the nation of Israel.
- A group of kings (Genesis 17:6). We see the fulfilment of this in the life of David, Samson, the kings of Judah and eventually in the King of Kings, Jesus Christ.
- An eternal seed (Genesis 17:7). We see the beginning of this fulfilment in the book of Acts where Jews and Gentiles alike were being added into the Kingdom of God. Acts 2:42 "They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, sharing in the Lord's Supper and in prayer." Acts 8:27 "So he did, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship,..." Acts 10:1-2 "In Caesarea there lived a Roman army officer named Cornelius, who was a captain of the Italian Regiment. He was a devout man who feared the God of Israel, as did

his entire household. He gave generously to charity and was a man who regularly prayed to God." Acts 10:24 "They arrived in Caesarea the following day. Cornelius was waiting for him and had called together his relatives and close friends to meet Peter." We continue to see the fulfillment of this in the growth of the kingdom of God as people come to believe in Christ Jesus and are added into the kingdom.

THE PROMISE OF BLESSINGS (Genesis 12:3)

God promised to bless Abraham and the families of the earth through him. This promise is amplified in the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31) and has to do with "Israel's spiritual blessing and redemption."

The blessings of Genesis 12:2-3 can be seen as:

- The blessing of a great reputation (Genesis 12:2). This blessing can be seen in the defeat of the four kings in Genesis 14 and his association with Abimelech (Genesis 21:22). The greatest fulfillment of this promise is that of Abraham's name being forever preserved in the Bible and of his being referred to the father of faith.
- The blessing of protection (Genesis 12:3; 15:1). This blessing was demonstrated by his association with three people that provided some level of military protection: Mamre (Genesis 14:13), Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20) and Abimelech (Genesis 21:22-23). It is also demonstrated in his deliverance while in Egypt (Genesis 12) and in Gerar (Genesis 20).
- The blessing of a great reward (Genesis 15:1). Hebrews 11:10 "Abraham did this because he was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God." Rev. 21:2 "And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a beautiful bride prepared for her husband."
- The blessing of a long peaceful life (Genesis 15:15). The fulfillment of this is seen in Genesis 25:8 "and he died at a ripe old age, joining his ancestors in death..."
- The blessing in every way. Genesis 24:1 "Abraham was now a very old man, and the Lord had blessed him in every way." Genesis 24:35 "And the Lord has blessed my master richly; he has become a great man. The Lord has given him flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, a fortune in silver and gold, and many servants and camels and donkeys."

THE PROMISES REPEATED:

The promises that God made with Abraham were repeated to Abraham's son, Isaac and his grandson, Jacob.

Land:

Promises to Isaac	Promises to Jacob
Genesis 26:3 "Do as I say, and stay here in this land. If you do, I will be with you and bless you. I will give all this land to you and your descendants, just as I solemnly promised Abraham, your father."	Genesis 28:13 "At the top of the stairway stood the Lord, and he said, 'I am the Lord, the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of your father, Isaac. The ground you are lying on belongs to you. I will give it to you and your descendants.' Genesis 28:15 "What's more, I will be with you, and I will protect you wherever you go. I will someday bring you safely back to this land. I will be with you constantly until I have finished giving you everything I have promised."

Seed:

Promises to Isaac	Promises to Jacob
Genesis 26:4 "I will cause your descendants to become as numerous as the stars, and I will give them all these lands...." Genesis 26:24 "where the Lord appeared to him on the night of his arrival. 'I am the God of your father, Abraham,'" he said. "Do not be afraid, for I am with you and will bless you. I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will do this because of my promise to Abraham, my servant."	Genesis 28:13-14 "...I will give it to you and your descendants. Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth! They will cover the land from east to west and from north to south. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants."

Blessings:

Promises to Isaac	Promises to Jacob
Genesis 26:3 "Do as I say, and stay here in this land. If you do, I will be with you and bless you..."	Genesis 27:28 "May God always give you plenty of dew for healthy crops and good harvests of grain and wine."
Genesis 26:4 "...And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed."	Genesis 32:29 ""What is your name?" Jacob asked him. "Why do you ask?" the man replied. Then he blessed Jacob there."
Genesis 26:13-14 "He became a rich man, and his wealth only continued to grow. He acquired large flocks of sheep and goats, great herds of cattle, and many servants. Soon the Philistines became jealous of him,"	

These promises that were received in Genesis 12 were not only for Abraham, but were for all his heirs, both physical and spiritual. We therefore can also partake of these blessings:

Galatians 3:29 "And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and now all the promises God gave to him belong to you."

THE NAME CHANGE

Genesis 17:5 "What's more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram; now you will be known as Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations."

Genesis 17:15 "Then God added, "Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai; from now on you will call her Sarah."

Part of the covenant promises that God made with Abraham was that of a name change. Abram went from being called Abram ("exalted father") to Abraham ("father of many"). Sarah's name changed, from Sarai to Sarah (17:15). As Abraham was called "the father of many nations" (17:4), Sarah was called "the mother of nations" (17:16).

Why did God change their names?

- To show them they had a new identity. The two letters in the middle of their new names (Ab**rah**am, Sar**ah**) were two of the primary letters in the Hebrew name for God Y**AH**WEH. By receiving this name change they were now being identified with God. When we are born again, we too experience this change in identity (Revelations 3:12, Isaiah 56:5, 62:2, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21)
- To show them that their destiny had changed. The difference between Abram and Abraham is the change of destiny that heralds the unprecedented blessing of God. Abraham's name change showed him that he and his wife were destined for a new mission in life. The new name was a way to let them in on the divine plan and also to assure them that God's plan would be fulfilled in them.
- To assure them that the promise would come to pass. Every time that Abraham was called his name was a reminder of God's promise that he would be a father of many nations. Therefore by changing his name God was assuring them that God's divine plan would be fulfilled in and through their lives.

When the covenant was repeated to Jacob, we see that some name changes take place:

- Jacob's name was changed from Jacob to Israel (Genesis 32:28)
- The name of the place Luz was changed to Bethel (Genesis 28:19)
- The name of the place was changed from Peniel to Bethel (Genesis 32:30)

SIGNS

The structure of the 17th chapter of Genesis can clearly be divided into three parts:

- God's part in the covenant was characterized by blessing Abraham (Genesis 17:3-8)
- Abraham's part in the covenant was to be circumcised, the sign of the covenant (Genesis 17:9-14)
- Sarah's part was to bring forth the seed through childbirth (Genesis 17:15-16)

Genesis 17:11 "the flesh of his foreskin must be cut off. This will be a sign that you and they have accepted this covenant."

Acts 7:8 "God also gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision at that time. And so Isaac, Abraham's son, was circumcised when he was eight days old. Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob was the father of the twelve patriarchs of the Jewish nation."

Circumcision was to be the sign of the covenant that God made with Abraham.

WHAT DID CIRCUMCISION IMPLY?

To be part of a family:

The first major implication we may note is the communal aspect, or horizontal dimension of the sign. To receive this sign made one part of the Abrahamic family, the covenant community. The key issue was that circumcision became an outward way of identifying one who made a conscious decision to commit to God. The special blessings which were attached to the covenant were only available to those in the covenant. Thus, it was necessary that all under the household covering of Abraham be marked in this way (servants and livestock included). All males, both offspring of Abraham or hired servants were to be circumcised on the 8th day (Genesis 17:10-14).

Failure to adhere to the sign or seal of circumcision would constitute breaking the covenant and that individual male would be cut off from the people of promise. Although individuals could break the covenant and thereby be excluded from participation in the promises, individual failure could not nullify the unconditional nature of the covenant with other descendants of Abraham.

Separation and Consecration:

The word "circumcision" means to be "cut off" (Genesis 17:14). Circumcision represented consecration and dedication to God. "Circumcise yourselves to the LORD And remove the foreskins of your heart, Men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My wrath go forth like fire And burn with none to quench it, Because of the evil of your deeds" (Jeremiah 4:4).

IS CIRCUMCISION STILL RELEVANT TODAY?

The sign of the Abrahamic covenant as read in Genesis 17 was a physical sign that an individual was part of the house of Abraham and therefore part of the Abrahamic covenant. However, as we look at various scriptures in the Old Testament, it becomes clear that circumcision was not merely a physical act of obedience it showed a heart that was dedicated and consecrated to God.

- In Leviticus, God talks about Israel's future treachery and hostility towards Him, using the term "uncircumcised hearts" (Leviticus 26:40-41).
- Moses commands the people: "Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer" (Deuteronomy 10:16).
- At the giving of the Law, Moses says, "The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live" (Deuteronomy 30:6).
- Jeremiah called on the Israelites to "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, circumcise your hearts...." (Jeremiah 4:4) and mourned that "the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart" (Jeremiah 9:26).
- Stephen angered his enemies by calling them "stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears!" (Acts 7:51, referring to Deuteronomy 10:16).
- Paul wrote, "A man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code" (Romans 2:29).

Therefore when we look at the understanding of circumcision in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ we can conclude that physical circumcision is no longer necessary if we are to be a part of the covenant of Abraham. What is required is that an individual has a heart that is circumcised – a heart that is change and is no longer dedicated to sin but to following God.

SACRIFICE

Genesis 15:8-10 "But Abram replied, "O Sovereign Lord, how can I be sure that you will give it to me?" Then the Lord told him, "Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." Abram took all these and killed them. He cut each one down the middle and laid the halves side by side. He did not, however, divide the birds in half."

Genesis 15:12 "That evening, as the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep. He saw a terrifying vision of darkness and horror."

Genesis 15:17 "As the sun went down and it became dark, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses."

In the times of Abraham, covenants were sometimes agreed to by preparing a sacrifice, cutting it in two pieces and halving it exactly. The participants would lay the pieces out on the ground and then they would pass between the divided carcasses. In so doing they were symbolizing the seriousness of their intentions to keep the covenant, because the divided carcass represented what would happen to them if they did not keep their oaths. They were committing themselves to be cut in two if they broke their word. If either party did not keep that covenant, they were pledging their life (see Jeremiah 34:18-20). After they passed through, the carcass was burned, symbolizing their acceptance.

When we look at the sacrifice that was made by Abraham, what is interesting here in this case is that God is the only one shown passing between the divided carcass.

- First, this showed God's seriousness to meet the requirement of the covenant.
- Secondly, it showed that God was not holding either Abraham or his descendants to the same stringent requirement to the covenant as He held Himself. This promise therefore would be met by God's grace, and not by man's works.

When the covenant was repeated to Abraham's son, Isaac, Isaac built an altar, a place of sacrifice. Genesis 26:25 "Then Isaac built an altar there and worshiped the Lord. He set up his camp at that place, and his servants dug a well."

When the covenant was repeated to Jacob, he set up a memorial and later we see he gave a sacrifice. Genesis 28:18 "The next morning he got up very early. He took the stone he had used as a pillow and set it upright as a memorial pillar. Then he poured olive oil over it." Genesis 35:1-2 "God said to Jacob, "Now move on to Bethel and settle there. Build an altar there to worship me—the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother, Esau." So Jacob told everyone in his household, "Destroy your idols, wash yourselves, and put on clean clothing."

WHAT CHARACTER OF GOD WAS REVEALED IN THIS COVENANT?

Firstly, God is a Shield:

Genesis 15:1 "Afterward the Lord spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, "Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great."

The shield in ancient warfare was used for defense against the sword of the enemy and against rocks thrown from city walls. Here God shows Himself to be a means of defense, a way in which man can be preserved from danger. God was promising Abraham that He would preserve Abraham and the promise of His covenant so that it would come to pass. In spite of all the attempts that the devil made in order to stop the Seed from being destroyed, God protected it – He was the shield. When Pharaoh tried to kill all the boys under a certain age in Egypt, God provided protection (Exodus 1). When the King tried to kill all the infants during the time that Jesus was to be born, God was a shield around Mary and Joseph.

Secondly, God Elects

Abraham was elected by God to be the one through whom the Seed would come. Both the Old and the New Testament frequently portray God as making a sovereign choice. As we see in this covenant, God chose individuals who would be responsible in carry out His plan. He chose Abraham (Genesis 18:19), He chose Moses (Psalm 106:23) and David (1 Kings 8:16). He also chose Israel to be His people (Deuteronomy 7:6-8). The motivation for the choices that He made was because of love and mercy (Romans 9:16).

Thirdly, God Provides

Genesis 22:14 "Abraham named the place "The Lord Will Provide." This name has now become a proverb: "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."

The same place where Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac was the same mountain, Mount Moriah, where David built an altar and Solomon constructed the Temple. This would be the same place where Jesus would become a sacrifice for the sins of man. God had already made provision for man to be saved. The Bible says, Revelations 13:8 "...the Lamb who was killed before the world was made." Ephesians 1:4 "Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes." 1 Peter 1:20 " God chose him for this purpose long before the world began, but now in these final days, he was sent to the earth for all to see. And he did this for you."

Fourthly, a God of relationship

In revealing Himself as the God of Abraham, God was revealing Himself to be the God who desired to relate personally to man. God was to be known as a God not only of a nation (as we will see later, in Israel) but as a God who is personal and therefore a God who is moved to help, protect, bless and reward individuals. Therefore in scripture we see examples of God being called: the God of Abraham, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the God of Shardach, Meshak and Abednigo.

DOES THIS COVENANT EXIST TODAY?

To Abraham, God said, "I will continue this everlasting covenant between us, generation after generation. It will continue between me and your offspring forever. And I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you" (Genesis 17:7)

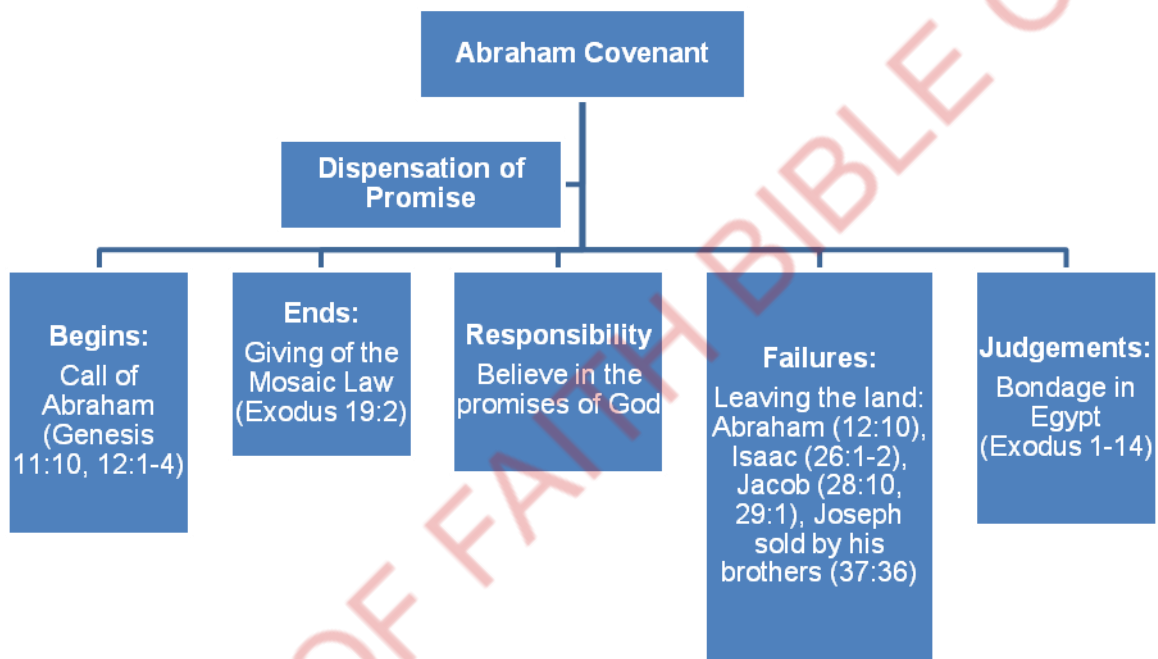
To Isaac, God said, "Do as I say, and stay here in this land. If you do, I will be with you and bless you. I will give all this land to you and your descendants, just as I solemnly promised Abraham, your father. I will cause your descendants to become as numerous as the stars, and I will give them all these lands. And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 26:3-4) "I am the God of your father, Abraham," he said. "Do not be afraid, for I am with you and will bless you. I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will do this because of my promise to Abraham, my servant." (Genesis 26:24)

To Jacob, God said, "I am the Lord, the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of your father, Isaac. The ground you are lying on belongs to you. I will give it to you and your descendants. Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth! They will cover the land from east to west and from north to south. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants" (Genesis 28:13-14)

The covenant that was made with Abraham was an everlasting covenant. Although originally this covenant was made between God and Abraham, in Genesis 17:7 we see that all those who are participants of the seed of faith, the seed of Abraham can receive the promises.

CHANGE IN DISPENSATIONS

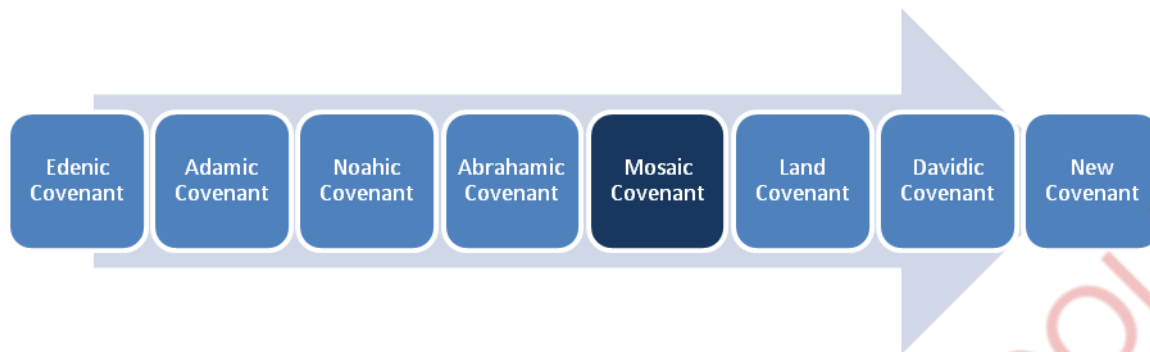
The covenant that was given to Abraham set the scene for a change in the dispensation of Human Government to that of the dispensation of Promise. The fourth dispensation, called the Dispensation of Promise, starts with the call of Abraham and includes the patriarchies and mostly ends with Moses and the exodus of the Jewish people out of Egypt, a period of some 430 years. This was God's method of developing a great nation that He had chosen to be His people.



ASSIGNMENT

Looking at both the Old and the New Testament, show examples of how both the Jews and the Gentiles have benefited from the promise of the Seed, the Messiah. What was the common element in the acceptance into this spiritual family? Was there a difference in what was required from the Jews and the Gentiles in order for them to be accepted into the beloved?

MOSAIC COVENANT



WHY WAS THIS COVENANT NECESSARY?

The Mosaic Covenant is a significant covenant in both God's redemptive plan and in the history of the nation of Israel.

For the nation of Israel

- A promise was given to set Israel apart: The Mosaic Covenant differed from the Abrahamic Covenant because in it God promised to make Israel “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). As a kingdom of priests this nation would minister to God (in the form that God had laid out in the Tabernacle) and they were to be ministers to the other nations. Israel was to be God's light to the dark world around them. As a holy nation, the people of Israel were to be a separate and called out nation so that everyone around them would know that they worshiped Yahweh, the covenant keeping God.
- A constitution was given: The Mosaic Law given at Mt. Sinai established boundaries for the land and a system of cities, courts, worship and welfare. Israel had a “constitution” given by God to direct her in her priestly service to the world. The family was strengthened as an institution by a gift of land that could not be taken away, by implicit limits on taxation, and by limits on the authority of the magistrates and priests. The law that was given was not only a set of rules that would govern their relationship with God, but it was also a health guide that was given to them to help live healthy long lives. For more information on this study the laws that are set forth in the book of Leviticus.
- Duties were explained: For the first time in history, the authority of priests and kings was clearly divided. The priesthood belonged to the tribe of Levi, no other tribe could legitimately assume the privileges granted to it. Prophets might be from any tribe, and, though only an occasional office, they had a special authority transcending priests or kings if necessary, though both

priests and kings too could be prophets. Kings would eventually come from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:8-12). From this point onward, no man could be both priest and king.

For the redemptive plan

The Mosaic Covenant contained the Mosaic Law that was to be a schoolmaster pointing the way towards the coming of Christ, the Promised Seed (Galatians 3:24-25, Genesis 3:15).

- The Mosaic Law would reveal to people their sinfulness and their need for a Savior. It was the Mosaic Law that Christ Himself said that He had not come to abolish but to fulfill.
- The sacrificial system of the Mosaic Covenant foreshadowed the bearing of sin by Christ, the perfect High Priest who was also the perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 9:11-28).
- The Tabernacle revealed to man the way that it was possible for sinful man to enter into the presence of God.

NAMES GIVEN TO THIS COVENANT

The Mosaic covenant was the covenant that was made with God, Moses and the nation of Israel. This covenant is also called the Sinai Covenant although it is mostly referred to as the Mosaic covenant since Moses was God's chosen leader at that time. Later on in scripture we also see that the Mosaic covenant is referred to as being the Old Covenant.

2 Corinthians 3:14 "But the people's minds were hardened, and even to this day whenever the old covenant is being read, a veil covers their minds so they cannot understand the truth. And this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ."

Hebrews 8:6 "But our High Priest has been given a ministry that is far superior to the ministry of those who serve under the old laws, for he is the one who guarantees for us a better covenant with God, based on better promises."

CONDITIONAL COVENANT

The Mosaic Covenant is a conditional agreement, which specifies the obligations of both parties to the covenant. Because of this, it differs somewhat from God's covenants to Noah (Genesis 6:18; 9:9, 11—17), Abraham (Genesis 15:18; 17:2, 4, 7—11, 13, 19, 21), and their descendants (Exodus 6:3—5) because the blessings that God promised were directly related to Israel's obedience to the Mosaic Law. If Israel was obedient then God would bless them, but if they were to disobey His precepts and laws, then God would punish them. The blessings and curses that were associated with this conditional covenant are found in detail in Deuteronomy 28.

This covenant, though conditional, was as equally binding as the unconditional covenant that God made with Abraham because it was also a blood covenant. It did not replace or annul the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant but rather served to set the nation of Israel apart from all other nations as the chosen people of God. It did not replace the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant, instead it placed stipulations on receiving the blessings promised by the covenant. Participation in the blessings was dependant on the keeping of the covenant.

Why was the covenant conditional?

Exodus 19:5-6 "Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the nations of the earth; for all the earth belongs to me. And you will be to me a kingdom of priests, my holy nation.' Give this message to the Israelites."

When God made covenant with the people, He used the words "if" thereby implying that the benefits that they were to receive from this covenant would be conditional to their obedience to the conditions implied. The covenant blessings were conditional on Israel's obedience to the law as given by God to Moses. God invited the people to "obey" His voice.

For the Israelites to "keep" this covenant relationship,

- they were to enter into it and agree to its terms, and
- they were to remain in it, fulfilling the requirements set forth.

Keeping the covenant meant entering into relationship with God and persevering in it. If the Israelites met these conditions and agreed to listen, obey and enter the covenant, then this relationship promised wonderful rewards. Israel's obedience to the law would bring manifold blessings from God in that the nation would prosper and thrive. Their disobedience to the law would bring discipline and judgment from God.

The Rewards of the Covenant Relationship

Exodus 19:5-6 "Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the nations of the earth; for all the earth belongs to me. And you will be to me a kingdom of priests, my holy nation.' Give this message to the Israelites."

- **....you will be my treasured possession:** The word "possession" doesn't seem like any special status, but in Hebrew, it is a highly significant word used of the treasure of kings (1 Chronicles 29:3, Ecclesiastes 2:8). These treasures were the kings' most valued possessions. God therefore when making this covenant with Israel said that the nation of Israel would become His most valued possession. Israel would be God's treasure chest, His special treasure.

Deuteronomy 7:6 "For you are a holy people, who belong to the Lord your God. Of all the people on earth, the Lord your God has chosen you to be his own special treasure."

Deuteronomy 26:18 "The Lord has declared today that you are his people, his own special treasure, just as he promised, and that you must obey all his commands.

- **....you will be for me a kingdom of priests:** Because every Israelite had been redeemed to a special status before God, the nation would be a kingdom of priests. Even though Israel would later be given priests from the tribe of Levi, they could not get away from the fact (in view of the Exodus event) that every Israelite stood out from all other peoples/nations in the eyes of God. Under the new covenant we too have been blessed with this reward. Peter writes about it in 1 Peter 2:5 "And now God is building you, as living stones, into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are God's holy priests, who offer the spiritual sacrifices that please him because of Jesus Christ."
- **....and a holy nation:** Because Israel belonged to God, it would be a holy nation. If Israel was to be a kingdom, it must have a king. This, of course, is the Lord, their royal suitor. The phrase "holy nation," which is in parallel construction, can be seen as an expansion of the phrase "kingdom of priests."

"Holy" means to be set apart for a special purpose. Under the new covenant we have been called to live separate. 1 Peter 2:15-16 "It is God's will that your good lives should silence those who make foolish accusations against you. You are not slaves; you are free. But your freedom is not an excuse to do evil. You are free to live as God's slaves."

What was the people's response to this conditional covenant?

Exodus 24:7 "Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They all responded again, "We will do everything the Lord has commanded. We will obey."

At the time of the covenant God reminded the people of their obligation to be obedient to His law (Exodus 19:5) and the people agreed to the covenant when they said; "All that the Lord has spoken we will do!" (Exodus 19:8).

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Exodus 19:1-8 "The Israelites arrived in the wilderness of Sinai exactly two months after they left Egypt. After breaking camp at Rephidim, they came to the base of Mount Sinai and set up camp there. Then Moses climbed the mountain to appear before God. The Lord called out to him from the mountain and said, "Give these instructions to the descendants of Jacob, the people of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians. You know how I brought you to myself and carried you on eagle's wings. Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the nations of the earth; for all the earth belongs to me. And you will be to me a kingdom of priests, my holy nation.' Give this message to the Israelites." Moses returned from the mountain and called together the leaders of the people and told them what the Lord had said. They all responded together, "We will certainly do everything the Lord asks of us." So Moses brought the people's answer back to the Lord.

See also Exodus 20:1 – 31:18, Deuteronomy 28

PARTIES

The Mosaic Law was a bilateral covenant made specifically for Israel alone to govern her life in the Promised Land. From the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12) we see Israel was a chosen nation, an instrument of God to become a channel of blessing to all nations. God was her Theocratic King who was to rule and guide the nation in her destiny that she might not become polluted or contaminated by other nations and could thus fulfill her purpose. For this the

Mosaic Law was instituted to direct Israel as a nation in all spheres of her life—morally, socially, politically, economically and religiously.

Exodus 19:3 "Then Moses climbed the mountain to appear before God. The Lord called out to him from the mountain and said, "Give these instructions to the descendants of Jacob, the people of Israel"

Exodus 20:22 "And the Lord said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: You are witnesses that I have spoken to you from heaven."

Exodus 24:3 "When Moses had announced to the people all the teachings and regulations the Lord had given him, they answered..."

PROVISIONS

The central theme of Exodus—Deuteronomy remains God's fulfillment of the promises that He had made to the Patriarchs. Woven together with this theme is that of the covenant which God establishes with the people of Israel, the key provisions being the Law. The Law contained the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5) and 603 additional commandments and laws which governed the religious, moral and civil affairs of the people. Of the 613 commandments in the Law, 365 were negative commandments (things which were forbidden), and 248 were positive commandments, things which should be done. The importance of the Law to this covenant is seen by the amount of writings devoted to it in the Pentateuch - about half of Exodus, most of Leviticus, the first part of Numbers and a portion of Deuteronomy.

Laws usually deal with a nation's social order and therefore tell how the citizens of the nation are to deal with one another. However in the laws that God gave to the nation of Israel, God not only told the people how they were to act towards each other but also included how they were to act towards Him. It is for this reason that from the outset of the provisions of the covenant that God provides the people with the Ten Commandments which can be divided into two main categories,

- man's relationship with God and
- man's relationship with one another.

This is the same division that Jesus speaks of when He gave the New Commandment. Matthew 22:37-40 "Jesus replied, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the other commandments and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

Through the Law that was given, God told the people of Israel how they were to live in harmony with Him. This was then the message of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5), the thrust of the civil law (Exodus 21-23) as well as of the rules for worship (Exodus 24-31).

It is common to divide the Mosaic Law into three parts as illustrated below:

- **The Moral Law or the Ten Commandments:** This part of the Law governed the people's moral life, giving guidance to Israel in principles of right and wrong in relation to God and man (Exodus 20:1-17)
- **The Judgments, or the Social Law:** This part of the Law governed Israel in her secular, social, political, and economic life (Exodus 21:1-23:13)
- **The Ordinances or the Ceremonial Law:** This was the religious portion of the Law which guided and provided for Israel in her worship and spiritual relationship and fellowship with God. It included the priesthood, tabernacle and sacrifices (Exodus 25:-31 and Leviticus)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM

As we have seen in the other covenants that have already been discussed, the sacrificial system was important to God. Now however, like never before, we see a greater impact on the importance of the sacrificial system. Through the book of Leviticus we see that God established five specific offerings which were to be done by the nation of Israel at various times of the year. These sacrifices are summarized as follows:

Burnt Offering (Leviticus 1:1-17)	Grain Offering (Leviticus 2:1-16)	Peace Offering (Leviticus 3:1-17)	Sin Offering (Leviticus 4:1-5:13)	Guilt Offering (Leviticus 5:14-6:7)
•This spoke of atonement (1:4) •Being accepted before the Lord (1:3) •The offering had the effect of removing and nullifying the effects of sin and averting God's wrath. •It spoke of relationship restoration •This sacrifice was offered whole on the altar (the skin being the priests portion)	•No atonement was necessary for this offering. •This offering was a gift to God as a result of inner worship. •This was a bloodless sacrifice. Salt and oil had to be used and no leaven or honey was to be used.	•No atonement was necessary. •There were three reasons for giving this offering - thanksgiving (7:12), making a vow to God (7:16), or giving a freewill offering (7:16). •The offerer was under no obligation to make this offering •Part of this offering was waved before the Lord	•Atonement was given - blood shed and forgiveness was secured. •This offering was to atone for the unwitting sins of individuals (4:2) or of the nation (4:13). •No restitution was necessary because of the nature of the sin	•Atonement was made •This offering was made for the sins in which restitution was required

Why was the sacrificial system important?

Leviticus 17:11 "for the life of any creature is in its blood. I have given you the blood so you can make atonement for your sins. It is the blood, representing life, that brings you atonement"

The key element of the Mosaic Law was the blood sacrifices. The word for atonement, "kippur" meant "covering". In the use of this word we see that through the blood that was sacrificed, the sins of the people were covered. The sacrifices made provision for the forgiveness of sins and the restoration of fellowship. However, the blood of animals never removed the sins nor took those sins away. It is only later through the sacrifice of the New Covenant that sins were removed. Only the blood of Messiah could remove sin and not only make atonement for sins, but also redemption.

The Hebrew writer says, "The old system in the law of Moses was only a shadow of the things to come, not the reality of the good things Christ has done for us. The sacrifices under the old system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship. If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time, and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared. But just the opposite happened. Those yearly sacrifices reminded them of their sins year after year. For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Hebrews 10:1-4).

SIGN

Circumcision:

Exodus 12:48-49 "'If there are foreigners living among you who want to celebrate the Lord's Passover, let all the males be circumcised. Then they may come and celebrate the Passover with you. They will be treated just as if they had been born among you. But an uncircumcised male may never eat of the Passover lamb. This law applies to everyone, whether a native-born Israelite or a foreigner who has settled among you."

The initial sign of the covenant was the same sign as that given in the Abrahamic Covenant – circumcision. The Law reaffirmed the practice of circumcision (Leviticus 12:3), but not for the same reasons. Under the Abrahamic Covenant, circumcision was the sign of the covenant, and it was mandatory for Jews only. Under the Mosaic Covenant, circumcision meant submission to the Law of Moses, and it was mandatory not only for all Jews, but also for Gentiles who wished to become part of the nation of Israel. That is why Paul warned the

Galatian believers, that if they got circumcised, they would be obliged to keep the whole Law, and not just this one commandment (Galatians 5:3).

Sabbath:

Exodus 31:16-17 "The people of Israel must keep the Sabbath day forever. It is a permanent sign of my covenant with them. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, but he rested on the seventh day and was refreshed."

Ezekiel 20:12 "And I gave them my Sabbath days of rest as a sign between them and me. It was to remind them that I, the Lord, had set them apart to be holy, making them my special people."

The continuing sign of the covenant is that of the observance of the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath was a sign between God and Israel that Israel had been set apart by God. (Exodus 31:12-17); it was a memorial of the Exodus (Deuteronomy 5:12-15); and it was a declaration or certificate that Jehovah was Israel's God (Ezekiel 20:10-12).

SACRIFICE

Exodus 24:4-8 "Then Moses carefully wrote down all the Lord's instructions. Early the next morning he built an altar at the foot of the mountain. He also set up twelve pillars around the altar, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent some of the young men to sacrifice young bulls as burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord. Moses took half the blood from these animals and drew it off into basins. The other half he splashed against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They all responded again, "We will do everything the Lord has commanded. We will obey." Then Moses sprinkled the blood from the basins over the people and said, "This blood confirms the covenant the Lord has made with you in giving you these laws."

Half of the blood of the sacrifice that was made at the foot of the mountain was splashed onto the altar whilst the other half was placed into basins. This blood was then sprinkled on the people after the children of Israel had made the agreement to follow the Law of God. In doing so, Moses sealed and confirmed the conditional covenant.

Remember in the Abrahamic Covenant, God was the only one who ratified the covenant. Abraham was asleep and could not agree to fulfill any part of that covenant. In this way God was the one totally responsible (and capable) of fulfilling this unconditional covenant with Abraham and his seed. In the Mosaic covenant we see that the covenant is ratified with the people of Israel and

God. The reason for this is that the blessings of the covenant were dependent upon the children of Israel fulfilling their part in the covenant.

HOW WAS GOD REVEALED IN THIS COVENANT?

Firstly, God is revealed as being Holy

The holiness of God is clearly seen in the fact that God called out Israel to be a people who were unlike any other nations of the earth. They were given a strict code of conduct, of how to relate to others and even how they were to relate to God as a means by which they would be able to live differently – how they would be able to be set apart. Their conduct, though appearing strange to some, was a means by which they could be distinguished from the other nations of the earth. Because God is holy He desired that His people become holy. Leviticus 19:2 “Say this to the entire community of Israel: You must be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.”

They were to be holy simply because God Himself was holy. It was the responsibility of the priests to “...distinguish between what is holy and what is ordinary, what is ceremonially unclean and what is clean. And you must teach the Israelites all the laws that the Lord has given through Moses.” (Leviticus 10:10-11).

Secondly, God is revealed as the Lawgiver

Isaiah 33:22 “For the Lord is our judge, our lawgiver, and our king. He will care for us and save us.”

The Laws of God functioned as a revelation of His goodness and His moral character. They were to be a means by which the people could be guided and if obeyed could result in the nation of Israel being partakers of the blessing of God.

The word “law” simply means, “teachings” or “instructions” and therefore has a far greater meaning than merely that God was the Giver of the Ten Commandments. As the Lawgiver He instructs and teaches people on how to live right before Him and towards man. This speaks of all His instructions and not merely the Law given on Mount Sinai. It is the instructions of God that Solomon writes and says, “But all who listen to me will live in peace and safety, unafraid of harm.” (Proverbs 1:33) Proverbs 2:1-5 “My child, listen to me and treasure my instructions. Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight and understanding. Search for them as you would for lost money

or hidden treasure. Then you will understand what it means to fear the Lord, and you will gain knowledge of God."

DOES THIS COVENANT EXIST TODAY?

The Mosaic Covenant no longer exists. Several passages of Scripture clearly establish that the coming of Christ has brought an end to the Mosaic Law. Paul specifically states that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4). The Greek word for "end" is *telos* which can mean either "termination", or "goal".

The book of Hebrews demonstrates that the old covenant of the Mosaic Law was only temporary and has been replaced by the coming of Christ whose ministry is based on a better priesthood, one after the order of Melchizedek which is superior to Aaron's, and a better covenant with better promises (see Hebrews 7-10).

Romans 7:5-6 declares that the believer has been discharged from the Law. The Greek word is *katargeo* which means "to render inoperative". The Law has been rendered inoperative insofar as being the rule of life over the believer.

The Law was never meant to be a permanent administration, but a temporary one. Galatians 3:19 states that the Law was added because of transgressions, till the Seed come to whom the Promise had been made. Added to what? To the Abrahamic Covenant, referred to in Galatians 3:15-18. It was added for the purpose of making sin very clear so that all will know that they have fallen short of God's standard of righteousness. It was added temporarily until the Seed (Messiah) should come, and now that He has come, the Law is finished. The addition ceased to function with the Cross. With the Messiah, there is a new priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek, not according to the Order of Aaron.

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW?

Though given to Israel to govern her life in the promise land for blessing instead of cursing, there was an attendant purpose in the giving of the Mosaic Law to Israel—a purpose that still stands today. Simply put, its proper use is to show man his total helpless and hopeless condition before a righteous and just God.

It was given as a tutor:

Galatians 3:24-25 "Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian and teacher to lead us until Christ came. So now, through faith in Christ, we are

made right with God. But now that faith in Christ has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian."

It was given to identify sin and reveal man's sin and bankrupt condition as guilty before God

God's holy Law reveals to man just who and what he is—sinful and separated from God by an infinite gulf that he is unable to bridge in his own human strength. The Law was never given to save people. The purpose of the Law was to show people that they can never save themselves.

Romans 3:19-20 "Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses and to bring the entire world into judgment before God. For no one can ever be made right in God's sight by doing what his law commands. For the more we know God's law, the clearer it becomes that we aren't obeying it."

Romans 7:12-14 "But still, the law itself is holy and right and good. But how can that be? Did the law, which is good, cause my doom? Of course not! Sin used what was good to bring about my condemnation. So we can see how terrible sin really is. It uses God's good commandment for its own evil purposes. The law is good, then. The trouble is not with the law but with me, because I am sold into slavery, with sin as my master."

It was given to reveal the holiness of God.

The Mosaic Law revealed the righteousness, holiness, and goodness of God.

Leviticus 11:44-45 "After all, I, the Lord, am your God. You must be holy because I am holy. So do not defile yourselves by touching any of these animals that scurry along the ground. I, the Lord, am the one who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God. You must therefore be holy because I am holy."

Leviticus 19:2 ""Say this to the entire community of Israel: You must be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy."

Leviticus 20:7 "So set yourselves apart to be holy, for I, the Lord, am your God."

WHY DID THE LAW FAIL?

Hebrews 8:7 "If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it."

The failure of the old covenant was not based on anything that God had done, nor on the promises that He had made to the people. The failure of the Old Covenant was based on the efforts of man. The Ten Commandments were the basis for the agreement. The people promised to keep that law, and God promised to bless them in return. The crucial weakness in the whole arrangement revolved around the way Israel promised. There was no suggestion that they could not fully conform to every requirement of God. Neither was there any application for divine assistance. "We can do it," they insisted. Here is a perfect example of leaning on the flesh and trusting human strength. The words are filled with self-confidence. "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." Were they able to keep that promise? In spite of their repeated assurances, they failed miserably and broke their word before Moses could even get off the mountain with the tables of stone (see the incident with the golden calf). Therefore the reason for the failure was that it was based on the works of man to receive the promises of God.

CHANGE IN DISPENSATION

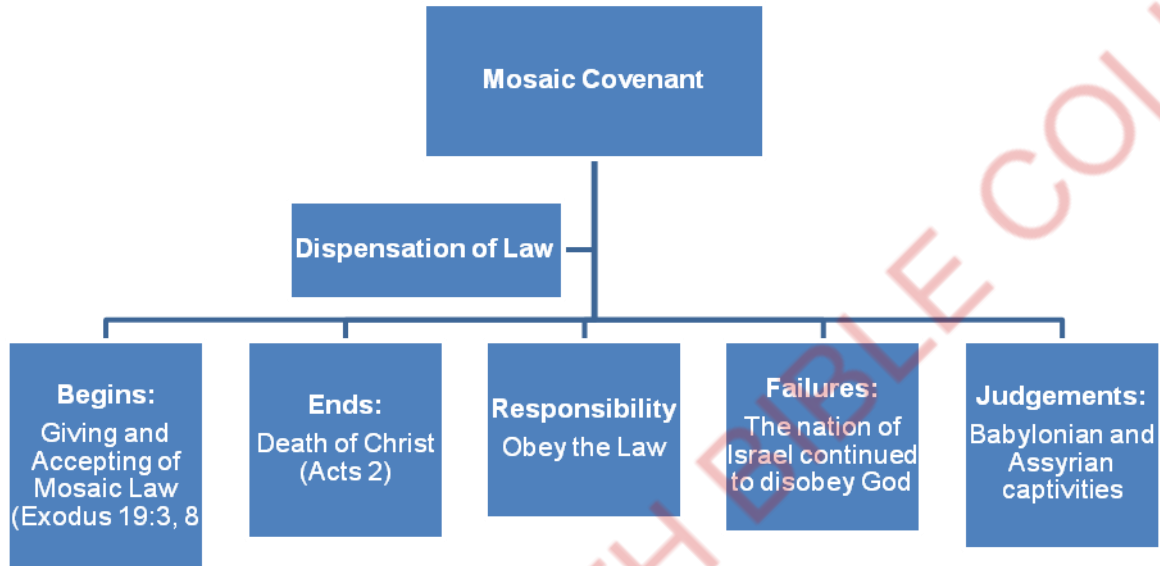
The Dispensation of Law focused on the nation of Israel. Through this dispensation we see God revealing His grace to Israel in two ways:

Firstly, in the sacrificial system: The sacrificial system was provided because the nation of Israel was not able to keep all 613 commandments. Whenever an individual Jew failed to keep a commandment, the sacrificial system could cover him and restore him as an individual sinner. Note: The sacrificial system could not take away sin, and therefore could not save anyone. No Jew was ever saved by merely bringing a sacrifice to the Tabernacle or the Temple. As in every Dispensation, salvation was by grace through faith. His faith was the element that saved him. But his faith had to have content. The content of faith in the Dispensation of Law was the sacrificial system. When he brought his sacrifice to the altar, he had faith that by the shedding of the animal's blood, his sin would be covered, and he would be restored to fellowship with God.

Secondly, in the provision of judges, kings and prophets: As a consequence to the disobedience of the nation, God raised up kings from the surrounding nations. These kings placed Israel in captivity and oppressed them for various periods of time. Only when Israel returned to God and repented did God raise up a judge who would act to deliver Israel. These judges then ruled over the nation and during this time was able to ensure that the nation lived right before God (see the Book of Judges). Righteous kings were provided to give them a kingdom of righteousness and justice. However in the latter years of the kings of both Israel and Judah, these kings failed to bring a righteous standard and therefore God raised up prophets who were responsible in expounding the Law,

BIBLICAL COVENANTS

calling the people back to obedience, reminding them of where they had failed, and summoning them to repentance.

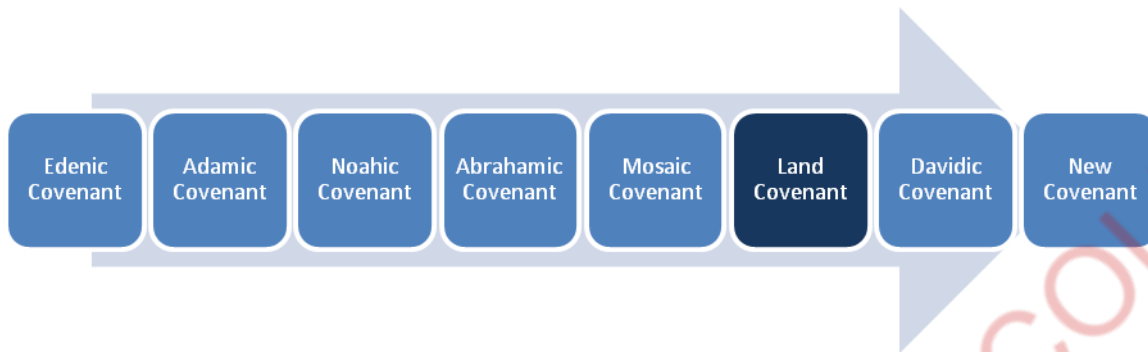


ASSIGNMENT

According to your understanding of the Old Covenant having been abolished and fulfilled through the life of Christ, do you feel that as believers we still need to observe the Sabbath? Won't this mean that we are being like the Galatians who were still insisting on circumcision? In an essay discuss your point of view in this regard. Keep in mind the following:

- What was the Sabbath and how did the people of Israel "observe" it?
- What is the benefit of the Sabbath? Did the keeping of the Sabbath in the Old Testament have a different meaning to that of the New Testament? What were these differences?
- Did Jesus observe the Sabbath in the same manner as that as those who were under the Law?
- Did any of the New Testament writers refer to the importance of the Sabbath or the gathering together on the Sabbath?
- When did the people of the early church meet together? Was it only on the Sabbath?
- What are the importance of the Local Church and the membership of the local church? Do you believe that as Christians we need to attend weekly?

THE LAND COVENANT



WHY WAS THIS COVENANT NECCESARY?

The special importance of the Land Covenant is that it confirms the title deed to the Land as belonging to Israel. Although Israel would be unfaithful and disobedient to God, her right to the Land would never be taken away from her.

The Land Covenant showed that the Mosaic Covenant (which was conditional) did not replace the Abrahamic Covenant (which was unconditional). The Land Covenant was, in fact, an enlargement of the original Abrahamic Covenant. It amplified the Land aspect, and emphasized the promise of the Land to God's earthly Jewish people, in spite of their unbelief.

The Abrahamic Covenant teaches that ownership of the Land is unconditional. The Land Covenant teaches that the enjoyment of the Land is conditional on obedience. The Land Covenant was made with Abraham, and thus was linked with the Abrahamic Covenant. It was intended to be conquered during the Dispensation of Law that was covered by the Mosaic Covenant. However, Israel compromised with the people they were to judge, and thus never came into possession of all the territory promised to them. This Land was to be the territory ruled in the Davidic Kingdom, and is thus linked with the Davidic Covenant

UNCONDITIONAL COVENANT

In Deuteronomy 29, Moses warned Israel that if they didn't keep the law, that God would expel them from the land. The Mosaic covenant was a conditional covenant which required Israel to maintain obedience to God. In order for Israel to receive the blessing of God they were required to obey the Law. This meant that the continuing dwelling of the Israelites in the land was dependent upon their obedience.

The Abrahamic covenant is not conditional. In Genesis 17:8, it is clear that the land of Canaan is to be Abraham's family inheritance as an "everlasting possession". This would seem to contradict the conditional nature of the Mosaic covenant where disobedience would result in expulsion from the land. So here in this covenant Moses clarifies the unconditional nature of the covenant. The expulsion would only be temporary. God would eventually restore the land to Abraham's seed and fulfill the unconditional nature of the Abrahamic covenant (Deuteronomy 30:1-10).

This covenant guaranteed Israel's permanent right to the land. It is unconditional, as seen in the statements "God will," which was made without corresponding obligations. This covenant promised the ultimate return of Israel to the land in repentance and faith (v. 2) in circumstances wherein God would prosper them (v. 3)

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Deuteronomy 30:1-5 "Suppose all these things happen to you—the blessings and the curses I have listed—and you meditate on them as you are living among the nations to which the Lord your God has exiled you. If at that time you return to the Lord your God, and you and your children begin wholeheartedly to obey all the commands I have given you today, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes. He will have mercy on you and gather you back from all the nations where he has scattered you. Though you are at the ends of the earth, the Lord your God will go and find you and bring you back again. He will return you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will possess that land again. He will make you even more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors!"

Ezekiel 34:25-29 "'I will make a covenant of peace with them and drive away the dangerous animals from the land. Then my people will be able to camp safely in the wildest places and sleep in the woods without fear. I will cause my people and their homes around my holy hill to be a blessing. And I will send showers, showers of blessings, which will come just when they are needed. The orchards and fields of my people will yield bumper crops, and everyone will live in safety. When I have broken their chains of slavery and rescued them from those who enslaved them, then they will know that I am the Lord. They will no longer be prey for other nations, and wild animals will no longer attack them. They will live in safety, and no one will make them afraid. "And I will give them a land famous for its crops, so my people will never again go hungry or be shamed by the scorn of foreign nations."

Amos 9:14-15 "I will bring my exiled people of Israel back from distant lands, and they will rebuild their ruined cities and live in them again. They will plant vineyards and gardens; they will eat their crops and drink their wine. I will firmly plant them there in the land I have given them," says the Lord your God. "Then they will never be uprooted again."

PARTIES

The Palestinian or Land Covenant is recorded in Deuteronomy 29:1-29, 30:1-10, and was made between God and Israel right before Moses died and Israel entered the Promised Land. This covenant came after the Mosaic Covenant and after Israel had wandered in the wilderness for forty years until the generation that had refused to enter the Promised Land had passed away. God made this covenant with Israel while they were in Moab waiting to go into the Promised Land, and the covenant was to serve as a reminder that this new generation of Israelites had a special covenant relationship with God.

PROVISIONS

The Palestinian Covenant has many similarities to the Mosaic Covenant made at Mount Sinai but is a separate and distinct covenant as clearly seen in chapter 29:1 "These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb."

Before making this covenant with Israel, God reminded them that if they obeyed the Mosaic Law, He would bless the nation abundantly and warned them that disobedience to the Law would result in His cursing the nation (Deuteronomy 28). The Palestinian Covenant contained eight provisions and special promises to Israel that many believe will not be completely fulfilled until the millennial reign of Christ.

- Israel will repent (Deuteronomy 30:2)
- The Messiah will return (Deuteronomy 30:3)
- Israel will be regathered (Deuteronomy 30:3-4)
- Israel will possess the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 30:5)
- Israel will be regenerated (born again, saved). (Deuteronomy 30:6)
- The enemies of Israel will be judged (Deuteronomy 30:7)

- Israel will receive her full blessing, and specially the blessings of the Messianic Age. (Deuteronomy 30:8-20). This blessing will include possession of all the Promised Land (Genesis 12:1, 7; 13:14-15, 17; 15:17-21; 17:8.).

DOES THIS COVENANT STILL EXIST TODAY?

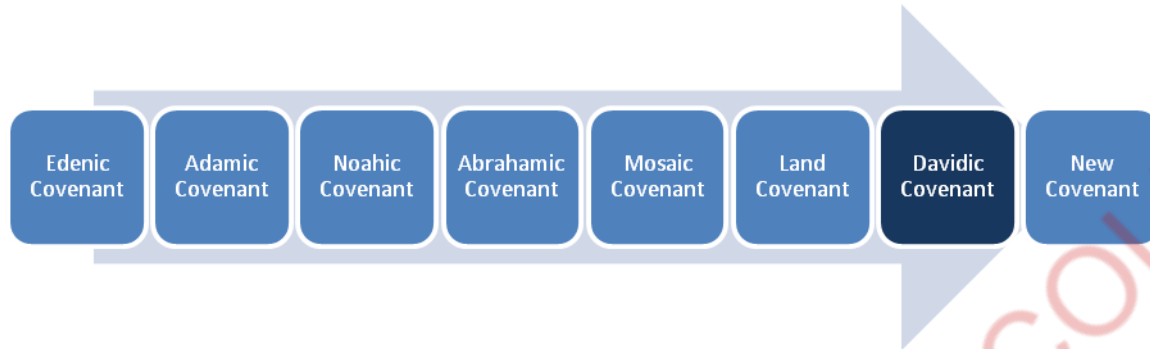
While some might see these promises being fulfilled when Israel was returned from captivity in Babylon at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, there seem to be some aspects of this covenant that has not been fully realized yet.

For example, the promised restoration of Israel to the land would not happen until all the blessings and curses promised them were fulfilled and we know that Israel as a nation rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah and was once again cursed and cut off from the land when the Romans conquered Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Second, we see that one of the promises in this covenant was that God would circumcise their hearts so that they and their descendents would obey Him.

Also, it seems that the final or ultimate restoration of Israel to the land and to an everlasting relationship with God is what Paul is looking forward to in Romans 11:25-26 when he says that "a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in and thus all Israel will be saved."

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT



WHY DID GOD MAKE THIS COVENANT?

In Genesis 17, God told Abraham that kings would descend from Sarah. Through this line we see the second king of Israel, David, coming forth. He desired to build the temple for the Lord, a house for God. God however forbid David from building Him a temple but instead gave him a promise that He would instead make David a house (2 Samuel 7:12). This house though would not be a physical structure but a family dynasty. David wanted to do something great for God and God responded by doing something great for him.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS COVENANT

This Covenant amplified the “Seed” aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant, just as the Land Covenant amplified the territorial aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant.

In the Adamic Covenant, the Messiah was to be the Seed of the Woman. That is, He would be a human being, and could potentially be from any part of humanity. Jesus fulfilled this in John 1:14 “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law ... (Galatians 4:4).

In the Abrahamic Covenant, the Messiah was to be of the Seed of Abraham. This merely meant that He would be a Hebrew, an Israelite, and could potentially be from any of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.” (Matthew 1:1,2)

Later, in the time of Jacob, the Seed was limited to be a member of the Tribe of Judah only (Genesis 49:10). In other words, the Messiah would be a Jew (the term used specifically for members of the Tribe of Judah). "I see Him, but not now; behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult." (Numbers 24:17)

The Davidic Covenant further narrowed the Messianic line to one family only within the Tribe of Judah, the family of David. "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isaiah 11:1). "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious" (Isaiah 11:10). "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth" (Jeremiah 23:5). "The LORD has sworn in truth to David; He will not turn from it: "I will set upon your throne the fruit of your body . . ." (Psalm 132:11). This line was further narrowed a bit in the time of Jeremiah. Jeremiah 22:24-30 states that Messiah would come from the House of David, but apart from Jeconiah.

UNCONDITIONAL COVENANT

1 Kings 9:5 "then I will establish the throne of your dynasty over Israel forever. For I made this promise to your father, David: 'You will never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel.'

2 Chronicles 21:7 "But the Lord was not willing to destroy David's dynasty, for he had made a covenant with David and promised that his descendants would continue to rule forever."

The Davidic Covenant is unconditional in nature. The fulfillment of its promises depended totally upon the faithfulness of God to His word. Nothing that David or any of his biological descendants would do could ever nullify the covenant's guarantee that a royal descendant of David would always be available to exercise his ruling authority when circumstances would so permit. Throughout Psalm 89, God used the personal pronoun "I" to confirm that He and He alone would bring to fruition the covenant promises (Psalm 89:1–4, 20–37).

The only reservation in this covenant centres on the chastisement of David's sons who would succeed him, but the covenant itself would never be abrogated. Though chastisement disrupted David's kingly line from the Babylonian Captivity until the birth of David's Greater Son, Jesus Christ, all the promises made in the covenant have been reaffirmed and will be re-established at Christ's Second Coming when He sets up His earthly Kingdom.

The Davidic Covenant is also unchangeable. It is based on the nature and character of God, who is immutable, meaning there is no variableness or change with Him. Thus the promises in the Davidic Covenant are immutable, since they were decreed by God. And they will come to fruition in the way and time that the Lord has predicted in Scripture.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

2 Samuel 7:8-16 "'Now go and say to my servant David, 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: I chose you to lead my people Israel when you were just a shepherd boy, tending your sheep out in the pasture. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies. Now I will make your name famous throughout the earth! And I have provided a permanent homeland for my people Israel, a secure place where they will never be disturbed. It will be their own land where wicked nations won't oppress them as they did in the past, from the time I appointed judges to rule my people. And I will keep you safe from all your enemies. 'And now the Lord declares that he will build a house for you—a dynasty of kings! For when you die, I will raise up one of your descendants, and I will make his kingdom strong. He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he sins, I will use other nations to punish him. But my unfailing love will not be taken from him as I took it from Saul, whom I removed before you. Your dynasty and your kingdom will continue for all time before me, and your throne will be secure forever.' "

The Davidic Covenant received further confirmation in a number of other passages:

- 2 Samuel 23:1-5;
- Psalm 89:1-52;
- Isaiah 9:6-9; 11:1;
- Jeremiah 23:5-6; 20:8-9; 33:14-17. 19:26;
- Ezekiel 37:24-25;
- Hosea 3:4-5;
- Amos 9:11;
- Luke 1:30-35, 68-70;
- Acts 15:14-18.

PARTIES

The parties of this covenant were God and David. David stood for the Davidic House and Dynasty.

PROVISIONS

The prophet Nathan revealed to David through prophecy the major provisions of the Davidic Covenant. They expand and develop the “seed” promise found in the Abrahamic Covenant.

God informed Abraham that Sarah would give birth to a son: Genesis 17:16 “And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings will be among her descendants!”

Genesis 17:19 “But God replied, “Sarah, your wife, will bear you a son. You will name him Isaac, and I will confirm my everlasting covenant with him and his descendants.”

Thus the promise would go through Isaac to Isaac’s son Jacob (Gen. 28:13–15), then be narrowed to the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10) and finally narrowed further to the house of David (2 Sam. 7:12).

Within the Davidic Covenant are four major promises.

House:

The first promise dealt with David’s house (physical descendants). David’s own son would sit on his throne as king of Israel after his death: 2 Samuel 7:12 “For when you die, I will raise up one of your descendants, and I will make his kingdom strong.” David’s son Solomon was God’s choice to succeed David as king (1 Kings 1:30).

Temple:

The second promise dealt with the temple David wanted to build for God. David was not allowed to build the Temple; but his son Solomon would: “He shall build an house for my name” (2 Sam. 7:13). This promise has both a near fulfilment and a distant fulfilment. The near fulfilment can be seen in the building of the temple by Solomon. The distant fulfilment can be seen in Jesus who builds the temple of His Body. Zechariah 6:13 “He will build the Lord’s Temple, and he will receive royal honor and will rule as king from his throne. He will also serve as priest from his throne, and there will be perfect harmony between the two.”

Throne:

The third promise dealt with the throne (royal authority) of David and Solomon. God said, "I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Samuel 7:13, 16). This promise was that Solomon's throne, not his seed, would be established forever. Christ did not come through Solomon's line, which was cutoff at Coniah (Jeconiah). God said of Coniah, "No man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah" (Jeremiah 22:30). Joseph, Jesus' legal father, was a direct descendant of Solomon, through whom the throne legally passed to Christ (Matthew 1:6, 16).

- The Lineage through Joseph:

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. (Matthew 1:1-17)

- The Lineage through Mary:

Christ was born of Mary, a direct descendant of David's son Nathan (Luke 3:23-31). Through Joseph, Jesus is a legal descendant of King David, and through Mary He is royalty by blood.

"Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God." (Luke 3:23:38)

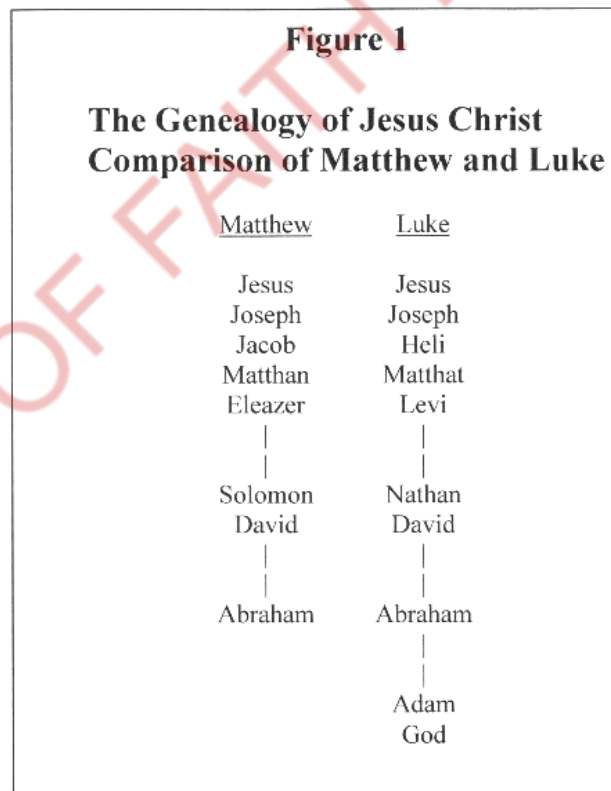


Figure: Genealogy of Jesus Christ (Suite 101.com)

Kingdom:

The fourth promise dealt with David's kingdom: 2 Samuel 7:16 "Your dynasty and your kingdom will continue for all time before me, and your throne will be secure forever."

This pledge did not guarantee that the rule of the Davidic family would be uninterrupted. Although David's kingdom had been inoperative for centuries, this promise, nevertheless, guarantees its existence forever.

David's kingdom was to be re-established at a time of God's choosing (Acts 1:6-7). This promise also guaranteed that no other family would ever displace David's line as the royal family of Israel

HOW WAS GOD'S CHARACTER REVEALED IN THIS COVENANT?

Firstly, God is seen as Father

The use of the term Father in the Old Testament is to show a founder of a guild, tribal or family line. When God called Himself the Father of David and Solomon (see 2 Samuel 7:14, 1 Chronicles 17:13, 22:10, 28:6), He was showing that it was He who had called David's royal line into being. God was therefore the founder and originator of David's line. He was the One responsible for its well being (Deuteronomy 1:31), the One who would bring discipline (Deuteronomy 8:5) and who would have mercy on His people (Psalm 103:13).

Secondly, God is seen as Almighty

The name "Almighty" comes from the Hebrew word, "sadday" coming from the root meaning "mountain". This term portrays God as the One who is exalted far above all human authority, the One who has control of the universe. Abraham knew God by this term when he was addressed in the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 17:1). The name "Almighty" is also linked with God's ability to fulfill His promises because He is above all.

DOES THIS COVENANT EXIST TODAY?

Scripture calls this covenant an eternal covenant and therefore it is still in existence:

2 Samuel 7:16 "Your dynasty and your kingdom will continue for all time before me, and your throne will be secure forever."

BIBLICAL COVENANTS

2 Samuel 23:5 ""It is my family God has chosen! Yes, he has made an everlasting covenant with me. His agreement is eternal, final, sealed. He will constantly look after my safety and success."

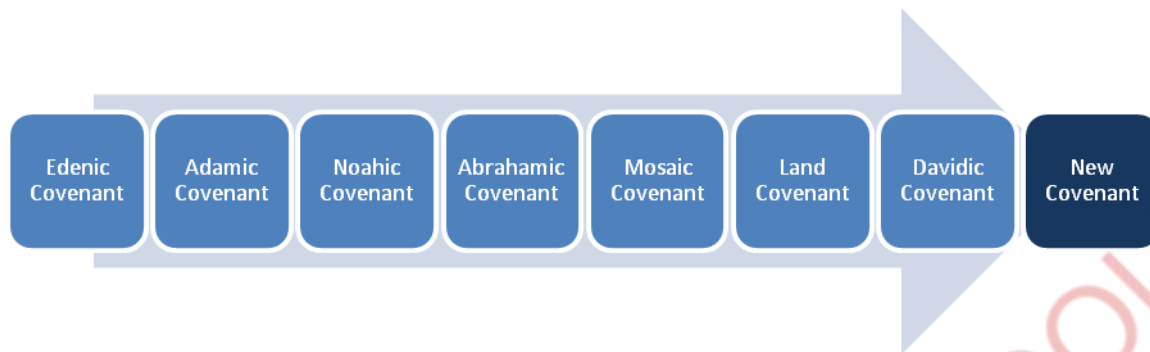
Isaiah 55:3 ""Come to me with your ears wide open. Listen, for the life of your soul is at stake. I am ready to make an everlasting covenant with you. I will give you all the mercies and unfailing love that I promised to David.

Ezekiel 37:25 "They will live in the land of Israel where their ancestors lived, the land I gave my servant Jacob. They and their children and their grandchildren after them will live there forever, generation after generation. And my servant David will be their prince forever.

ASSIGNMENT

Create a family tree to clearly reveal the genealogy of Jesus Christ from both the line of Joseph and Mary. Your chart (family tree) should include scripture.

THE NEW COVENANT



WHY WAS THIS COVENANT NECESSARY

The Old Covenant presented and ratified by the children of Israel during the days of Moses was a fair and good covenant. It faithfully laid out the duties of each party – blessings if the people obeyed and curses if the people disobeyed. God, knowing the nature of man, even set in place a sacrificial system whereby the people when they sinned could come and make atonement for their sins.

However, this old covenant became obsolete because of the people's inability to keep the law. In spite of the great motivation of obedience because of the blessings of prosperity, health, and safety, the Israelites failed over and over again to be obedient. The sins of the people therefore need to be covered time and time again by the sacrificial system that was in place. However, this system only covered their sins.

Therefore, the New Covenant was necessary because the Old Covenant failed to take away the sins of the people. The Old Covenant was ineffective. Hebrews 8:7 "If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it. But God himself found fault with the old one ..."

Why was the Law ineffective?

The Law was ineffective because the heart (mind, will, and emotions) of man is defective:

The heart of man does not naturally lean towards the Lord and His ways, but rather is full of self-interest. Jeremiah wrote "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds" (Jeremiah 17:9-10)

The Law is ineffective because the heart is unmoved by it.

The Law can reveal lawless behavior, but it is usually ineffective in changing behavior. The Law typically does not correct the heart; it only condemns the heart. One could say that Paul's words in Romans 7:7-25 are all about the defectiveness of the heart and the ineffectiveness of the Law to correct it.

The Law is ineffective because the heart gravitates to legalism and defeats the intent of the Law.

Legalism focuses on what is measurable in the Law. Meeting the requirements of such laws requires discipline and character, and in the meeting of the measure, the heart contents itself. The misfortune is that laws of measure do not get the heart right with God. See for example the rulers who were angry when Jesus healed on the Sabbath. They were more content to have the men and women sick than for Jesus to break the Law.

The Law is ineffective because the heart misuses the redemptive provisions in the Covenant of Law.

The blessings in the Old Covenant of Law did not demand perfect obedience. Instead, an entire system of blood sacrifice and offerings was erected to provide a covering for sin. Once a year, the high priest would take blood into the Holy of Holies to provide redemption for national guilt. In other words, the Law never required perfect obedience. However, the provision for covering tended to promote more sin. What God intended as a vehicle for His mercy, man distorted as a palliative for a guilty conscience. "'Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery and swear falsely, and offer sacrifices to Baal and walk after other gods that you have not known, then come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered!' — that you may do all these abominations? Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen it,' declares the Lord" (Jeremiah 7:9-11)

The Law is ineffective because the heart's deception and wickedness does not seek God by faith.

Faith is not a New Testament concept. Genesis 15:6 "And Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord declared him righteous because of his faith." Habakkuk 2:4 "'Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked; but the righteous will live by their faith."

The Law was to bring people to Christ

The purpose of the Law was there to bring a person to a knowledge of sin and condemn it (Romans 3:20, 7:7-13), but greater than that, the Law was there to bring us to Christ. Galatians 3:24-25 "Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian and teacher to lead us until Christ came. So now, through faith in Christ, we are made right with God. But now that faith in Christ has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian."

Hebrews 8:13 "When God speaks of a new covenant, it means he has made the first one obsolete. It is now out of date and ready to be put aside."

UNCONDITIONAL COVENANT

There are two things that can be said about the New Covenant. Firstly, the New Covenant is an unconditional covenant. This means that the fulfillment of the promises of the New Covenant would not depend upon the obedience of Israel or any man in fact. When God presented the promises of the New Covenant, instead of stating conditions for Israel, He continually said, "I will" (Jeremiah 31:31-34; 32:37-42; Ezekiel 36:24-37). This meant that the fulfillment of the promises of the New Covenant would be dependent totally upon God's faithfulness to His Word. God emphasized this fact when He said, "I, the LORD, have spoken it, and I will do it" (Ezekiel 36:36).

The second thing that can be said concerning the nature of the New Covenant is that God intended it to be an everlasting covenant. He specifically declared it to be everlasting in nature (Isaiah 61:8-9; Jeremiah 32:40; Ezekiel 16:60; 37:26).

The fact that God intended the New Covenant to be everlasting, together with the fact it would be unconditional in nature, meant that the New Covenant would never be abolished or annulled with or by Israel. What makes the New Covenant an unbreakable covenant is that the New Covenant is not based on our works any longer but it is based on Jesus' perfect works!

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Jeremiah 31:31-37 "'The day will come,'" says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife," says the Lord. "But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day," says the Lord. "I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will

be my people. And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their family, saying, 'You should know the Lord.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will already know me," says the Lord. "And I will forgive their wickedness and will never again remember their sins." It is the Lord who provides the sun to light the day and the moon and stars to light the night. It is he who stirs the sea into roaring waves. His name is the Lord Almighty, and this is what he says: "I am as likely to reject my people Israel as I am to do away with the laws of nature! Just as the heavens cannot be measured and the foundation of the earth cannot be explored, so I will not consider casting them away forever for their sins. I, the Lord, have spoken!"

Ezekiel 36:26-29 "And I will give you a new heart with new and right desires, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony heart of sin and give you a new, obedient heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so you will obey my laws and do whatever I command. "And you will live in Israel, the land I gave your ancestors long ago. You will be my people, and I will be your God. I will cleanse you of your filthy behavior. I will give you good crops, and I will abolish famine in the land."

Hebrews 8:8 "But God himself found fault with the old one when he said: 'The day will come, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah.'"

PARTIES

Under the Old Covenant, the parties of the covenant was the nation of Israel alone (Exodus 34:27-28, Deuteronomy 5:1-3, Ephesians 2:11-12). Now however when this new covenant is made, we see that God makes covenant with all the nations of the world.

Matthew 28:18-20 "Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Mark 16:15-20 "And then he told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere. Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak new languages. They will be able to handle snakes with safety, and if they drink anything poisonous, it won't hurt them. They will be able to place their hands on the sick and heal them." When the Lord Jesus had finished talking with them, he was taken up into heaven and sat down in the place of

honor at God's right hand. And the disciples went everywhere and preached, and the Lord worked with them, confirming what they said by many miraculous signs.

Acts 2:39 "This promise is to you and to your children, and even to the Gentiles—all who have been called by the Lord our God."

PROMISES

The promises of this New Covenant are numerous and are not only those that are specifically mentioned in the book of Jeremiah. However, we will be focusing on these promises as they are prophesied by Jeremiah:

A new heart:

Jeremiah 31:33 "But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day," says the Lord. "I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts."

Ezekiel 36:26 "And I will give you a new heart with new and right desires, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony heart of sin and give you a new, obedient heart."

God promised regeneration. This would involve the giving of a new heart (a new inner control center where the issues and direction of life are determined) and the new nature (a new favorable disposition toward God consisting of the law of God in the heart). Regeneration of the heart would lead to the outcome of having a desire to obey Him and having a right attitude toward Him forever.

Jeremiah 32:39-40 "And I will give them one heart and mind to worship me forever, for their own good and for the good of all their descendants. "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, promising not to stop doing good for them. I will put a desire in their hearts to worship me, and they will never leave me."

Ezekiel 36:27 "And I will put my Spirit in you so you will obey my laws and do whatever I command."

Ezekiel 37:23-24 "They will stop polluting themselves with their detestable idols and other sins, for I will save them from their sinful backsliding. I will cleanse them. Then they will truly be my people, and I will be their God. "My servant David will be their king, and they will have only one shepherd. They will obey my regulations and keep my laws."

A new relationship:

Jeremiah 31:33 "I will be their God, and they will be my people."

The context of this promise indicated that God was referring to a personal experiential knowledge of Himself (the kind of knowledge which comes through a genuine salvation experience), not just a head knowledge of His existence.

The presence of Jesus the Messiah on the earth revealed the Father and made Him known in an intimate way. For us to know Jesus is to know God. John 14:7 says, "If you had known who I am, then you would have known who my Father is. From now on you know him and have seen him!"

An ability to know God:

Jeremiah 31:34 "And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their family, saying, 'You should know the Lord.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will already know me," says the Lord."

The houses of Judah and Israel broke the Old Covenant. The first tenet of the New Covenant is that the Law would be within the people of God and that it would be written on their hearts. The Law would not be on tablets of stone or on the leather pages of a scroll. It would instead be an operating principle in the heart. Under the Old Covenant the forefathers forgot the Lord, but in the new, "they will all know me." When we have a personal relationship with God, reading His Word, living in obedience to Him and being ever mindful of His presence, it is hard to forget Him. The people under the Old Covenant forgot God because they did not continue to speak of God and therefore one generation to the next began to forget His precepts and therefore no longer had knowledge of Him. This will not be the case under the New Covenant. Here under this covenant people will relate intimately with Father God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Forgiveness of sin:

Under the Old Covenant, sin was remembered, but in the new, "I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more." (Jeremiah 31:34). Ezekiel 36:25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols."

The single most complete treatment of this aspect of the New Covenant is presented in Hebrews, chapters 8 through 10. In chapter 8, the writer clearly connects Jesus as the high priest and mediator of Jeremiah's New Covenant. In

chapter 9, he tells us how Jesus took His own blood into the holy place that is in heaven to provide an "eternal redemption." Chapter 10 contrasts the work of the Aaronic priesthood with the priesthood of Jesus. Throughout this section in Hebrews, the superiority of Jesus' sacrifice for sin is put forth. Through His sacrifice we not only received covering for our sins, but complete redemption

Colossians 2:11-14 "When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. It was a spiritual procedure—the cutting away of your sinful nature. For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to a new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins. He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross."

The indwelling of the Spirit:

Ezekiel 36:27 "And I will put my Spirit in you ..." This promise was further spoken of in the book of Joel when God said, "Then after I have poured out my rains again, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see visions. In those days, I will pour out my Spirit even on servants, men and women alike." (Joel 2:28-29).

The beginning of the fulfillment of this promise was seen on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and continues today as believers are baptized by the Holy Spirit.

God promised many national blessings to the people of Israel:

- He pledged that His Spirit and words would never depart from them (Isaiah 59:21),
- The nation would have a great reputation because of God's special blessing (Isaiah 61:8-9),
- Israel would have a unique relationship with Him as His special people (Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:28),
- God would do them good (Jeremiah 32:40-42),
- Wild beasts would be eliminated from their land (Ezekiel 34:25, 28),
- Israel would enjoy complete security in its land (Ezekiel 34:25-28),

BIBLICAL COVENANTS

- The nation would receive no more threats and insults from other nations (Ezekiel 34:28-29),
- Great abundance of food would eliminate famine (Ezekiel 34:27, 29; 36:29-30),
- Israel's land would be so luxurious that it would have the reputation of being like the Garden of Eden (Ezekiel 34:29; 36:34-35),
- Rainfall would be controlled perfectly (Ezekiel 34:26), that Israel's cities would be rebuilt and inhabited (Ezekiel 36:33),
- The nation would enjoy a population explosion (Ezekiel 36:37-38; 37:26),
- The nation would be completely unified (Ezekiel 37:21-22),
- The people of Israel would live in their own land forever (Ezekiel 37:25),
- Once again God would have His sanctuary in Israel and would dwell in the midst of the nation forever (Ezekiel 37:26- 28), and
- God would never turn away from the people of Israel (Jeremiah 32:40).

ASSIGNMENT

The blessings and the promises of God towards all those who have accepted Him as their Lord and Saviour are vast and numerous, far more than those mentioned in the covenantal promises found in Jeremiah. In an essay discuss some of the promises and blessings that you received as a result of being saved through the blood of Jesus.

SIGN

The sign of the covenant between God and the nation of Israel under the Mosaic covenant was that of circumcision.

- Genesis 17:9 "'Your part of the agreement," God told Abraham, "is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this continual responsibility."
- Exodus 12:48 "'If there are foreigners living among you who want to celebrate the Lord's Passover, let all the males be circumcised. Then they may come and celebrate the Passover with you. They will be treated just as if they had been born among you. But an uncircumcised male may never eat of the Passover lamb."
- John 7:22 "But you work on the Sabbath, too, when you obey Moses' law of circumcision. (Actually, this tradition of circumcision is older than the law of Moses; it goes back to Abraham.)"

This circumcision that was spoken of here was one that was physical. Therefore in order to be identified with the nation of Israel and be a part of the Old Covenant, every male was required to undergo natural circumcision.

The sign of the new covenant however, though also spoken of as being circumcision, is not one that is physical but it is of the heart.

- Deuteronomy 30:6 "The Lord your God will cleanse your heart and the hearts of all your descendants so that you will love him with all your heart and soul, and so you may live!"
- Romans 2:25-29 "The Jewish ceremony of circumcision is worth something only if you obey God's law. But if you don't obey God's law, you are no better off than an uncircumcised Gentile. And if the Gentiles obey God's law, won't God give them all the rights and honors of being his own people? In fact, uncircumcised Gentiles who keep God's law will be much better off than you Jews who are circumcised and know so much about God's law but don't obey it. For you are not a true Jew just because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the Jewish ceremony of circumcision. No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not a cutting of the body but a change of heart produced by God's Spirit. Whoever has that kind of change seeks praise from God, not from people."

- Colossians 2:11-13 "When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. It was a spiritual procedure—the cutting away of your sinful nature. For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to a new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins."

What does it mean to have a circumcised heart?

- When we are circumcised in our hearts we become God's property and take on a new spiritual identity. Paul said that we belong to God once we have been circumcised in our heart. 1 Corinthians 6:20 "for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body." 1 Corinthians 7:23 "God purchased you at a high price. Don't be enslaved by the world."
- When we are circumcised in our hearts, through salvation our heart condition changes. This change in our heart is due to us being apart from all other people of the earth. We are changed because our "fleshy desires" are cut away and we receive the mark of God on our lives. It is therefore because of this change in our old nature that we are able to now "glorify God in our bodies" (1 Corinthians 6:20). Colossians 2:11 "When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. It was a spiritual procedure—the cutting away of your sinful nature."
- When we are circumcised in our heart, we become new before God. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!"
- When we are circumcised in our hearts we no longer live for ourselves but we live for God. Galatians 2:20 "I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. So I live my life in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

SACRIFICE

The sacrificial system that was established during the time of the Law was a means by which the nation of Israel could atone for their inability to keep the Law. This sacrificial system was based on the works of law, offerings, animal sacrifices, vows and washings. Through these sacrifices, the animal that was offered became a substitute. Substitution is the action performed by putting another person or thing in the place of another. It means to "replace, switch, exchange, or swap positions".

Substitution under the old covenant:

Sin resulted in death (Rom 3:23) and therefore in order for Adam and Eve to be spared judgment for their sins, God used an animal as a means to switch positions with them. In the Old Testament we notice that substitution of an animal for the sins of man was common:

- Leviticus 16:3 ""When Aaron enters the sanctuary area, he must follow these instructions fully. He must first bring a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a whole burnt offering."
- Genesis 4:4 "while Abel brought several choice lambs from the best of his flock. The Lord accepted Abel and his offering,"
- Numbers 28:3 ""Say to them: When you present your daily whole burnt offerings to the Lord, you must offer two one-year-old male lambs with no physical defects."
- Leviticus 4:3 "If the high priest sins, bringing guilt upon the entire community, he must bring to the Lord a young bull with no physical defects."
- Leviticus 5:6 "and bring to the Lord as their penalty a female from the flock, either a sheep or a goat. This will be a sin offering to remove their sin, and the priest will make atonement for them."

These animals were killed in the place of the guilty person and its blood was used as atonement for man's sin. However, this system was merely a shadow of what was to come. The Old Testament sacrifices were instituted by God as a temporary measure, pointing forward to Jesus, God's perfect sacrifice.

Hebrews 10:1-4 "The old system in the law of Moses was only a shadow of the things to come, not the reality of the good things Christ has done for us. The sacrifices under the old system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship. If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time, and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared. But just the opposite happened. Those yearly sacrifices reminded them of their sins year after year. For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."

Substitution under the new covenant:

Because of the insufficiency of the blood of animals in removing the sins of the people once and for all, God prophesied that He would provide a Lamb. This prophecy was first seen after God made a covenant with Abraham. Genesis 22:12-14 "'Lay down the knife," the angel said. "Do not hurt the boy in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld even your beloved son from me." Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a bush. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering on the altar in place of his son. Abraham named the place "The Lord Will Provide." This name has now become a proverb: "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."

Who was the Lamb? John 1:29 "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

When Jesus is called the Lamb of God in John 1:29 and John 1:36, it is in reference to His being the perfect and ultimate sacrifice for sin. In order to understand who Christ was and what He did, we must begin with the Old Testament, which contains prophecies concerning the coming of Christ as an "offering for sin" (Isaiah 53:10). In fact, the whole sacrificial system established by God in the Old Testament set the stage for the coming of Jesus Christ, who is the perfect sacrifice that God would provide as atonement for the sins of His people (Romans 8:3; Hebrews 10).

In the New Testament we see that no longer is the substitute for our sins an animal, but a Person, the Lamb of God. When John saw Jesus, he prophesied by saying, "Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

Jesus became our Lamb (our substitute) and died in our place. As man's substitute and surety, the iniquity of men was laid upon Christ; He was counted a transgressor that He might redeem them from the curse of the law. He, the Sin-Bearer, endured judicial punishment for iniquity and became sin itself for man.

- Galatians 3:13 "But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

- Isaiah 53:12 "I will give him the honors of one who is mighty and great, because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among those who were sinners. He bore the sins of many and interceded for sinners."
- Hebrews 9:28 "so also Christ died only once as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people..."

HOW DID HE QUALIFY AS OUR SUBSTITUTE?

- He qualified Himself by becoming a Man. "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." (Gal 4:4-5) In order to identify with us and be our representative, Jesus had to become man. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). "His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Romans 1:1). "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:14). "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:16-18). If Jesus did not become one of us in kind, He could not legitimately substitute for us. In the plan of redemption, Jesus is representative for us. Notice the original promise in Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmity between thee [Satan] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His [Christ's] heel." Again, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The seed of Eve, is Christ.
- He qualified because He was accepted as the substitute. Christ our Substitute has been accepted by God the Father. He declares, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." (Matthew 17:5)
- He qualified by becoming sin for us: "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). As soon as man sinned, Jesus offered to take our penalty and die in our place. Revelation 13:8 says that He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world". His choice was voluntary; none forced Him to it. His mission is made clear in the words of John the Baptist, who said that Christ came "to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Jesus became sin for us "That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Without taking

our sin there was no hope for us, no transformation option. And so Jesus *must* take our sin, *must* substitute His spotless life for our spotted life.

- He qualified by dying in our place: "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3). Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5:7).
- He qualified because He was able to pay our penalty: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes (Hosea 13:14). "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45). "Christ Jesus who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time (1 Timothy 2:5, 6).

Jesus' blood was shed:

Blood was a necessary ingredient in the atoning of sins. Hebrews 9:22 "In fact, we can say that according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified by sprinkling with blood. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins."

In scripture the Blood is spoken of in two ways, as being shed and as being sprinkled. Here as the Lamb of God, we notice that the Blood of Jesus was shed. "...This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20). Matthew 26:28, "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

When Jesus suffered and died for our redemption, He shed His blood seven different times buying back our freedom:

- Willpower: In Genesis 3:6-17 Adam and Eve chose to eat of the fruit that God had specifically told them not to. At that moment Adam sacrificed the willpower of mankind. The first place where Jesus shed His blood was in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:30-44). The loss of the willpower of man was in a Garden, the redeeming of our will is also in a garden. Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane fully aware of the sacrifice that He was to make. Three times here in this Garden we hear Jesus crying out, "Not as I will but as You will". In Luke 22:43-44 it says that Jesus was in such agony in the Garden that His sweat became drops of blood that fell on the ground. Sweating drops of blood is not unknown in medicine but it is a rare occurrence. The clinical word for it is "hematohidrosis". It can happen when the blood vessels around the sweat glands constrict (due to extreme stress)

and then dilate to the point of rupture. The blood is released from the body through the sweat glands.

- Whipped and scourged: In the Old Testament, God said to the Israelites, Exodus 15:26 "'If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and laws, then I will not make you suffer the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you.'" When Jesus was whipped and beaten, He redeemed this promise for us. Isaiah 53:5 "But he was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed!" In Matthew 27:26, Jesus was scourged. Scourging was the cruellest form of punishment. The flesh was generally cut with whips that had bones or nails at the ends of the leather. Jesus was publically lashed with a cat of nine tails 39 times. Psalm 129:3 "My back is covered with cuts, as if a farmer had plowed long furrows." Isaiah 50:6 "I give my back to those who beat me and my cheeks to those who pull out my beard. I do not hide from shame, for they mock me and spit in my face."
- Crown of thorns: In Genesis 3:17-19, we read of how a curse was brought on the ground due to the sin of Adam and Eve. The result is seen in Genesis 3:18 "It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains." A thorn is something that pricks and causes wounds. A thistle is something that multiplies quickly. After Jesus was beaten, a crown of thorns was placed on His head. It was said that these thorns were probably about 3 – 3 ½ inches in length. As this was placed on His head, blood flowed to break the curse of poverty off the land. Matthew 27:29 "They made a crown of long, sharp thorns and put it on his head, and they placed a stick in his right hand as a scepter. Then they knelt before him in mockery, yelling, "Hail! King of the Jews!"
- His hands were pierced: All dominion and rule had been given to Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:26-28). However this dominion and authority was lost in Genesis 3. When Jesus' hands were pierced, He redeemed the authority and the dominion of man.
- His feet were pierced: Deuteronomy 28:13 "If you listen to these commands of the Lord your God and carefully obey them, the Lord will make you the head and not the tail, and you will always have the upper hand." Deuteronomy 11:24 "Wherever you set your feet, the land will be yours. Your frontiers will stretch from the wilderness in the south to Lebanon in the north, and from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west." When Jesus' feet were pierced He gave us back the position of walking with Him, walking in His blessings (Genesis 12).

- His side was pierced: When Jesus was pierced in the side, blood and water flowed. Why? Because Jesus died of a broken heart. Mark 15:34 "Then, at that time Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" Medically it is said that when you suffer such agony your heart develops a sack of water around it. When the soldiers pierced His side, this water flowed with the blood and fell on the ground. Jesus' blood from His side heals our brokenness. Luke 4:18-19 "'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has appointed me to preach Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the downtrodden will be freed from their oppressors, and that the time of the Lord's favor has come.'"
- He was bruised: Isaiah 53:5 "But he was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed!" A bruise is a bleeding that occurs internally. Jesus was bruised for our "iniquity". Iniquity is often used in the Bible not as an action, but rather as the character of an action (something that is hidden – internal motives). Jesus died so that our character and our hidden emotional motives could be changed, that we no longer are evildoers, wicked, unrighteous etc.

Jesus was put to death:

Jesus did not only shed His blood for us, but He died for us. Mark 15:37 "Then Jesus uttered another loud cry and breathed his last."

- Christ died for us: The death of Jesus was not only necessary and voluntary, it was also beneficial. He did not need to die for Himself as He was sinless, however He died for us, those who knew sin and were condemned by it.
- Christ died for us that He might bring us to God: 1 Peter 3:18 "Christ also suffered when he died for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners that he might bring us safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit."
- Christ died for our sins: Our sins were the obstacle that was preventing us from fellowship with God. In order for us to receive the blessings and the promises of His Presence, these sins needed to be removed – thereby removing the wall of separation and reconciling us to the Father.
- Christ died our death: Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." Death was a penal event that took place because of sin. It was a divine judgment on human disobedience. Romans 5:12-14 "When Adam sinned, sin entered the

entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. And though there was no law to break, since it had not yet been given, they all died anyway—even though they did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. What a contrast between Adam and Christ, who was yet to come!"

Jesus Offered a Perfect Sacrifice:

Under the Old Covenant, the people were told to bring to God an offering without blemish. Numbers 6:14 "and offer these sacrifices to the Lord: a one-year-old male lamb without defect for a burnt offering, a one-year-old female lamb without defect for a sin offering, a ram without defect for a peace offering,"

Under the New covenant Jesus offered to God His perfect life.

- Hebrews 9:14 "Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our hearts from deeds that lead to death so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins."
- 1 Peter 1:19 "He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God."
- John 1:29 "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"
- 1 John 3:5 "And you know that Jesus came to take away our sins, for there is no sin in him."

Since Jesus died in our place, God's justice has been satisfied and therefore Jesus was able to say, "It is finished!" (John 19:30). In Romans times, the phrase, "it is finished" was used when a debt had been paid in full. Therefore when Jesus shouted this He was indicating that He had made a perfect, complete and final payment for sin.

Colossians 2:13-14 "You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins. He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross."

The severity of God fell upon Jesus, and the goodness of God fell upon us (John 3:16). Therefore the gospel says, "You have been bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23) and "God purchased the church with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). The heavenly song praises Jesus, "You purchased for God with your blood men from every nation" (Revelations 5:9). As Jesus faced His own death, He spoke of His "blood... shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

THE OLD COVENANT VERSUS THE NEW COVEVANT

Galatians 4:22-24 "The Scriptures say that Abraham had two sons, one from his slave-wife and one from his freeborn wife. The son of the slave-wife was born in a human attempt to bring about the fulfilment of God's promise. But the son of the freeborn wife was born as God's own fulfilment of his promise. Now these two women serve as an illustration of God's two covenants. Hagar, the slave-wife, represents Mount Sinai where people first became enslaved to the law."

SIMILARITIES IN THE COVENANTS:

- Blood is involved in both of the covenants. However, the difference in the blood is the value and the worth of the blood. In the Old Testament, it was the blood of animals.

In the New Testament under the new covenant, it is the Blood of Jesus. The power in the blood is dependant upon the worth of the sacrifice. How much more powerful is the blood of Jesus than the blood of animals because He is worth far more, He is the Son of God. 1 Corinthians 11:25 "In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and you, sealed by the shedding of my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it."

- Obedience is involved in both of the covenants: The old covenant was based on the obedience of man to the Law that God had provided them at Mount Sinai. This law however could and eventually did become broken by man. There was no guarantee that he would remain faithful to God's precepts and laws. Jeremiah 31:32 "This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife," says the Lord."

The new covenant is far greater because it is not based upon the obedience of man (who will inevitably break the laws) but it is based on Jesus' obedience. This obedience has proven itself and He was faithful to the end. He fulfilled the written requirements of the Law. Philippians 2:5-8 "Your

attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross."

- Atonement is involved in both of the covenants: The first covenant was insufficient in giving full salvation. It made atonement for the sins of the nation but atonement had to be made on a continuous basis. Every year the people had to celebrate the Day of Atonement. It was a repetitive sacrifice that had to be made on their behalf. In the new covenant sins have been atoned for "once and for all".
- People are involved in both of the covenants: However under the old covenant the promises and provisions were only for Israel. Deuteronomy 4:7-8 "For what great nation has a god as near to them as the Lord our God is near to us whenever we call on him? And what great nation has laws and regulations as fair as this body of laws that I am giving you today?" Deuteronomy 5:3 "The Lord did not make this covenant long ago with our ancestors, but with all of us who are alive today."

Under the new covenant, the promises and provisions are for all men. Luke 22:20 "After supper he took another cup of wine and said, "This wine is the token of God's new covenant to save you—an agreement sealed with the blood I will pour out for you." Mark 14:24 "And he said to them, "This is my blood, poured out for many, sealing the covenant between God and his people."

BIBLICAL COVENANTS

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE COVENANTS:

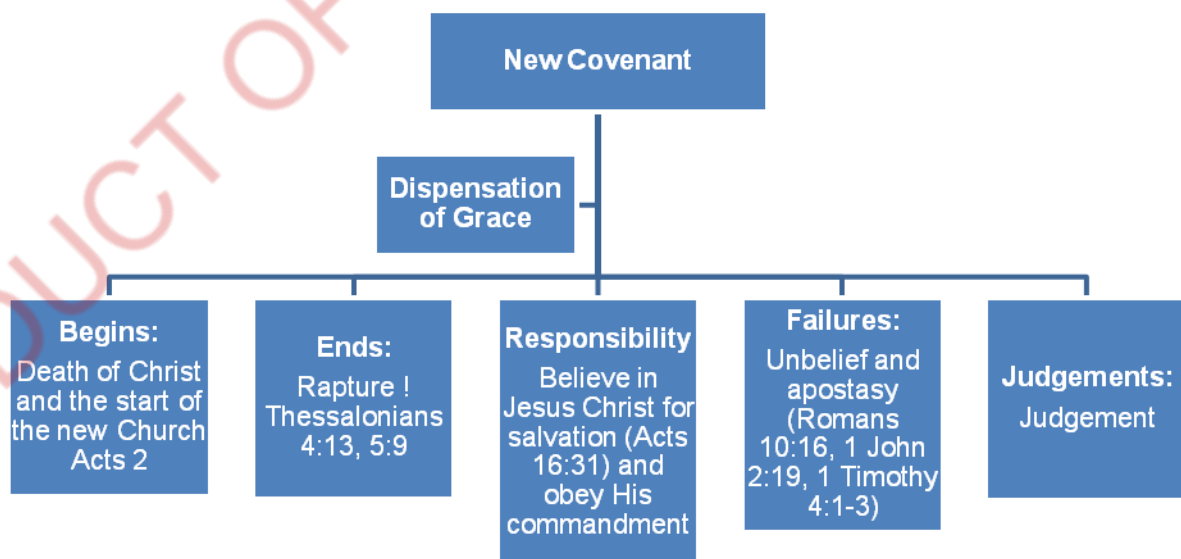
THE OLD COVENANT	THE NEW COVENANT
Ended by Christ: Romans 10:4 "For Christ has accomplished the whole purpose of the law. All who believe in him are made right with God."	Established by Christ: Hebrews 10:9 "Then he added, 'Look, I have come to do your will.' He cancels the first covenant in order to establish the second."
Entangles: Galatians 5:1 "So Christ has really set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law."	Sets free: John 8:32 "And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
Powerless to save: Hebrews 9:9 "This is an illustration pointing to the present time. For the gifts and sacrifices that the priests offer are not able to cleanse the consciences of the people who bring them."	Saves to the uttermost: Hebrews 7:25 "Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save everyone who comes to God through him. He lives forever to plead with God on their behalf."
Many sacrifices: Hebrews 9:12-13 "Once for all time he took blood into that Most Holy Place, but not the blood of goats and calves. He took his own blood, and with it he secured our salvation forever. Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow could cleanse people's bodies from ritual defilement."	Once sacrifice: Hebrews 10:12 "But our High Priest offered himself to God as one sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down at the place of highest honor at God's right hand."
Resulted in death: 2 Cor. 3:7 "That old system of law etched in stone led to death, yet it began with such glory that the people of Israel could not bear to look at Moses' face. For his face shone with the glory of God, even though the brightness was already fading away."	Resulted in life: Galatians 3:11 "Consequently, it is clear that no one can ever be right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, 'It is through faith that a righteous person has life.'"
Remembers sin: Hebrews 10:3 "But just the opposite happened. Those yearly sacrifices reminded them of their sins year after year."	Forgets sin: Hebrews 10:17 "Then he adds, 'I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds.'"
Yearly atonement: Hebrews 10:3 "But just the opposite happened. Those yearly sacrifices reminded them of their sins year after year."	Eternal atonement: Hebrews 10:14 "For by that one offering he perfected forever all those whom he is making holy."
Animal sacrifice: Hebrews 9:12 "Once for all time he took blood into that Most Holy Place, but not the blood of goats and calves. He took his own blood, and with it he secured our salvation forever."	Human sacrifice: Hebrews 9:14-28
Law of works: Romans 3:27 "Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on our good deeds. It is based on our faith."	Law of grace and faith: John 1:17 "For the law was given through Moses; God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ."
Works wrath: Romans 4:15 "But the law brings punishment on those who try to obey it. (The only way to avoid breaking the law is to have no law to break!)"	Saves from wrath: Romans 5:9 "And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's judgment."

BIBLICAL COVENANTS

Faulty: Hebrews 8:7 "If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it."	Perfect: James 1:25 "But if you keep looking steadily into God's perfect law—the law that sets you free—and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it."
Weak: Hebrews 7:18 "yes, the old requirement about the priesthood was set aside because it was weak and useless."	Strong: Hebrews 7:25 "Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save everyone who comes to God through him. He lives forever to plead with God on their behalf."
Brings a curse: Galatians 3:10 "But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all these commands that are written in God's Book of the Law."	Redeems from the curse: Galatians 3:13 "But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."
Exposes sin: Galatians 3:19 "Well then, why was the law given? It was given to show people how guilty they are. But this system of law was to last only until the coming of the child to whom God's promise was made. And there is this further difference. God gave his laws to angels to give to Moses, who was the mediator between God and the people."	Covers sin: Romans 4:1-8

CHANGE IN DISPENSATION

The New Covenant brought about a change in dispensation. Where previously under the old covenant the dispensation was the Law, now under the new covenant, we see that the dispensation is grace.



CHRIST – SEEN IN THE COVENANTS

EDENIC COVENANT

CHRIST RETURNED OUR DOMINION:

Genesis 1:26 "Then God said, "Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all life—the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals, and small animals."

Adam and Eve were promised authority and dominion. However, when they sinned they lost this authority. But with Christ, we once again can receive dominion and authority. Through His death and resurrection He was given all authority and has promised this as our inheritance.

- Hebrews 1:3 says, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."
- Ephesians 1:18-21 "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come."

Because of Christ we have now received a new position – a new authority. Our position in Him is that we have been raised up with Christ and are seated with Him. Ephesians 2:4-8 "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."

CHRIST HAS BECOME OUR BRIDEGROOM – WE HIS BRIDE

Genesis 2:24 "This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one."

In the Edenic Covenant man was given a natural wife - someone who could work with him and be his helpmeet. She was taken from his side. Under the New Covenant, Christ has been given a Bride. A group of people formed from the Blood that flowed from His side, who will work with Him in fulfilling His task here on earth.

Ephesians 5:25-27 "And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault."

CHRIST HAS GIVEN US ETERNAL LIFE

Genesis 3:22-24 "Then the Lord God said, 'The people have become as we are, knowing everything, both good and evil. What if they eat the fruit of the tree of life? Then they will live forever!' So the Lord God banished Adam and his wife from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. After banishing them from the garden, the Lord God stationed mighty angelic beings to the east of Eden. And a flaming sword flashed back and forth, guarding the way to the tree of life."

The promise of the Edenic Covenant was eternal life. Before the Fall of man, Adam and Eve did **not** know physical death nor did they know of any form of separation from God. Because of the Fall, man was removed from God's presence and it is for this reason that Christ came - to restore eternal life to man. Through His Life we have once again been given eternal life – the ability to choose to live with God through all eternity, just as it was intended in the Garden of Eden. Through Christ, the way that was guarded and blocked to us so that we could not have entrance into eternal life, has been opened and we are now able to draw near to God.

Hebrews 10:19-20 "And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. This is the new, life-giving way that Christ has opened up for us through the sacred curtain, by means of his death for us. "

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

ADAMIC COVENANT

THE VICTORY – CONQUERED SATAN

Genesis 3:15 "From now on, you and the woman will be enemies, and your offspring and her offspring will be enemies. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

The promise that was given to Adam in the Adamic covenant was that the Seed would conquer the devil.

- Isaiah prophesied and said, "I will give him the honors of one who is mighty and great, because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among those who were sinners. He bore the sins of many and interceded for sinners" (Isaiah 53:12).
- When Jesus walked the earth He told His disciples, "...I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).
- Paul wrote and said, "In this way, God disarmed the evil rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross of Christ" (Colossians 2:15).
- Hebrews 2:14 "Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—Jesus also became flesh and blood by being born in human form. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the Devil, who had the power of death."

LAST ADAM

1 Corinthians 15:45 "The Scriptures tell us, "The first man, Adam, became a living person." But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit."

The Bible speaks of the first man as the first Adam and Christ as the Last Adam. There are two representatives of the human race: Adam and Christ. Romans 5:14-15 "they all died anyway—even though they did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. What a contrast between Adam and Christ, who was yet to come! And what a difference between our sin and God's generous gift of forgiveness. For this one man, Adam, brought death to many through his sin. But this other man, Jesus Christ, brought forgiveness to many through God's bountiful gift."

Similarities between the First and the Last Adam:

- Each was the head of a race. Adam was the head of the human race which is governed by having a sinful nature. Christ is Head of the Church – a new race – a group of new creatures who are born again and are saved by the Blood of the Lamb.
- Each was the head of a covenant. Adam was the head of the Old Covenant. Jesus is the Head of the New Covenant.

Differences between the First and Last Adam:

The most basic contrast is that our relationship to Adam is a natural, physical one. He is the physical father of the human race. We were all created like Adam physically. Our relationship to Jesus Christ, however, is not physical, but spiritual. This is highlighted as we consider the different characteristics of the Old and the New Testaments. In the first case everything tends to be material. A man was considered blessed in the Old Testament according to the number of oxen, sheep and camels he possessed. In the New Testament the emphasis is on spiritual blessing. Similarly, people belonged to the nation of Israel by physical descent, while those who are Christians belong to the kingdom of God as a result of spiritual rebirth.

In the passage shown above (Rom 5:15) the difference is clear. Sin deserves punishment because of the ensuing guilt. We are all under the judgment of God because of our relationship to Adam and the sinful nature we have inherited from him. It is through the first Adam that we are plunged into ruin. Through the second Adam (Jesus) we can know salvation. Jesus Christ represented us on the cross. On that cross, Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sins. He took our sins on Himself, while the righteousness of His sinless life is counted as ours (2Corinthians 5:21).

Through Adam came the trespass, the sin that breaks our relationship with God. Through Christ we receive God's great gift of salvation. What Adam did was destructive; what Jesus does is redemptive. Death is something we earn through our sin; but salvation is something we receive as a gift. Christ's power to save exceeds Adam's power to ruin. We receive more blessing in Jesus than we lost when Adam failed. This is what is meant in the verse above where it states that the gift is greater than the trespass. Through the one trespass of Adam, the sentence of condemnation was passed upon mankind. But by the righteousness and obedience of Jesus Christ, many are made righteous. He made us righteous, God is satisfied and we are restored. The more we look at our sinful nature the more we see how merciful Jesus Christ is.

NOAHIC COVENANT

THE ARK

Genesis 6:14 "Make a boat from resinous wood and seal it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior."

Genesis 7:1 "Finally, the day came when the Lord said to Noah, "Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I consider you alone to be righteous

The similarities between the Ark and Christ

- The Ark was provided by God through grace: "God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark...'" (Genesis 6:13-14). Before the flood came God provided Noah a way in which he could escape. Why? Because "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." (Genesis 6:8). God does not change. He's still righteous so He must judge sin yet He's still merciful and "takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked." (Ezekiel 33:11) Through His grace He has provided us a way to escape before judgment comes. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Jesus is the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:8).
- The Ark's design was revealed in advance: "And this is how you shall make it..." Genesis 6:14-15. God gave Noah very specific instructions as to how the ark was to be built. Through the Old Testament He gave the world very specific details about Jesus' life and mission. We refer to these details as Messianic Prophecies. For example, the Old Testament tells us that Jesus would be the Son of God (Psalm 2:7), that He would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), He would be an offering for sin (Isaiah 53:10), He would be raised from the grave (Psalm 16:10).
- The Ark was of divine/ human origin: Genesis 6:14-17 "Make a boat from resinous wood and seal it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. Make it 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. Construct an opening all the way around the boat, 18 inches below the roof. Then put three decks inside the boat—bottom, middle, and upper—and put a door in the side. "Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing. Everything on earth will die!" The architect of the ark was God. But its workmanship was human. It took Noah and his 3 sons

120 years to construct the ark specifically as God had stipulated it to be - each dimension and each detail. Jesus is both the Son of God and the Son of Man. Luke 1:32 "He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David." John 6:62 "Then what will you think if you see me, the Son of Man, return to heaven again?"

- A sacrifice was made to build the Ark: "Make yourself an ark of gopherwood..." (Genesis 6:14). The ark was made of wood and so Noah and his family received life through the sacrifice of the trees. Christ became our sacrifice so that we could be saved. "No one takes [my life] from Me, but I lay it down of Myself." (John 10:18) "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."
- The Ark had only one door: "...and set the door of the ark in its side." (Genesis 6:16). There were two groups of people during the time of the flood - those who survived and those who didn't. The ark was the only means of salvation. Those who survived walked into the ark through the one door. Jesus is the only means of salvation and the only door into heaven. "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved." (John 10:9) Is there another way to heaven? The Bible answers clearly: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'" (John 14:6) "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)
- The ark was a refuge from the storm: "...I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark--you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female" (Genesis 6:17-19). The ark was a place of refuge from the storm. Jesus is our refuge from God's wrath. "Having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:9-10)
- Man was invited into the ark: "Then the Lord said to Noah, 'Come into the ark...' (Genesis 7:1) Noah was invited into the ark to rest from the storm. Jesus gives us an invitation to rest from life's storms. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28).

- They were secure in the Ark: "So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in" (Genesis 7:16). The Lord shut Noah in the ark and He kept him secure. In the same way we are not saved by works, but by grace. We have trusted in Christ for our salvation and as a result we are "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." (Ephesians 1:13-14).

ASSIGNMENT

Continuing with the idea of how God gave Noah the design of the Ark in advance, draw up a chart that shows the various prophecies (the details) concerning Jesus Christ – His birth, His ministry, His death, His resurrection and His ascension.

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

OUR INHERITANCE

Genesis 12:2 "I will cause you to become the father of a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and I will make you a blessing to others."

In the Abrahamic covenant God promised the descendants of Abraham an inheritance of blessing. These blessings were material and physical yet they also related to a spiritual inheritance. Galatians 3:29 "And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and now all the promises God gave to him belong to you."

Through faith in Christ we have received spiritual blessings. These blessings are:

- We can do everything through him who gives us strength (Philippians 4:13)
- In ALL things we are more than conquerors (Romans 8:37)
- We are free from condemnation (Romans 8:1)
- In Christ, we are counted dead to sin but alive to God (Romans 6:11)
- We are presented perfect in Christ (Colossians 1:28)

BIBLICAL COVENANTS

- In Christ, we are new creations, the old is gone and the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- In Christ, we are sanctified and called to be Holy (1 Corinthians 1:2)
- We are given protection from the evil one (John 17:11)
- Through Christ, God has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32)
- With Christ God has forgiven us all of our sins (Colossians 2:13)
- In Christ, we receive the gift of God, which is eternal life (Romans 6:23)
- Through Him everyone who believes is justified (Acts 13:39)
- In Christ we have intimacy and unity with God (John 17:20-21)
- Through Christ we are healed (1 Peter 2:24)
- In Christ, we will never be separated from the love of God (Romans 8:39)
- In Christ, we receive the grace of God (1 Corinthians 1:4)
- In Christ, we receive our wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption from God (1 Corinthians 1:30)
- In Christ, we have hope for this life (1 Corinthians 15:19)
- In Christ, we are all made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22)
- Through Christ, we are given freedom (Galatians 2:4)
- In Christ, God has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3)
- God has raised us up with Christ, and seated us with him in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:6)
- In Christ, God has demonstrated his incomparable grace and his kindness to us (Ephesians 2:7)
- He meets all of our needs according to his glorious riches in Christ (Philippians 4:19)

MOSAIC COVENANT

THE LAW – THE WORD

The Law that was given to Moses was a set of instructions that would help the people of Israel to relate not only with one another but with God. The Bible, the Word of God is a book of instructions and wisdom that helps us to know God. It is a book that teaches us how we are to live out our relationship with Him and how we are to behave.

Jesus was spoken of as being the Word of God:

- John 1:1 “In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and he was God.”
- John 1:14 “So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father.”

By Jesus being the Word of God, we see that He was revealed as being the expression of God. He is the means by which we are able to know Father God and He is the means by which we are able to have a relationship with God and with one another. Just as the Law taught holiness through obedience to the written law that was placed on the tablets, so Christ teaches us how we are to live a holy life through the example that He gave us whilst He was on earth.

ASSIGNMENT

Christ is the fulfillment of the Law. Prove that this statement is true by looking at:

- Christ and the Offerings
- Christ and the office of Aaron
- Christ and “the Firstfruits”

Show clearly in your essay how Christ has fulfilled each of the requirements under the Law and how His death was typified by the Law and the sacrificial system.

DAVIDIC COVENANT

THE BRANCH

The term "branch" is a common metaphor which is used to show family relationship. As a branch grows from a tree so Christ grew from the same line as David. He was called the Branch of righteousness because He was a descendant of king David.

Jeremiah 23:5 "For the time is coming," says the Lord, "when I will place a righteous Branch on King David's throne. He will be a King who rules with wisdom. He will do what is just and right throughout the land."

In Isaiah 11:1 "Out of the stump of David's family will grow a shoot—yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root."

THE KING

As a descendant of David, Jesus was qualified as being the King of Israel. Meeting this requirement was a primary requirement of the promised Messiah (Matthew 1:1-2:6). Pilate identified Jesus as being "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews" (Matthew 27:37) when he insisted that a sign was placed above His head when He died on the cross. Revelations 17:14 "Together they will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will defeat them because he is Lord over all lords and King over all kings, and his people are the called and chosen and faithful ones."

PART TWO:

COVENANTS MADE BETWEEN MAN AND MAN

Covenants were made not only between God and man but also between men. There are two specific covenants that we will be looking at in this section of the course

- Covenants made between friends
- Covenants made between a man and a woman in a marital relationship

COVENANT OF FRIENDSHIP - JONATHAN AND DAVID

The covenant that Jonathan made with David is one which shows us the qualities of a covenantal relationship--one in which there is unconditional acceptance, loyalty and commitment to one another. This covenant was stronger than his family commitments and extended not just to the two individuals who had made the covenant but also to their entire house and progeny. A powerful demonstration of this is seen in 2 Samuel 9:1-13. Here we see how David is committed to show 'kindness' or covenant faithfulness to the house of his covenant partner.

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

"When he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his girdle." (1 Samuel 18:1-3)

"And Jonathan said to David, 'The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded my father, about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if he is well disposed toward David, shall I not then send and disclose it to you? But should it please my father to do you harm, the LORD do so to Jonathan, and more also, if I do not disclose it to you, and send you away, that you may go in safety. May the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father. If I am still alive, show me the loyal love of the LORD, that I may not die; and do not cut off your loyalty from my house for ever. When the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth, let not the name of Jonathan be cut off from the house of David. And may the LORD take vengeance on David's enemies.' And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul." (1 Samuel 20:12-17)

"And David was afraid because Saul had come out to seek his life. David was in the Wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. And Jonathan, Saul's son, rose, and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said to him, 'Fear not; for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you; you shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you; Saul my father also knows this.' And the two of them made a covenant before the LORD; David remained at Horesh, and Jonathan went home." (1 Sam. 23:15-18)

ELEMENTS OF THIS COVENANT

In this covenant we see that Jonathan performed two ceremonial acts - each designed to underscore the seriousness and permanence of the covenant relationship that he was entering into with David.

1 Samuel 18:4 "and he sealed the pact by giving him his robe, tunic, sword, bow, and belt."

Exchange of clothes:

Jonathan demonstrated his commitment to this solemn covenant by giving David his royal robe. In a symbolic sense, (especially as this practice was understood in ancient times) in the context of covenant, David was essentially "putting on" Jonathan.

When Jonathan handed his outer garment to David, he was symbolizing that everything that belonged to him now belonged to David too. He knew that David had been anointed by Samuel to become the next king in line and therefore here in this covenant we see how he gave up his right to be king so that David could become king.

In this exchange David, by putting on the robe, was taking on the identity of his covenant partner Jonathan. Matthew Henry offers the apt description that... "David is seen in Jonathan's clothes that all may take notice he is Jonathan's second self" Therefore when anyone looked at David they did not see David the Shepherd boy, but they saw David as the one who would replace Saul on the throne (the next heir to the throne). David in wearing Jonathan's robe was identifying himself to others as being the next king.

Exchange of his sword:

When a sword, bow and other weapons were exchanged in covenant, it indicated that each of the partners were pledging themselves to the other's defense; placing his power, as it were, at the other's disposal. When Jonathan made a covenant with David, he gave his sword and belt to David. In doing this he was pledging himself to be a protector of David. We see evidence of this:

1 Samuel 20:30-33 "Saul boiled with rage at Jonathan." "You stupid son of a whore!" he swore at him. "Do you think I don't know that you want David to be king in your place, shaming yourself and your mother? As long as that son of Jesse is alive, you'll never be king. Now go and get him so I can kill him!" "But what has he done?" Jonathan demanded. "Why should he be put to death?" Then Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan, intending to kill him. So at last Jonathan realized that his father was really determined to kill David."

1 Samuel 23:14-18 "David now stayed in the strongholds of the wilderness and in the hill country of Ziph. Saul hunted him day after day, but God didn't let him be found. One day near Horesh, David received the news that Saul was on the way to Ziph to search for him and kill him. Jonathan went to find David and encouraged him to stay strong in his faith in God. "Don't be afraid," Jonathan reassured him. "My father will never find you! You are going to be the king of Israel, and I will be next to you, as my father is well aware." So the two of them renewed their covenant of friendship before the Lord. Then Jonathan returned home, while David stayed at Horesh."

AFTER JONATHAN'S DEATH

David continued to honor his covenant with Jonathan after his friend's death. He recovered Jonathan's remains from battle and gave him a decent burial (2 Samuel 21:12-14). He also showed great kindness to Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9:1-13).

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF THIS COVENANT TO US TODAY

FIRSTLY, IT PICTURES OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

The covenant relationship that Jonathan made with David beautifully depicts the covenant that Christ has made with us. This can be seen in:

Responsibility of Jonathan towards David = Responsibility of Christ towards us

- Jonathan gave up his rightful position: Jonathan was the eldest son of Saul (1 Samuel 14:49) and therefore he would have been in line to be the next king of Israel had Saul not sinned against God (1 Samuel 13:14, 15:23). When he made covenant with David, he gave David his robe thereby signifying that he was giving up his right, without resistance and strife, to be the next king. Christ demonstrated this same act under the New Covenant. Philippians 2:5-8 "Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross." 2 Corinthians 8:9 "You know how full of love and kindness our Lord Jesus Christ was. Though he was very rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich."
- Jonathan took off his robe: Jonathan pictures Christ Who stripped Himself bare that He might clothe us with His robe of righteousness (Philippians 2:5-8). Galatians 3:29 "And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and now all the promises God gave to him belong to you." This passage parallels Jonathan giving David his robe in 1 Samuel 18. It is here that we see that because Jesus took off His robe, we can now belong to Christ. We now have a new identity. Just as David's identity was changed from a shepherd boy to that of future king, our identities change from being that of a sinner to that of being a king and a priest unto God (1 Peter 2:9). Isaiah pictures our old state, Isaiah 64:6 "We are all infected and impure with sin. When we proudly display our righteous deeds, we find they are but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall. And our sins, like the wind, sweep us away" as well as our new state in Isaiah 61:10 "I am overwhelmed with joy in the Lord my God! For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom in his wedding suit or a bride with her jewels."
- Jonathan gave David his sword, bow and belt: When David was given Jonathan's sword, bow and belt, he was being promised protection from his enemy Saul - a man who had dedicated the latter part of his life to seek David out so that he might kill and destroy him. In the book of Ephesians we see that Paul writes about the armour of God that we have been given so that we can be protected against our arch enemy the devil (Ephesians 6:10-17).
- Jonathan was willing to lay his life down (1 Samuel 20:30-33): The friendship of Jonathan didn't stop at simply laying down his rights but extended to the point where he was even willing to place his life on the line to protect David.

Jonathan's loyalty and love for his friend placed his own life at risk. This is a picture of Jesus Christ who, like Jonathan, was willing to lay His life down for mankind. Jesus said 'Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.' (John 15:13). Like Jonathan also, who bore the hatred of Saul for another, so Jesus bore the hatred of mankind so that the very people who hated Him could go free. The greatest prophecy in the Old Testament about the suffering that the Messiah would endure goes into this, saying 'He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.'" (Isaiah 53:3-5)

- Jonathan interceded for David (1 Samuel 19:1-6): When Saul was plotting the death of David, Jonathan came to David's aid by pleading for David's life to be spared. This intercession of Jonathan is a small reminder of the intercession that the Lord Jesus Christ does for us. In His early ministry Jesus interceded for Simon, Luke 22:31 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." In His present role as our Priest and mediator before God, Jesus carries on interceding for us. Hebrews 7:24-25 '...because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.' Romans 8:33-34 'Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.' Hebrews 4:16-17 'Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.'
- Jonathan encouraged David whilst he was in the wilderness (1 Samuel 23:15-18): When David was discouraged because it seemed as if Saul would never give up pursuit for his life, Jonathan went into the wilderness to find David and encourage him by reminding him of the promises that he had received from God. Jesus too has provided us with Comfort when we are discouraged. Before He left and ascended into Heaven He told His disciples, John 14:26 'But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will

send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' Romans 15:4-5 'For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus.'

Responsibility of David towards Jonathan = Responsibility of the believer towards Christ

- David showed love and loyalty to Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:14-15, 2 Samuel 9): Even after the death of Jonathan David continued to show his love and loyalty to his friend, Jonathan. This can be seen in the kindness that David showed Mephibosheth. Our responsibility as being believers and children of God is to obey His commandments to love Him and place Him first. Matthew 22:36-37 ""Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?" Jesus replied, ""You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.""
- David accepted the clothes of Jonathan and put them on (1 Samuel 18:4):

Putting on the Covenant Identity						
	Who initiated it?		What is the motive	What is the heart attitude	What happens to identity?	What happens to "rights"
Jonathan	Jonathan (1 Sam 18:3)		Love (1 Sam 18:1-3)	Humility	David put on Jonathan	Jonathan gave up his rights to the throne
Jesus	Jesus (Luke 22:20)		Love (John 15:13)	Humility (Philippians 2:5)	Believer is to put on Christ	Jesus did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped

Just as David accepted the clothes of Jonathan and put them on, so we too need to "put on" Christ. We are able to do this when we first, take off those things that are fleshly and then "put on" the attitudes of Christ by acting in a way that is pleasing to God. Paul wrote about this important aspect of our relationship with God:

Colossians 3:9-10 "Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds. In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you."

Colossians 3:12-14 "Since God chose you to be the holy people whom he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony."

ASSIGNMENT

"Identity" is one of the truths that are revealed from the beginning of the Bible. Because identity precedes and affects behavior, we need to ensure that we have the right perception of our identity. In an essay discuss your identity as pertaining to some of the following thoughts:

What was your spiritual identity when you were not saved? Look at your identity from the time of the Fall and how this identity affects man in his relationships with God and man.

How does your spiritual identity change as a result of being saved? How has this change been made possible? Who is responsible for these changes?

Is it possible to take off your old identity (your old sinful nature) without putting on new character traits? For example, can we take off hate, if we first have not learnt to love? What is the sequence of taking off and putting on according to the scripture?

SECONDLY, IT REVEALS TO US TRUE BIBLICAL FRIENDSHIP

The true friendship of David and Jonathan revealed three characteristics of true friendship

- Friendship is unselfish
- Friendship is faithful
- Friendship is in the Lord

COVENANT OF MARRIAGE

The marriage covenant is a covenant that is made between man and woman. This covenant serves as an institution through which mankind can successfully carry out his God-given purpose of filling the earth and ruling over it as well as being a symbol and a type of God's love for His people, His Bride.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT MARRIAGE?

Marriage is a Divine Institution:

Marriage is not a human institution but it is a divine institution that was given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In the creation account, God repeatedly recognized that His creation was good (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). The only thing that God acknowledged as "not good" was the incomplete creation of man as a single being: "Then God said: 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him'" (Genesis 2:20).

Therefore, to rectify the "not good" situation, God declared, "I will make him a helper fit for him" (Genesis 2:18). God therefore designed woman to be man's suitable helper, or literally, "a helper agreeing to him." Eve was created to be Adam's other half making the marriage union a complete whole. The word "helper" ('ezer) is used in the Bible also for God as the helper of the needy (Psalm 33:20; Psalm 146:5), thus it does not imply that woman is an inferior being. She was to be equal in nature and worth, reflecting the same divine image of God (Genesis 1:27). Yet she was to be different in function, serving as a supportive helper.

Marriage is a Divine Illustration:

In both the Old and New Testaments, marriage is used as the supreme illustration of the love relationship that God established with His people.

- Israel is spoken of as being the wife of Jehovah: Isaiah 54:5 "for your Creator will be your husband. The Lord Almighty is his name! He is your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of all the earth." Jeremiah 3:8 "she paid no attention. She saw that I had divorced faithless Israel and sent her away. But now Judah, too, has left me and given herself to prostitution." Hosea 2:19-20 "I will make you my wife forever, showing you righteousness and justice, unfailing love and compassion. I will be faithful to you and make you mine, and you will finally know me as Lord."

- The Church is called the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-32). Revelations 19:7-9 "Let us be glad and rejoice and honor him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself. She is permitted to wear the finest white linen." (Fine linen represents the good deeds done by the people of God.) And the angel said, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb." And he added, "These are true words that come from God."

Being a sacred covenant, human marriage serves in the Old and New Testaments as the prism through which God reveals His covenant relationship with His people and Christ with His church.

Marriage is a covenant:

From the earliest chapters of the Bible the idea of covenant is the framework by which man's relationship to God is to be understood, and which also regulates the lives of God's people. Marriage is called a covenant (Malachi 2:14), the most intimate of all human covenants.

As a contract, marriage is a formal agreement that is made between two people to perform or not to perform in certain ways. However, as a covenant, we see that marriage:

- Is focused on relationships: Biblical covenants differ from contracts in that they are personal and they are relationship orientated instead of service orientated. In the Noahic covenant, God made a covenant between Noah and his descendants. In the Mosaic covenant God made covenant with Himself and the people of Israel. Marriage is about relationship not service. Genesis 2:23 "At last!" Adam exclaimed. "She is part of my own flesh and bone! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken out of a man." God made Eve a companion first for Adam and then a helpmeet. Genesis 2:18 "And the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion who will help him.'"
- Is governed and initiated by God Himself: Contracts are initiated by man and are overseen by worldly authorities, but God becomes the third cord that binds a marriage couple together. Ecclesiastes 4:12 "A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken." God initiated the first marriage (Genesis 1:27, 2:18-25) and Jesus Himself declared that God was the One who ultimately joins two people together (Matthew 19:6).

- Is permanent: Contracts have escape clauses that provide parties with a way out while biblical covenants, especially the marriage covenant is permanent. It is "till death do us part". Marriage in the Old and the New Testament was revealed as being a permanent covenant. In both the Old and the New Testament divorce was not permitted but rather tolerated because of the hardness of the hearts of the Israelites. This permanence in marriage is due to the nature of Biblical covenants. It is due to the fact that the two become one flesh (Genesis 2:24).

ELEMENTS OF THE MARRIAGE COVENANT

"Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

This verse is the foundational statement concerning the marriage covenant and is repeated three times in Scripture.

- Matthew 19:5 "And he said, 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.'
- Mark 10:7-8 "This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' Since they are no longer two but one,"
- Ephesians 5:31 "As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one."

The very first description of the nature of marriage in the Bible, as consisting of leaving, cleaving and becoming one flesh (Gen 2:24), reveals the Biblical understanding of marriage as a covenant relationship. This meaning of marriage as a covenant of companionship is expressed more explicitly later in Scripture in such passages as Malachi 2:14: "The Lord was witness to the *covenant* between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant."

In Genesis 2:24 we see that there are three components to this covenant:

Leaving:

The first step in establishing a marriage covenant is *leaving* all other relationships, including the closest ones of father and mother: "Therefore a man *leaves* his father and his mother" (Genesis 2:24). Leaving does not mean the abandonment of one's parents. The responsibility to "Honor your father and mother" (Exodus 20:12) is applied by Jesus to adults (Mark 7:6-13). We do not

evade our responsibility toward our parents as they grow old. Jesus scorned the hypocrisy of those who gave to the Temple the money they had set aside for their parents (Mark 7:9-13). As adults, however, we assume responsibility *for* our parents rather than *to* them. The Bible never suggests that married couples should sever their ties with their parents, but that they must "let go" of their former lives as sons and daughters in order to cement their relationships as husbands and wives. What "leaving" means is that all lesser relationships must give way to the newly formed marital relationship. A leaving must occur to cement a covenant relationship of husband and wife. This principle of leaving applies likewise to our covenant relationship with God. It is said of the disciples that "they *left* everything and followed Him" (Luke 5:11).

Cleaving:

The second essential component of a marriage covenant is *cleaving*: "Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and *cleaves* to his wife" (Genesis 2:24). A leaving must occur before a cleaving can take place. This process reveals divine wisdom. A man and a woman must leave all lesser relationships for the purpose of cleaving, that is, cementing their new relationship and establishing a new home. "Cleaving" reflects the central concept of covenant-fidelity. The Hebrew word for "cleave" *dabaq*, suggests the idea of being permanently glued or joined together. It is one of the words frequently used to express the covenant commitment of the people to God: "You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve him and *cleave to Him*" (Deuteronomy 10:20; 11:22; 13:4; 30:20). The word is used to describe Ruth's refusal to leave her mother-in-law Naomi: "Ruth *clave* unto her" (Ruth 1:14). In the sight of God, cleaving means wholehearted commitment which spills over to every area of our being. It means to be permanently glued together rather than temporarily taped together. You can separate two pieces of wood taped together, but you cannot separate without great damage two pieces of wood glued together. In fact, two pieces of wood glued together become not only inseparable, but also much stronger than if they were taped together. Cleaving involves unswerving loyalty to one's marital partner. Note that man is to cleave to "his wife."

Becoming One Flesh:

The third essential ingredient of a marriage covenant is that "they become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Note the progression: leaving, cleaving, becoming one flesh. As husband and wife leave lesser relationships and learn to cleave to one another, they become a new entity, "one flesh." To become "one flesh", (Genesis 2:24), means to become one functioning unit. H. C. Leupold explains that becoming one flesh "involves the complete identification of one personality with the other in a community of interests and pursuits, a union consummated in intercourse."

What does it mean to be one flesh?

- It is a supernatural act where God combines two lives into one (Matthew 19:4-6)
- It is a mystery (Ephesians 5:31-32)
- It in itself is not the act of sex, though it includes sexual intimacy (1 Corinthians 6:15-16)
- It refers to being conformed in mind, spirit, will and purpose and is both a one time event and an ongoing process.

THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT

The exchange of rings:

When a couple enters into the marriage covenant a ring is given to one another to signify that a covenant has been made between each other. This sign is to serve as a constant reminder or memorial of the solemn and binding characteristics of the marriage covenant.

The name change:

When God reaffirmed His covenant with Abram, He changed his name from Abram to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah. As part of the marriage ceremony, the wife will take on the husband's name. This change of name signifies the identity and oneness that God intended for the partners who have entered into the marriage covenant.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTIES

The husband:

- **Love His wife:**

Ephesians 5:25-31 "And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man is actually loving himself when he loves his wife. No one hates his own body but lovingly cares for it, just as Christ

cares for his body, which is the church. And we are his body." Ephesians 5:33 "So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

- **Provide for his family:**

Genesis 3:17-19 "And to Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate the fruit I told you not to eat, I have placed a curse on the ground. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. All your life you will sweat to produce food, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return."

- **Be the Head of the Home:**

Ephesians 5:23 "For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of his body, the church; he gave his life to be her Savior."

- **Treat his wife well:**

1 Peter 3:7 "In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat her with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. If you don't treat her as you should, your prayers will not be heard."

The Wife:

- **Love Her Husband:**

Titus 2:4 "These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children" 1 Cor. 7:3-5 "The husband should not deprive his wife of sexual intimacy, which is her right as a married woman, nor should the wife deprive her husband. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband also gives authority over his body to his wife. So do not deprive each other of sexual relations. The only exception to this rule would be the agreement of both husband and wife to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time, so they can give themselves more completely to prayer. Afterward they should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt them because of their lack of self-control."

- **Submit to the Headship of the Husband.**

Ephesians 5:22-24 "You wives will submit to your husbands as you do to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of his body, the church; he gave his life to be her Savior. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives must submit to your husbands in everything." Ephes. 5:33 "So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband." Titus 2:5 "to live wisely and be pure, to take care of their homes, to do good, and to be submissive to their husbands. Then they will not bring shame on the word of God." Colossians 3:18 "You wives must submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord."

THE PERMANENCE OF THE COVENANT

Marriage is for life. It is a permanent union, a bond that should not be broken by each of the parties of the marriage.

Matthew 19:3-6 "Some Pharisees came and tried to trap him with this question: 'Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife for any reason?' 'Haven't you read the Scriptures?' Jesus replied. 'They record that from the beginning 'God made them male and female.' And he said, 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' Since they are no longer two but one, let no one separate them, for God has joined them together.'"

Romans 7:2 "Let me illustrate. When a woman marries, the law binds her to her husband as long as he is alive. But if he dies, the laws of marriage no longer apply to her."

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 "Now, for those who are married I have a command that comes not from me, but from the Lord. A wife must not leave her husband. But if she does leave him, let her remain single or else go back to him. And the husband must not leave his wife."

1 Corinthians 7:39 "A wife is married to her husband as long as he lives. If her husband dies, she is free to marry whomever she wishes, but this must be a marriage acceptable to the Lord."

MARRIAGE: THE TYPOLOGY OF THE CHURCH AND CHRIST

God uses marriage as an imagery to illuminate the special intimate relationship between Him and His people. This concept of marriage between God and His people was not a unique New Testament idea but occurred in the Old Testament.

- Isaiah 54:5 "for your Creator will be your husband. The Lord Almighty is his name! He is your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of all the earth."
- Isaiah 62:5 "Your children will care for you with joy, O Jerusalem, just as a young man cares for his bride. Then God will rejoice over you as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride."
- Jeremiah 3:1 "If a man divorces a woman and she marries someone else, he is not to take her back again, for that would surely corrupt the land. But you have prostituted yourself with many lovers, says the Lord. Yet I am still calling you to come back to me."
- Hosea 2:19-21 "I will make you my wife forever, showing you righteousness and justice, unfailing love and compassion. I will be faithful to you and make you mine, and you will finally know me as Lord. In that day," says the Lord, "I will answer the pleading of the sky for clouds, which will pour down water on the earth in answer to its cries for rain."

Jesus is the Bridegroom:

- Jesus spoke of Himself as the bridegroom: Mark 2:18-20 "John's disciples and the Pharisees sometimes fasted. One day some people came to Jesus and asked, 'Why do John's disciples and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples don't fast?' Jesus replied, 'Do wedding guests fast while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. They can't fast while they are with the groom. But someday he will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.'"
- John the Baptist spoke of Jesus as the bridegroom: John 3:28-30 "You yourselves know how plainly I told you that I am not the Messiah. I am here to prepare the way for him—that is all. The bride will go where the bridegroom is. A bridegroom's friend rejoices with him. I am the bridegroom's friend, and I am filled with joy at his success. He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less."

The church is His Bride:

The Church is betrothed to Jesus Christ and will at the end of the ages become His Bride (Revelations 19:6-8, 21:2, 9-11). When she is presented to Her Bridegroom she will be perfect – without stain, wrinkle or any blemish (Ephesians 5:25-27).

THE HUSBAND	SCRIPTURE	JESUS CHRIST
Head of the Wife	1 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 5:23	Head of the Church
Protector of the Wife	Ephesians 5:23, 29	Saviour of the Church
Lover of the Wife	Hosea 2:13-14, Ephesians 5:25, 28, 29, Song of Solomon	Lover of the Church
THE WIFE	SCRIPTURE	JESUS CHRIST
Submitted to husband	Ephesians 5:22-24	Submitted to Christ
One with Husband	Genesis 2:23-24, Mark 10:8, Ephesians 5:31-32	One with Christ
As bride, betrothed to her husband	Isaiah 54:5, Jeremiah 3:14, Hosea 2:16, 19-20	As the Bride of Christ betrothed to know the Lord
Bridal gown of White	Isaiah 61:10, Revelations 19:6-9	Fine linen, the righteousness of the saints
The Wedding Feast	Matthew 22:1-14, John 2:1-11, Revelations 19:7-8	The marriage supper of the Lamb
Permanency of the Marriage vow	Matthew 19:3-6, 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11, 39	The promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God

"The covenant of marriage is the single most important human bond that holds all of God's work on the planet together. It is no small wonder that the Lord is passionate about the sanctity of marriage and the stability of the home. This covenant of marriage is based on the covenant God has made with us. It is in the power of His promise to her mankind that our personal covenant of marriage can be kept against the forces that would destroy homes and ruin lives." 5

5. Hayford, J. W. The Spirit-Filled Family : Holy Wisdom to Build Happy Homes

CONCLUSION

As we have seen in the course material, biblical covenants make up a large portion of the scripture as well as being the basis by which God communicated and related with man. Right from the time of the Garden of Eden all the way through to the New Earth (the Kingdom Age) God's covenants with man will stand.

The faithfulness of God towards His covenants is not due to man being faithful and fulfilling the requirements and responsibilities set forth in each covenants (as he was not able to do this in the Mosaic Covenant), but rather it is based upon the faithfulness of God. In spite of man's inability to remain faithful and obedient, God is ultimately in control and therefore He places Himself responsible in bringing about the promises and provisions of His covenants. God will ultimately fulfill His covenant promises so that His plans and purposes will come to pass.

2 Timothy 2:13 "If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself."

ASSIGNMENT

Summarize the contents of this course by creating a summary chart of all the covenants that have been studied.

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