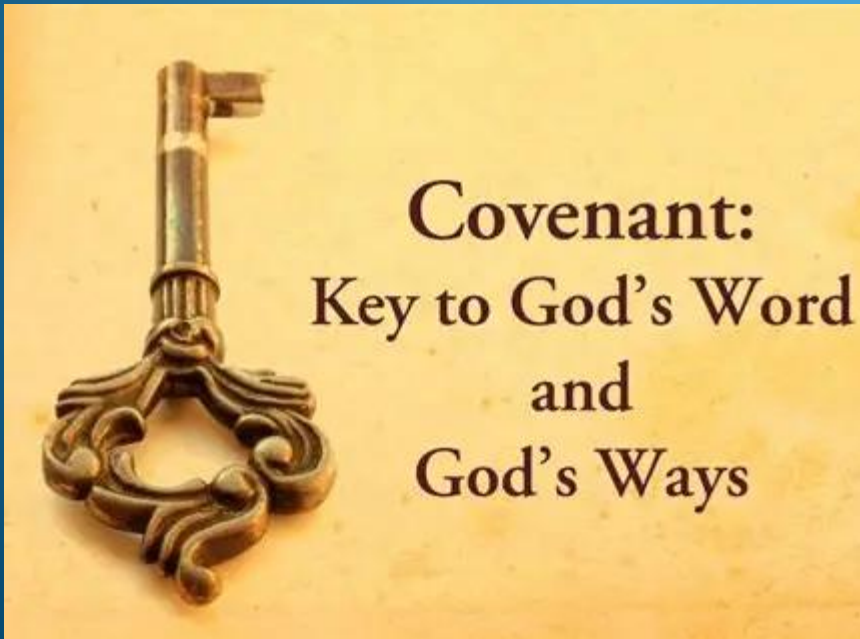




# An Overview of **Christ** and His **Covenants**



The Biblical History of Redemption  
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# The Bible Has Many **Covenants**

- A biblical **covenant** is a bond in **blood** sovereignly administered. (O. Palmer Robertson)
- **Covenants** are the **backbone** of the story of Scripture:
  - **Adam**—the promised son, the seed of the woman
  - **Noah**—The re-creation after universal judgment
  - **The Patriarchs**—The divine choice of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob
  - **Moses**—The Old Covenant and its Legal System
  - **David**—The Kings prepare for the King of Kings
  - **The Prophets**—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, a new covenant awaits
  - **Jesus** establishes the New Covenant
    - The **New Covenant** by the Holy Spirit
- The distinct biblical covenants while different are united. They are all expressions of **one Covenant of Grace**.

# Etymology and Synonyms of **Covenant**

- **Etymology:** (English: *Co-venire* = “to come together”)
  - Hebrew—*Berith*—Genesis 15
  - Greek—*Diatheke*
  - Latin—*Testamentum, Pactum, Foedus* (= “Federal”)
  - French, Spanish—*Alliance*
- **Synonyms:**
- Union with Christ—“in Christ”, “with Christ” (88x in Paul)
- Testament—Last Will and Testament
- Adoption—Formula of the Covenant
- Promise—From God to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3
- Kingdom—Especially with the Davidic Covenant

# The Elements of a **Covenant**

- **Parties**—those entering into the **covenant**
- **Promise/Oath**—those making **covenant** (God or man) give an oath that is to be relied upon or trusted
- **Conditions**—the requirements for fulfillment of the **covenant** for either God, man or both
- **Stipulations**—fulfillment of the conditions is required bringing the benefits of the **covenant**, but if violated, its curses
- **Blessings and Curses**—as **covenants** are binding, they have wonderful or grave consequences
- **Sacrifices**—the shedding of blood by the death of a sacrifice is a central part of a biblical **covenant**. A covenant is a *berith* or “cutting”. They emphasize the sanctity and gravity of the stipulations and the reality of the blessings and curses
- **Signs or Sacraments**—actions, objects and elements that seal and illustrate the bond or **covenant** between the parties

# Three Theological Covenants:

- **Covenant of Redemption** with Christ in Eternity—  
John 17. God's eternal plan or decree to save sinners through the work of Christ
- **Covenant of Works** with Adam in Creation—  
Genesis 1-3. The original relationship between God and man in Eden, lost due to man's fall
- **Covenant of Grace** with all of God's People—the story of salvation throughout the Bible. It is the story of the broken covenant restored.

# The **Covenant** Has Many Connections with Theology

- Canon—Jerome
- Hermeneutics—Augustine
- Trinitarianism—Predestination—*Pactum Salutis* (John 17)
- History of Salvation = Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology
- Christology—Two natures in one person = the covenant person
- Salvation—Soteriology—the duplex gratia of the covenant of grace
- Ethics—The Moral Law/Ten Commandments
- Ecclesiology and Reformation—Breaking covenant and Resistance
- Sacraments—infant baptism and Lord's Supper
- Family—Marriage covenant and covenant children
- Government—Federal Government and Political Resistance
- Missions—The Covenant of Grace as the Paradigm of Missions

# The Formula of the **Covenant**: God **Adopts** a People for Himself

- “I will be your God and you will be my people.”
- Divine initiative and promise:
  - Monergism, the one-sided sovereign work of God
  - Unilateral in initiation,
  - Sovereignty, God is Lord of this relationship
  - A suzerainty covenant in context of the Ancient Near East
- Yet Mutual or bilateral in realization, “I...You”
- A promise/fact with an implied command: Indicative with obligatory implications, or imperatives,
  - “You will be”,
  - “You will be”

# The Formula of the **Covenant**:

## God Completes the **Adoption** of His People in Heaven

- Revelation 21:1-3:
- Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. **He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.**

# The Abiding Unity of the **Covenant**

- God **Keeps** His **Covenant**:

- Deuteronomy 7:9—”Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who **keeps covenant** and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.”

- God **Remembers** His **Covenant**:

- Psalm 105:7-10, 42—”He **remembers** his **covenant forever**, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, the **covenant** that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant....”
- Psalm 106:45 (“**remembered** his **covenant**”);
- Psalm 111:5 (“**remembers** His **covenant forever**”);
- Luke 1:72-73 (“to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to **remember** his holy **covenant**, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham....”) *Zechariah’s prophecy at beginning the New Testament.*

# The Signs of the Biblical **Covenants**

## The Covenants

- Redemption
- Works
- Grace:
  - Adam
  - Noah
  - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob
  - Moses
  - David
  - Prophets
  - New Covenant in Christ
  - Apostles
  - Apocalypse

## The Signs of the Covenants

- Redemption—Creation itself
- Works—Tree of Life, Sabbath
- Grace: Several signs that vary
  - Adam—childbirth
  - Noah—rainbow
  - Patriarchs—circumcision
  - Moses—Passover, Sabbath-law
  - David—Temple and Kingly line
  - Prophets—Empty Ark of the Covenant (law on heart)
  - Christ—Lord's Supper, the cross
  - Apostles—Trinitarian Baptism
  - Apocalypse—Tree of Life

# The **Covenant** Is the Same in Substance but Distinct in Administration

## Same in Substance

- 1. Formula of the **Covenant** is the same: “I will be your God and you will be my people”
- 2. The Word of God is the same
- 3. Justification by Faith is the same
- 4. The need for a sacrifice for sin to be forgiven
- 5. The coming Savior/Christ is still the heart of God’s plan
- 6. The holy nature of God and His moral law are timeless

## Distinct in Administration

- 1. Incomplete Revelation
- 2. Greater burdens
- 3. Movement of lesser to greater
- 4. Use of many Signs, types, symbols
- 5. Limited to Israel, now to nations
- 6. Different sacraments and signs in different ages
- 7. Emphasis on land, now on new heavens and new earth

# The Unfolding of the **Covenant** of Grace in Genesis

- With **Adam**: Genesis 3:15—**the proto-evangelion**, the promised Son, the struggle, the cross
- With **Noah**: Genesis 9—re-creation after judgment, the **covenant** sign of the rainbow for all mankind
- With **Abraham**, the beginnings of Israel:
  - Genesis 12:1-3—The promise of blessing to the nations
  - Genesis 15—The **covenant** is unilateral in initiation
  - Genesis 17—The **covenant** is mutual in fulfillment
  - Genesis 22—The sacrifice of the **covenant**—The Lamb of God
  - Galatians 3:29—Abraham's **covenant** is joined with Christian believers

# The **Covenant** with Abraham:

## One **covenant** with two benefits

- Abraham's call—Gen. 12
  - A Land—The promised land, the new heavens and new earth
  - A Seed—Isaac, the people of Israel, the Messiah, all believers
  - A Blessing—The Word of God, the gift of salvation in Christ
  - All Nations—The Gospel will touch the whole earth
- His justification—Gen. 15
- His sanctification—Gen. 17
- God's sacrifice—Gen. 22—"God will provide the Lamb"
- The New **Covenant** in Jeremiah 31:31ff is also one covenant with two benefits
  - Sanctification: I will write my law on your heart (the law given to Moses—the Moral Law, the Ten Commandments)
  - Justification: I will forgive your sins and remember them no more

# The Ten Commandments, The Moral Law: Begin With A Critical Preface—

It Is the Statement of the Grace of the **Covenant**

“I Am the Lord Your God Who Brought You out of the Land of Egypt, the House of Bondage.”

## The First Table: Loving God

- 1<sup>st</sup>—God is first
- 2<sup>nd</sup>—No idols, worship God His way, not ours
- 3<sup>rd</sup>—Use God’s name and all that is His in a holy manner
- 4<sup>th</sup>—Worship God with a day of rest and worship each week

## The Second Table: Loving Our Neighbor

- 5<sup>th</sup>—Honor parents and lawful authority
- 6<sup>th</sup>—Life is sacred, no murder
- 7<sup>th</sup>—Marriage is sacred, no sexual misconduct
- 8<sup>th</sup>—No stealing, protect one’s neighbor’s property
- 9<sup>th</sup>—No lying, pursue the truth, protecting others’ reputations
- 10<sup>th</sup>—No coveting, contentment and gratitude with God’s provision

# The **Covenant** Is A Strategic Concept for Understanding the Bible

- The **Covenant** is like a **handle**: It helps us gain a grasp of the Bible
- The **Covenant** is a like a **superstructure** or **skeleton**: It creates the shape of the Bible
- The **Covenant** is a like a **road map**: It gives direction to the story line of the Bible
- The **Covenant** is a like a **file cabinet**: It organizes the Bible's teaching
- The **Covenant** is a like a **constitution**: It unites the Bible's message of how God governs His people

# Summary of Key Ideas

Why understanding the **covenant** is helpful

Basic elements of a biblical **covenant**

Three theological **covenants**

Differences between the **covenants** of works and grace

There are several biblical **covenants**

The formula of the **covenant**

How the **covenants** Relate—Continuity and Discontinuity

The **covenants** are marked by signs and seals

The **covenants** with Adam and Noah

The **covenant** with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

# The **Covenant** of **Works** and The **Covenant** of **Grace** Compared

- The **Covenant** of **Works**
- With a perfect man
- In Creation
- Adam is Head
- Perfect Obedience of man
- Blessing is life
- Curse is death
- Sign is tree of life, lost when Adam is banished
- All are under its penalty of death
- The **Covenant** of **Grace**
- With Christ who is perfect
- After the Fall
- Christ is Head
- Perfect Obedience of Christ
- Blessing is life for sinners
- Curse is taken by Christ
- Sign is sacrifice and the cross, Christ hangs on a tree
- Only believers have this grace

# How Do Biblical **Covenants** Relate?

- **The Continuity of the Covenant:**
  - They are progressive
  - They are organic in development
  - They are the same in substance
    - The Formula of the Covenant
    - The Coming of the Savior, they are Christ-centered
- **The Discontinuity of the Covenant:**
  - They are distinct in administration
  - They move from the lesser to the greater
  - They can be considered in a broad sense—Grace
  - They can be considered in a narrow sense—Specific Demand

# Genesis and the **Covenant** of Grace

- With Adam after the fall—the **Proto-evangelion**, Gen. 3:15, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”
- With Noah after the flood—the re-creation, Gen. 9:1-17
- With Abraham—the beginnings of Israel and blessings for all nations, Gen. 12:1-3, 15:5-18, 17:1-14, 22:15-18
- Isaac—Gen. 17:15-22; 26:3-5
- Jacob—Gen. 28:13-14; 35:11-12

# God's **Covenant** with Noah, his sons, all future generations, all animals and the earth

- Genesis 9:8-16, “Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, Behold, I establish my **covenant** with you and your **offspring after you**, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; **it is for every beast of the earth**. I establish **my covenant** with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the sign of the **covenant** that I make **between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations**: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of **the covenant** between me and the earth...When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember **the everlasting covenant** between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”

# The Formula of the **Covenant** and Election: God **Adopts** Abraham's Descendents for Himself

- All stand in Adam by creation and fall.
- All Stand in Noah by re-creation and common grace.
- But not all stand in Abraham's **covenant** of special grace.
- Genesis 17:7, “And I will establish my **covenant** between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting **covenant**, to be God to you and to your offspring after you, and I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”

# The **Covenant** of Grace With Abraham and Isaac

- Abraham—the beginnings of Israel and God’s blessings for all nations, Gen. 12:1-3, 15:5-18, 17:1-14, 22:15-18
- Isaac—Abraham’s promised son:
- Gen. 17:15-22, v. 19, “God said, No, [not Ishmael] but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my **covenant** with him as an everlasting **covenant** for his offspring after him.”
- 26:3-5, “Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the **oath** that I swore to Abraham your father. I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”
- Jacob—Gen. 28:13-14; 35:11-12

# The **Covenant** of Grace With Abraham and Jacob

- **Abraham**—the beginnings of Israel and God’s blessings for all nations, Gen. 12:1-3, 15:5-18, 17:1-14, 22:15-18.
- **Isaac**—Abraham’s promised son, Gen. 17:15-22; 26:3-5.
- **Jacob**, or, **Israel**, Isaac’s son, Gen. 28:12-14, “And he dreamed, and behold, there was a **ladder** set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

# The **Covenant** of Grace With Abraham and Jacob

- **God renames Jacob, Israel, at Bethel, Gen. 35:9-15:**
- God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name. So he called his name Israel. And God said to him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you, Then God went up from him in the place where he had spoken with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone. He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it So Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken with him **Bethel**.

# Moses: The Covenant of Theocracy

How does the Mosaic Law  
Fit into the Covenant of Grace?

# How Do Biblical **Covenants** Relate?

- **The Continuity of the **Covenant**:**
  - They are progressive
  - They are organic in development
  - They are the same in substance
    - The Formula of the **Covenant**
    - The Coming of the Savior, they are Christ-centered
- **The Discontinuity of the **Covenant**:**
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  - They can be considered in a broad sense--Grace
  - They can be considered in a narrow sense—Specific Demand

# Three Parts to the Law of Moses

- **Ceremonial Law**—the law for worship in the tabernacle and temple. This is fulfilled in Christ
- **Civil Law**—the law for the nation of Israel—abrogated with the end of the nation of Israel
- **Moral Law**—the Ten Commandments, the eternal will of God based upon His holy nature

# The **Covenant** of Abraham Compared With the **Covenant** with Moses

## Abraham

- Genesis 12, 15, 17, 22
- With Abraham and his seed
- Condition begins with faith
- Obedience flows from faith
- Emphasis is grace
- God provides a name, a seed, a blessing
- All nations will be blessed
- Sacrifice shows grace
- Sign is circumcision

## Moses

- Exod., Lev., Num., Deut.
- With the nation of Israel
- Suzerainty Treaty with faith
- Obedience is demanded
- Emphasis is on law in grace
- God provides law for the nation, for worship & for life
- Sacrifices demanded yet gracious
- Sign is Passover and Sabbath

# The Covenant with Moses Is The **Covenant** with New Testament Christians

- Lev. 26:12, “And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.”
- 2 Cor. 6:16, What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, ‘I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.’

# Moses: The Covenant of Theocracy

How does the Mosaic Law  
Fit into the Covenant of Grace—In light of  
Dispensationalism?

# Dispensationalism

- **Dispensationalism teaches:**
- The OT and NT present two entirely different purposes of God
- These purposes are for two different peoples of God
- The OT is for Israel
- The NT is for the Church

# Dispensationalism

- The “*sine qua non* of Dispensationalism” is the distinction between the Church and Israel
- It sees two purposes of God in the history of salvation— one for Israel, and one for the Church
- It teaches that the specific covenants identified in Scripture are different dispensations, different ways God works with, tests and even saves His people
- There is not a unified message to the Bible in the history of salvation
- The unity of the covenant of grace in the Bible is denied
- The pre-fall covenant with Adam is not accepted