



Covenants

From God to Man

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Forward

God, our creator and keeper, has chosen to deal with his Creation in the form of covenants.

A Biblical covenant is a religious covenant that is described in the Bible.

Jeremiah 31:30-33

But everyone shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

The people tried to blame God's judgment on the sins of their fathers. One person's sin does indeed affect other people, but all people are still held personally accountable for the sin in their own lives (Deut. 24:16; Ezekiel 18:2).

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

God would write his law on their hearts rather than on tablets of stone, as he did the Ten Commandments. In Jeremiah 17:1 their sin was engraved on their hearts so that they wanted above all to disobey. This change seems to describe an experience very much like the new birth, with God taking the initiative. When we turn our lives over to God, he, by his Holy Spirit, builds into us the desire to obey him.

The old covenant, broken by the people, would be replaced by a new covenant. The foundation of this new covenant is Christ (Hebrews 8:6).

It is revolutionary, involving not only Israel and Judah, but even the Gentiles. It offers a unique personal relationship with God himself, with his laws written on individuals' hearts instead of on stone. Jeremiah looked forward to the day when Jesus would come to establish this covenant.

But for us today, this covenant is here. We have the wonderful opportunity to make a fresh start and establish a permanent, personal relationship with God (see Jeremiah 29:11; Jeremiah 32:38-40).

In this study, we are going to study the promises and provisions of the seven major covenants in the Bible.

They are the Adamic, the Noahic, the Abrahamic, the Priestly, the Davidic and the New Covenants.

Receive the provisions of God's Covenants today.

Chapter 1

The Adamic Covenant

Genesis 1:26-30

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. [

We are to reflect the character of God in our love, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and faithfulness.

Knowing that we are made in God's image and thus share many of his characteristics provides a solid basis for self-worth. Human worth is not based on possessions, achievements, physical attractiveness, or public acclaim. Instead it is based on being made in God's image.

Because we bear God's image, we can feel positive about ourselves. Criticizing or downgrading ourselves is criticizing what God has made and the abilities he has given us. Knowing that you are a person of worth helps you love God, know him personally, and make a valuable contribution to those around you.

27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

God made both man and woman in his image. Neither man nor woman is made more in the image of God than the other. From the beginning the Bible places both man and woman at the pinnacle of God's creation. Neither sex is exalted, and neither is depreciated.

[28] And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

To “rule over” something is to have absolute authority and control over it. God has ultimate rule over the earth, and he exercises his authority with loving care. When God delegated some of his authority to the human race, he expected us to take responsibility for the environment and the other creatures that share our planet. We must not be careless and wasteful as we fulfill this charge. God was careful how he made this earth. We must not be careless about how we take care of it.

[29] And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

[30] And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

God saw that all he had created was very good. You are part of God’s creation, and he is pleased with how he made you. If at times you feel worthless or of little value, remember that God made you for a good reason. You are valuable to him.

Genesis 3:16-19

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. [17] And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; [18] Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; [19] In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Adam and Eve learned by painful experience that because God is holy and hates sin, he must punish sinners. The rest of the book of Genesis recounts painful stories of lives ruined as a result of the fall. Disobedience is sin, and it breaks our fellowship with God. But, fortunately, when we disobey, God is willing to forgive us and to restore our relationship with him.

The Seed of the woman, who is Jesus Christ, shall bruise the head of Satan, bringing destruction and an end to Satan.

Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Satan is our enemy. He will do anything he can to get us to follow his evil, deadly path. The phrase “you will strike his heel” refers to Satan’s repeated attempts to defeat Christ during his life on earth.

“Jesus Christ will crush your head” foreshadows Satan’s defeat when Christ rose from the dead. A strike on the heel is not deadly, but a crushing blow to the head is.

Already God was revealing his plan to defeat Satan and offer salvation to the world through his Son, Jesus Christ.

The Adamic Covenant once broken can now be renewed through Jesus Christ, in the New Covenant.

Chapter 2

The Noahic Covenant

Genesis 9:8-17.

The Noahic Covenant is a promise God made to Noah and his descendents after the flood that destroyed the world.

Genesis 9:8-17

And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,

[9] And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;

[10] And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.

[11] And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there anymore be a flood to destroy the earth.

[12] And God said, “This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations”:

[13] I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between the earth and me.

[14] And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud:

[15] And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

[16] And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.

[17] And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

It is a non-conditional covenant.

Noah stepped out of the ark onto an earth devoid of human life. But God gave him a reassuring promise. This covenant had three parts:

- (1) Never again will a flood do such destruction;
- (2) As long as the earth remains, the seasons will always come as expected;
- (3) A rainbow will be visible when it rains as a sign to all, that God will keep his promises.

The earth's order and seasons are still preserved, and rainbows still remind us of God's faithfulness to his Word.

When God promised Noah and his sons that he would establish a covenant with them, Noah believed God without doubting.

All Scripture is Inspired of God.

2 Tim. 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

[17] That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Scripture is completely trustworthy.

Because God was in control of its writing. Its words are entirely authoritative for our faith and lives. The Bible is “God-breathed.” Read it, and use its teachings to guide your conduct.

The whole Bible is God’s inspired Word. Because it is inspired and trustworthy, we should *read* it and *apply* it to our lives. The Bible is our standard for testing everything else that claims to be true. It is our safeguard against false teaching and our source of guidance for how we should believe.

The Bible is our only source of knowledge about how we can be saved. God wants to show you what is true and equip you to live for him. Read God’s word regularly to discover God’s truth and to become confident in your life and faith. Develop a plan for reading the whole Bible, not just the familiar passages.

In our zeal for the *truth* of Scripture, we must never forget its *purpose*. The purpose is to equip us to do good. We should not study God’s Word simply to increase our knowledge or to prepare us to win arguments. We should study the Bible so that we will know how to do Christ’s work in the world. Our knowledge of God’s Word is not useful unless it strengthens our faith and leads us to do well.

Holy men of old spoke as the Holy Spirit moved upon them.

2 Peter 1:21

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Christ's sacrifice for our sins was not an afterthought, not something God decided to do when the world spun out of control. The all-knowing, eternal God set this plan in motion long before the world was created.

What a comfort it must have been to Jewish believers to know that God planned Christ's coming and his work of salvation long before the world began. This assured them that the law was not being scrapped because it didn't work, but that both the law *and* the coming of Christ were part of God's eternal plan.

It can clearly be seen that the Old Testament Scriptures were claiming the promises of God.

More than 400 times, the Bible states that God is speaking.

God spoke through prophets.

1 Kings 14:18

And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet.

Chapter 3

The Abrahamic Covenant

Genesis 12:1-3

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: [2] And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: [3] And I

will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

God appeared to Abraham and promised to make his descendants into a great nation. Abraham's part of the agreement was to obey God. Through sharp testing and an incident that almost destroyed his family, Abraham remained faithful to God. Throughout this section we discover how to live a life of faith.

When God called him, Abram moved out in faith from Ur to Haran and finally to Canaan. God then established a covenant with Abram, telling him that he would found a great nation. Not only would this nation be blessed, God said, but also the other nations of the earth would be blessed through Abram's descendants. Israel, the nation that would come from Abram, was to follow God and influence those with whom it came in contact. Through Abram's family tree, Jesus Christ was born to save humanity. Through Christ, people can have a personal relationship with God and be blessed beyond measure.

God promised to bless Abram and make him great.

God promised to bless Abram and make him great, but there was one condition. Abram had to do what God wanted him to do. This meant leaving his home and friends and traveling to a new land where God promised to build a great nation from Abram's family. Abram obeyed, walking away from his home for God's promise of even greater blessings in the future. God may be trying to lead you to a place of greater service and usefulness for him. Don't let the comfort and security of your present position make you miss God's plan for you.

Abraham builds an altar unto the Lord

Genesis 12:6-7

And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.

Abram built an altar to the Lord. Altars were used in many religions, but for God's people, altars were more than places of sacrifice. For them, altars symbolized communion with God and commemorated notable encounters with him. Built of rough stones and earth, altars often remained in place for years as continual reminders of God's protection and promises.

Abram regularly built altars to God for two reasons:

- (1) For prayer and worship, and
- (2) As reminders of God's promise to bless him.

Abram couldn't survive spiritually without regularly renewing his love and loyalty to God.

Building altars helped Abram remember that God was at the center of his life. Regular worship helps us remember what God desires and motivates us to obey him.

God shows Abram the promise of land.

Genesis 13:14-17

And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: [15] For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. [16] And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can

number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. [17] Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

Good pasture and available water seemed like a wise choice to Lot at first. But he failed to recognize that wicked Sodom could provide temptations strong enough to destroy his family. Have you chosen to live or work in a “Sodom”? Even though you may be strong enough to resist the temptations, other members of your family may not. While God commands us to reach people in the “Sodom” near us, we must be careful not to become like the very people we are trying to reach.

Abram receives a Vision

Genesis 15:1-21

After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

Why would Abram be afraid? Perhaps he feared revenge from the kings he had just defeated (Genesis 14:15). God gave him two good reasons for courage:

(1) he promised to defend Abram (“I am your shield”), and (2) he promised to be Abram’s “very great reward.” When you fear what lies ahead, remember that God will stay with you through difficult times and that he has promised you great blessings.

[2] And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? [3] And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. [4] And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall

come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. [5] And he brought him forth abroad, and said, “Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be”.

Abram wasn't promised wealth or fame; he already had that. Instead God promised descendants like the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on the seashore (Genesis 22:17), too numerous to count.

To appreciate the vast number of stars scattered through the sky, you need to be, like Abram, away from any distractions. Or pick up a handful of sand and try to count the grains—it can't be done! Just when Abram was despairing of ever having an heir, God promised descendants too numerous to imagine. God's blessings are beyond our imaginations!

[6] And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Although Abram had been demonstrating his faith through his actions, it was his belief in the Lord, not his actions that made Abram right with God (Romans 4:1-5). We too can have a right relationship with God by trusting him. Our outward actions

[7] And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. [8] And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

Abram was looking for confirmation and assurance that he was doing God's will. We also want assurance when we ask for guidance. But we

can know for sure that what we are doing is right if we do what the Bible says.

God Renews His Covenant with Abram.

Genesis 17:1-14

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

The Lord told Abram, “I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless.” God has the same message for us today. We are to obey the Lord in every respect because he is God—that is reason enough. If you don’t think the benefits of obedience are worth it, consider who God is—the only one with the power and ability to meet your every need.

[2] And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. [3] And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, [4] As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. [5] Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. [6] And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. [7] And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. [8] And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Why did God repeat his covenant to Abram? Twice before, he had mentioned this agreement (Genesis 12 and Genesis 15). Here, however, God was bringing it into focus and preparing to carry it out. He revealed

to Abram several specific parts of his covenant: (1) God would give Abram many descendants; (2) many nations would descend from him; (3) God would maintain his covenant with Abram's descendants; (4) God would give Abram's descendants the land of Canaan.

Abraham Receives a New Name

God changed Abram's name to Abraham ("father of many") shortly before the promised son was conceived. From this point on, the Bible calls him Abraham.

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[9] And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. [10] This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

Why did God require circumcision? (1) As a sign of obedience to him in all matters. (2) As a sign of belonging to his covenant people. Once circumcised, there was no turning back. The man would be identified as a Jew forever. (3) As a symbol of "cutting off" the old life of sin, purifying one's heart, and dedicating oneself to God. (4) Possibly as a health measure.

[11] And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. [12] And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. [13] He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. [14] And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

God was making a covenant, or contract, between himself and Abraham. The terms were simple: Abraham would obey God and circumcise all the males in his household; God's part was to give Abraham heirs, property, power, and wealth. Most contracts are even trades: We give something and in turn receive something of equal value. But when we become part of God's covenant family, the blessings we receive far outweigh what we must give up.

Genesis 22:15-18

And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, [16] And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: [17] That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; [18] And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Abraham received abundant blessings because he did not hold back, but obeyed God. First, God gave Abraham's descendants the ability to conquer their enemies. Second, God promised Abraham children and grandchildren who would in turn bless the whole earth. People's lives

would be changed as a result of knowing of the faith of Abraham and his descendants. Most often we think of blessings as gifts to be enjoyed. But when God blesses us, his blessings are intended to overflow to others.

Chapter 4

The Priestly Covenant

The priestly order of the Sinai Covenant

Comparison and contrast is made between the Levitical priesthood, and Jesus Christ eternal priesthood in the New Testament.

Priesthood was based on genealogy.

Numbers 18:1-7

And the Lord said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. [2] And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. [3] And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only

they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die. [4] And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. [5] And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel. [6] And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the Lord, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. [7] Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for everything of the altar, and within the vail; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

God provided a provision for the tribe of Levi was served as priest.

Numbers 18:21-22

And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. [22] Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die.

Priests were to be compassionate and advocates of Israel.

Exodus 28:1

And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

God was teaching his people how to worship him. To do so, he needed ministers to oversee the operations of the tabernacle and to help the people maintain their relationship with God.

These men were called priests and Levites, and they could only be members of the tribe of Levi.

Not only was a priest from the tribe of Levi, but he also was a descendant of Aaron, Israel's first high priest. Priests had more responsibilities than Levites. As high priest, Aaron was in charge of all the priests and Levites. The priests performed the daily sacrifices, maintained the tabernacle, and counseled the people on how to follow God. They were the people's representatives before God and thus were required to live worthy of their office.

Jesus is now our high priest

(Hebrews 8). Daily sacrifices are no longer required because he sacrificed himself on the cross for our sins. Today ministers no longer sacrifice animals. Instead they lead us in prayer and teach us about both the benefits and the commandments that characterize our new life as Christians.

Exodus 28:41-43

And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. [42] And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach: [43] And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him.

Both God and his priest are to show compassion.

Hebrews 5:2-3

Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. [3] And

by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

Christ's divine appointment and his humanity. The writer uses two Old Testament verses to show Christ's divine appointment—Psalm 2:7 and Psalm 110:4. At the time this book was written, the Romans selected the high priest in Jerusalem. In the Old Testament, however, God chose Aaron, and only Aaron's descendants could be high priests. Christ, like Aaron, was chosen and called by God.

Melchizedek was a priest of Salem (now called Jerusalem)..

Offerings and sacrifices were made by the priesthood, for the people.

Leviticus 5:13

And the priest shall make an atonement for him as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him: and the remnant shall be the priest's, as a meat offering.

Numbers 15:25

And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them; for it is ignorance: and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord, and their sin offering before the Lord, for their ignorance:

The guilt offering was a way of taking care of sin committed unintentionally. It was for those who sinned in some way against “holy things”—the tabernacle or the priesthood—as well as for those who unintentionally sinned against someone. In either case, a ram with no defects had to be sacrificed, plus those harmed by the sin had to be compensated for their loss, plus a 20 percent penalty. Even though Christ's death has made guilt offerings unnecessary for us today, we still need to make things right with those we hurt.

The priestly role offered the people blessings, gifts and sacrifices to God.

Numbers 6:22-27

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, [23] Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, [24] The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: [25] The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: [26] The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. [27] And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.

A blessing was one way of asking for God's divine favor to rest upon others. The ancient blessing in these verses helps us understand what a blessing was supposed to do. Its five parts conveyed hope that God would

- (1) Bless and keep them (favor and protect);
- (2) Make his face shine upon them (be pleased);
- (3) Be gracious (merciful and compassionate);
- (4) Turn his face toward them (give his approval);
- (5) Give peace.

When you ask God to bless others or yourself, you are asking him to do these five things. The blessing you offer will not only help the one receiving it, it will also demonstrate love, encourage others, and provide a model of caring to others.

The priesthood was limited to priestly functions.

Exodus 19:5-6

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: [6] And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words that thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Chapter 5

The Priestly order of Melchizedek

The first priestly succession order found in Scriptures is found in Genesis 14:18

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the Most High God.

Melchizedek was obviously a God-fearing man, for his name means “king of righteousness,” and king of Salem means “king of peace.” He was a “priest of God Most High” (Hebrews 7:1-2). He recognized God as Creator of heaven and earth. What else is known about him? Four main theories have been suggested. (1) Melchizedek was a respected king of that region. Abram was simply showing him the respect he deserved. (2) The name Melchizedek may have been a standing title for all the kings of Salem. (3) Melchizedek was a type of Christ (Hebrews 7:3). A type is an Old Testament event or teaching that is so closely related to what Christ did that it illustrates a lesson about Christ. (4) Melchizedek was the appearance on earth of the preincarnate Christ in a temporary bodily form.

Tithes were paid to Melchizedek by Abraham.

Genesis 14:20

And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Abram gave one-tenth of the booty to Melchizedek. Even in some pagan religions, it was traditional to give a tenth of one's earnings to the gods. Abram followed accepted tradition; however, he refused to take any booty from the king of Sodom. Even though this huge amount would significantly increase what he could have given to God, he chose to reject it for more important reasons—he didn't want the ungodly king of Sodom to say, "I have made Abram rich." Instead, Abram wanted him to say, "God has made Abram rich." In this case, accepting the gifts would have focused everyone's attention on Abram or the king of Sodom rather than on God, the giver of victory. When people look at us, they need to see what God has accomplished in our lives.

God's Covenant with Noah extended to all the earth. Melchizedek was called the priest of the Most High God.

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Chapter 6

The Mosaic Covenant

The Mosaic Covenant was an outgrowth of the Abrahamic Covenant made with the descendants of Abraham.

The Abrahamic Covenant was an unconditional Covenant into which one entered merely in placing their faith and trust in God. The Abrahamic covenant determined receiving salvation by placing their faith and trust in God. It was based on obedience.

The requirements and blessing for the Mosaic Covenant are found in Exodus 19-6. These verses reveal that the Mosaic Covenant was based on Obedience with a priest going between God and the people.

God speaks to Moses

Exodus 19:3-6

And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; [4] Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. [5] Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: [6] And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Mount Sinai (also called Mount Horeb) is one of the most sacred locations in Israel's history. Located in the south-central Sinai peninsula,

this mountain is where Moses met God in a burning bush, God made his covenant with Israel, and Elijah heard God in the gentle whisper. Here God gave his people the laws and guidelines for right living. They learned the potential blessings of obedience (Exodus 34:4-28) and the tragic consequences of disobedience (Exodus 34:32).

God had a reason for rescuing the Israelites from slavery. Now he was ready to tell them what it was: Israel was to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation where anyone could approach God freely.

It didn't take long, however, for the people to corrupt God's plan. God then established Aaron's descendants from the tribe of Levi as priests, representing what the entire nation should have been (Leviticus 8-9). But with the coming of Jesus Christ, God has once again extended his plan to all believers. We are to become holy, a "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9). The death and resurrection of Christ has allowed each of us to approach God freely.

God knew that no nation on earth was good enough to deserve to be called his people, his "treasured possession." He chose Israel, not because in his love and mercy he chose Israel in spite of the wrong the nation had done and would do.

God wanted to have a special nation on earth to represent his way of life, to teach his Word, and to be an agent of salvation to the world. "All nations on earth" would be blessed through Abraham's descendants (Genesis 18:18). Gentiles and kings would come to the Lord through Israel, predicted Isaiah (Isaiah 60:3). Through the nation of Israel, the Messiah, God's chosen Son, would be born. God chose one nation and put it through a rigorous training program, so that one day it could be a channel for his blessings to the whole world.

Moses speaks to Israel concerning God's Covenant.

Leviticus 18:1-5

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, [2] Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the Lord your God.

[3] After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. [4] Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God. [5] Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord.

After the sacrificial system for forgiving sins was in place, the people were instructed on how to live as forgiven people. Applying these standards to our lives helps us grow in obedience and live a life pleasing to God.

The Israelites moved from one idol-infested country to another. As God helped them form a new culture, he warned them to leave all aspects of their pagan background behind. He also warned them how easy it would be to slip into the pagan culture of Canaan, where they were going. Canaan's society and religions appealed to worldly desires, especially sexual immorality and drunkenness.

The Israelites were to keep themselves pure and set apart for God. God did not want his people absorbed into the surrounding culture and environment.

Society may pressure us to conform to its way of life and thought, but yielding to that pressure will (1) create confusion as to which side we should be on and (2) eliminate our effectiveness in serving God.

Follow God, and don't let the culture around you mold your thoughts and actions.

Deut. 11:1

Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, always Deut. 11:22 For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;

Deut. 19:9

If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the Lord thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three:

Deut. 30:16

In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

God has called us to keep his commands, while reminding us that his laws are not hidden from us or beyond our reach. Have you ever said you would obey God if you knew what he wanted? Have you ever complained that obedience is too difficult for a mere human? These are unacceptable excuses. God's laws are written in the Bible and are clearly evident in the world around us. Obeying them is reasonable, sensible, and beneficial. The most difficult part of obeying God's laws is simply deciding to start now. Paul refers to this passage in Romans 10:5-8.

Deut. 30:20

That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

Moses challenged Israel to choose life, to obey God, and therefore continue to experience his blessings. God doesn't force his will on anyone. He lets us decide whether to follow him or reject him. This decision, however, is a life-or-death matter. God wants us to realize this, for he would like us all to choose life. Daily, in each new situation, we must affirm and reinforce this commitment.

Joshua 22:5

But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

The purpose of the Covenant

Galatians 2:16-3:2

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

If observing the Jewish laws cannot justify us, why should we still obey the Ten Commandments and other Old Testament laws? We know that Paul was not saying the law is bad, because in another letter he wrote, "the Law is holy" (Romans 7:12). Instead, he is saying that the law can never make us acceptable to God. The law still has an important role to play in the life of a Christian. The law: (1) guards us from sin by giving

us standards for behavior; (2) convicts us of sin, leaving us the opportunity to ask for God's forgiveness; (3) drives us to trust in the sufficiency of Christ, because we can never keep the Ten Commandments perfectly. The law cannot possibly save us. But after we have become Christians, it can guide us to live as God requires.

[17] But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

[18] For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. [19] I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. [20] I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

[21] I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Believers today may still be in danger of acting as if Christ died for nothing. How? By replacing Jewish legalism with their own brand of Christian legalism, they are giving people extra laws to obey. By believing they can earn God's favor by what they do, they are not trusting completely in Christ's work on the cross.

By struggling to appropriate God's power to change them (sanctification), they are not resting in God's power to save them (justification). If we could be saved by being good, then Christ did not have to die. But the cross is the only way to salvation.

[3:1] O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? [2] This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

The Galatian believers had become fascinated by the false teachers' arguments, almost as though they had been bewitched. Magic was common in Paul's day (Acts 8:9-11; Acts 13:6-7). Magicians used both optical illusions and Satan's power to perform miracles, and people were drawn into the magician's mysterious rites without recognizing their dangerous source.

The Righteous of God would reveal the selfishness of man

Matthew 5:17

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

God's moral and ceremonial laws were given to help people love God with all their hearts and minds. Throughout Israel's history, however, these laws had been often misquoted and misapplied. By Jesus' time, religious leaders had turned the laws into a confusing mass of rules. When Jesus talked about a new way to understand God's law, he was actually trying to bring people back to its *original* purpose. Jesus did not speak against the law itself, but against the abuses and excesses to which it had been subjected

The failure of man would reveal a need for a savior.

Luke 24:26-27

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

[27] And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Jesus' warnings about false teachers still hold true. Upon close examination it becomes clear that many nice-sounding messages don't agree with God's message in the Bible. Only a solid foundation in God's Word can equip us to perceive the errors and distortions in false teaching.

In times of persecution even strong believers will find it difficult to be loyal. To keep from being deceived by false messiahs, we must understand that Jesus' return will be unmistakable (Mark 13:26); no one will doubt that it is he. If you have to be told that the Messiah has come, then he hasn't (Matthew 24:27). Christ's coming will be obvious to everyone.

God had to come with a new plan to save Israel. The new plan is the plan instituted by Christ.

Chapter 7

The Davidic Covenant

2 Samuel 7:12-16

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. [13] He shall build an house for my

name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. [14] I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

[15] But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. [16] And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

David's request was good, but God said no. This does not mean that God rejected David. In fact, God was planning to do something even greater in David's life than allowing him the prestige of building the temple. Although God turned down David's request, he promised to continue the house (or dynasty) of David forever. David's earthly dynasty ended four centuries later, but Jesus Christ, a direct descendant of David, was the ultimate fulfillment of this promise (Acts 2:22-36).

Christ will reign for eternity—now in his spiritual kingdom and in heaven, and later, on earth, in the New Jerusalem (Luke 1:30-33; Rev. 21). Have you prayed with good intentions, only to have God say no? This is God's way of directing you to a greater purpose in your life. Accepting God's no requires as great a faith as carrying out his yes.

The House was David's royal dynasty

2 Samuel 7:11

And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the Lord tells you that he will make you an house.

When referring to seed, it means descendant of David.

Psalm 89:4

Thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.

This psalm was written to describe the glorious reign of David. God had promised to make David the mightiest king on earth and to keep his descendants on the throne forever (2 Samuel 7:8-16). But Jerusalem was destroyed, and kings no longer reign there. So these verses can only look forward, prophetically, to the future reign of Jesus Christ, David's descendant. Psalm 89:27 is a prophecy concerning David's never-ending dynasty, which will reach its fulfillment and highest expression in Christ's future reign over the world (see Rev. 22:5).

The throne described.

The throne refers to the right to rule over the kingdom

Psalm 89:29

His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

Psalm 89:36

His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me.

In light of Israel's continual disobedience throughout history, this is an amazing promise. God promised that David's descendants would always sit on the throne (Psalm 89:29), but that if the people disobeyed, they would be punished (Psalm 89:30-32). Yet, even through their disobedience and punishment, God would never break faith with them (Psalm 89:33). Israel *did* disobey, evil ran rampant, the nation was divided, exile came—but through it all, a remnant of God's people remained faithful. Centuries later, the Messiah arrived, the eternal King

from David's line, just as God had promised. All that God promises, he fulfills. He will not take back even one word of what he says. God can also be trusted to save us as he promised he would (Hebrews 6:13-18). God is completely reliable.

The eternal provisions of the Covenant include "Seed descendants" and "Throne".

An uninterrupted succession of kings ruled over the house of David between 1010BC and 586BC. The promises concerning the throne, though often unfulfilled, was an enduring covenant.

Chapter 8

The New Covenant

Many believers today would say they are new covenant believers. Some religious leaders even go so far as to teach their followers to avoid the old covenant. Jesus did not come to destroy the old covenant but to fulfill it.

Many of the promises concerning the New Covenant is found in the Old Testament.

Song 5:7

The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.

How we must enter into the new covenant:

Jeremiah 31:31-33

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: [32] Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: [33] But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

God would write his law on their hearts rather than on tablets of stone, as he did the Ten Commandments.

In Jeremiah 17:1 their sin was engraved on their hearts so that they wanted above all to disobey. This change seems to describe an experience very much like the new birth, with God taking the initiative. When we turn our lives over to God, he, by his Holy Spirit, builds into us the desire to obey him.

The old covenant, broken by the people, would be replaced by a new covenant. The foundation of this new covenant is Christ (Hebrews 8:6). It is revolutionary, involving not only Israel and Judah, but even the Gentiles. It offers a unique personal relationship with God himself, with his laws written on individuals' hearts instead of on stone. Jeremiah looked forward to the day when Jesus would come to establish this covenant. But for us today, this covenant is here. We have the wonderful opportunity to make a fresh start and establish a permanent, personal relationship with God (see Jeremiah 29:11; Jeremiah 32:38-40).

The prophet Ezekiel gives us insight into the new covenant.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. [27] And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

God promised to restore Israel not only physically, but spiritually. To accomplish this, God would give them a new heart for following him and put his Spirit within them (see Ezekiel 11:19-20; Psalm 51:7-11) to transform them and empower them to do his will. Again the new covenant was promised (Ezekiel 16:61-63; Ezekiel 34:23-25), ultimately to be fulfilled in Christ. No matter how impure your life is right now, God offers you a fresh start.

You can have your sins washed away, receive a new heart for God, and have his Spirit within you—if you accept God’s promise. Why try to patch up your old life when you can have a new one?

God will cause us to obey his statutes and his judgments. This includes the laws of Moses. He will not force us or compel us to obey but he will guide our feet into the way of peace by guiding us in leading us into all truth. He will provide us a walk of grace in obedience. In order to do this, we must first choose to fear the Lord Proverbs 1:28 and 29.

Proverbs 1:28-29

Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: [29] For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:

God is more than willing to pour out his heart and make known his thoughts to us. To receive his advice, we must be willing to listen, refusing to let pride stand in our way. Pride is thinking more highly of our own wisdom and desires than of God's. If we think we know better than God or feel we have no need of God's direction, we have fallen into foolish and disastrous pride.

Those who choose to fear the Lord are those who totally committed to obedience, to his word, and are willing to let go of the doctrines of men and follow strictly the new covenant provided by Jesus Christ.

John reveals how to understand the New Covenant.

John 15:5-8

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. [6] If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. [7] If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. [8] Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

Fruit is not limited to soul winning. In this chapter, answered prayer, joy, and love are mentioned as fruit (John 15:7, 11-12). Galatians 5:22-24 and 2 Peter 1:5-8 describe additional fruit: qualities of Christian character.

Remaining in Christ means (1) believing that he is God's Son (1 John 4:15), (2) receiving him as Savior and Lord (John 1:12), (3) doing what God says (1 John 3:24), (4) continuing to believe the gospel (1 John 2:24), and (5) relating in love to the community of believers, Christ's body (John 15:12).

Many people try to be good, honest people who do what is right. But Jesus says that the only way to live a truly good life is to stay close to him, like a branch attached to the vine. Apart from Christ our efforts are unfruitful. Are you receiving the nourishment and life offered by Christ, the vine? If not, you are missing a special gift he has for you.

When a vine bears “much fruit,” God is glorified, for daily he sent the sunshine and rain to make the crops grow, and constantly he nurtured each tiny plant and prepared it to blossom. What a moment of glory for the Lord of the harvest when the harvest is brought into the barns, mature and ready for use! He made it all happen! This farming analogy shows how God is glorified when people come into a right relationship with him and begin to “bear much fruit” in their lives.

Under the new covenant the believers are promised a new heart and a new spirit They are given the experience of being born again and being filled with the Holy Spirit

Under the new covenant the eternal Commandments of Torah are no longer externally written on tables of stone, but our internal written on the heart a purifying obedience to the same eternal Torah

Under the new covenant instead of trying to obey the commandments Barone stream, or our own ability, is now Messiah who gives us the grace, the delight and ability to keep his Commandments

Under the new covenant we will delight in the law in the inward man. Just as Paul the apostle. Romans 7:22, when we, as Paul began to walk in obedience to the Messiah external an everlasting covenant will be manifest according to the Scripture. We must look father at the Passover, and see how the blood of the new covenant is to be sprinkled physically within the holy place, of our tabernacle or temple we must look father in some of the difficult words and see how all of these confirm the many sublime features of the father's everlasting covenant.

Rev. 3:3

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

The church at Sardis was urged to obey the Christian truth they had heard when they first believed in Christ, to get back to the basics of the faith. It is important to grow in our knowledge of the Lord, to deepen our understanding through careful study.

But no matter how much we learn, we must never abandon the basic truths about Jesus. Jesus will always be God's Son, and his sacrifice for our sins is permanent. No new truth from God will ever contradict these Biblical teachings.

If you do not know Jesus Christ as your personal saviour, declare this Scriptures today.

Romans 10:9-10

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. [10] For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 10:13

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

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