

## Bible Connections

# Covenant<sup>1</sup>

[Jeremiah 31:31](#) (NASB) – “Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

[1 Corinthians 11:25](#) (NASB) – In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

**A key theme of the Bible is *covenant*. In fact, the proper name for the Old and New Testaments would be the Old and New Covenants. What is a covenant? Why does it matter? Let’s find out.**

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## Covenant

# Table of Contents

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<b>What is a Covenant?</b>	<b>4</b>
There are three kinds of covenant	4
Conditional vs unconditional	4
Symmetrical vs asymmetrical	4
1) Royal grant (or patron) covenant	5
2) Suzerain-vassal covenant	5
3) Parity covenant between equals	6
<b>Why Does Covenant Matter?</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The Process of “Cutting” a Covenant</b>	<b>8</b>
... and elements of a covenant	8
<b>Example – Marriage is a Covenant</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Covenant Meals</b>	<b>12</b>
The Passover Seder Meal is a Covenant Meal.	12
The Lord’s Supper Communion is the Covenant Meal for our Christian New Covenant	12
<b>Elements of a Covenant <i>Agreement</i> (documentation)</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Major Covenants in the Old Testament</b>	<b>15</b>
Abraham’s Covenant in Genesis 15:9-21	18
Abraham’s Covenant in Genesis 17	19
Covenant with Isaac	19
Jacob’s Covenants: Stone Pillow & Wrestling Match – Genesis 28, 32, and 35	20
The Law, the Mosaic Covenant (Old Covenant, Old Testament)	20
The Kinsman-Redeemer	22
<b>The New Covenant</b>	<b>23</b>
“I will put My law... on their heart... I will be their God, and they will be My people.” (Jeremiah 31:31, 33)	23
"Covenant" in Hebrew and Greek	24
The New Covenant	25
Why do the Jews have such a big beef about the New Covenant?	27

## **Covenant**

<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>29</b>
What does it all mean?	29
So What? What should we do about it?	29
<b>Appendix – Summaries</b>	<b>30</b>
Attributes of covenants	30
Kinds of covenants	30
Elements of a Covenant	30
... and process of cutting a covenant	30
Elements of Covenant agreement documentation	31

## Covenant

# What is a Covenant?

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Fundamentally, a covenant is a bond between two parties, a binding, iron-clad, agreement between people or states other parties, much like a contract or a treaty. As a binding pledge, a covenant can also be considered an oath, whether verbal or not.

A covenant establishes a relationship between the parties and has requirements, terms, and conditions.

There are different kinds of covenants with different characteristics, whether in the Bible or in external culture.

## There are three kinds of covenant

First, a little background. Attributes of different kinds of covenants include the following:

### ***Conditional vs unconditional***

A *conditional* covenant has requirements which, if not met, invalidate the covenant and release the other party. These requirements are usually performance requirements. This kind of covenant, while conditional, is, like all covenants, nevertheless still binding. Modern contracts are an example of such a conditional agreement: If you don't provide the goods or services I'm contracting for, then I don't have to pay you. Conversely, if I don't pay you, then you don't have to provide the goods or services. If either party doesn't follow through, the contract or covenant is broken. Nevertheless, the point of the contract or covenant is that we are both required to do our agreed-upon part.

An *unconditional* covenant has no such requirements. A gift, while not a covenant or contract, is unconditional: If I give you a Christmas present, then there are no further requirements or expectations on either of us. You can use the present as you wish and it's no skin off my nose.

### ***Symmetrical vs asymmetrical***

A *symmetrical* covenant or *covenant between equals* is exactly that: a covenant between equals. There is no hierarchical relationship implied. If you and I shake hands and agree on something, that's an agreement between equals.

An *asymmetrical* (or *master-subordinate*) covenant is between non-equals like a king or sovereign and his subjects. For example, the USSR and its East Bloc satellites, or the historical British Empire and its colonies.

With those definitions as background, the kinds of covenants are:

## Covenant

### 1) Royal grant (or patron) covenant

This is not a covenant God makes with a king or queen (with a royal), but is the kind of covenant a royal makes with a subject. When God makes this kind of covenant, He is the royal – the King of Kings and Lord of Lords – making the covenant with His people.

“In this type of ‘royal grant’ covenant, a king or other person in authority rewards a loyal subject by granting him an office, land, exemption from taxes, or similar.” ([Hebrew Roots: Covenant](#)) This type of covenant emphasizes the *promise* of the sovereign to his subject. It is an *unconditional* (the recipients didn’t have to do anything to continue in its benefits) and *asymmetrical* (the king or patron and his subject are not equals) covenant<sup>2</sup>.

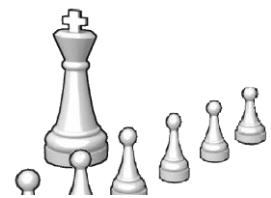


**Figure 1 - Giving a gift**  
(Illustration by author)

### 2) Suzerain-vassal covenant

A suzerain<sup>3</sup> is a feudal master and a vassal is his serf, servant, or slave that he owns. The suzerain and vassal can also be nations or states.

This is the classical *asymmetrical*, master-subordinate covenant between a master and his slave or indentured servant or between an empire and its vassal states. It is generally *conditional* in the sense that it has conditions and requirements that must be met. (Nevertheless, the subordinate/vassal often has no choice in the matter and is not allowed to cancel the contract or break the covenant.) This type of covenant emphasizes the *obligation* of the vassal or subordinate to the sovereign or master. (For biblical examples, see <sup>4</sup>



**Figure 2 - King and pawn chess pieces**  
(illustration by author based on public domain clip art)

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<sup>2</sup> Biblical examples of a royal grant / patron covenant: [Isaiah 8:14](#) – And He will be a sanctuary—but to both houses of Israel a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, to the dwellers of Jerusalem a trap and a snare.

[Isaiah 22:7](#) – Your choicest valleys are full of chariots, and horsemen are posted at the gates.

[Isaiah 27:6](#) – In the days to come, Jacob will take root. Israel will bud and blossom and fill the whole world with fruit.

[Esther 8:1](#) – That same day King Xerxes awarded Queen Esther the estate of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai entered the king’s presence because Esther had revealed his relation to her.

<sup>3</sup> a **Suzerain** is "1 : a superior feudal lord to whom fealty [obedience and tribute] is due : overlord  
2 : a dominant state controlling the foreign relations of a vassal state but allowing it sovereign authority in its internal affairs" -- <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/suzerain#>

<sup>4</sup> Biblical examples of a suzerain-vassal covenant: [Josh 9:6, 8](#)Josh – They went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the men of Israel, “We have come from a distant land; please make a treaty with us.” ... “We are your servants,” they said to Joshua. Then Joshua asked them, “Who are you and where have you come from?”

See also [Ezekiel 17:13-18](#)

[continued...]

## Covenant

### 3) Parity covenant between equals

Like a contract, this is a *symmetrical covenant between equals* and is *conditional*: if either party doesn't live up to the terms of the covenant, the covenant or contract is broken and the other party is released from their obligations, as well. Additionally, there may be penalties for breaking the covenant or contract. This type of covenant emphasizes both parties' *promises* to each other and the *performance* of those promises. God's covenants can't be parity covenants since He has no equal. (For biblical examples see <sup>5</sup>



*Figure 3 - Shaking hands*  
(public domain clip art)

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[Hosea 12:1](#) Hosea – Ephraim chases the wind and pursues the east wind all day long; he multiplies lies and violence; he makes a covenant with Assyria and sends olive oil to Egypt.

<sup>5</sup> **Biblical examples of a parity covenant:** [Gen 21:27](#) Gen – So Abraham brought sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a covenant.

[Genesis 26:31](#) – And they got up early the next morning and swore an oath to each other. Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they left him in peace.

See also [Genesis 31:44-54](#).

[1 Kings 5:12](#) – And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as He had promised him. There was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty.

[1 Kings 15:19](#) – “Let there be a treaty between me and you, between my father and your father. See, I have sent you a gift of silver and gold. Now go and break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me.”

[1 Kings 20:32-34](#) – So with sackcloth around their waists and ropes around their heads, they went to the king of Israel and said, “Your servant Ben-hadad says, ‘Please spare my life.’” And the king answered, “Is he still alive? He is my brother.” Now the men were looking for a sign of hope, and they quickly grasped at this word and replied, “Yes, your brother Ben-hadad.” “Go and get him!” said the king. Then Ben-hadad came out, and Ahab had him come up into his chariot. Ben-hadad said to him, “I will restore the cities my father took from your father; you may set up your own market-places in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria.” “By this covenant I release you,” Ahab replied. So he made a treaty with him and sent him away.

[Amos 1:9](#) – This is what the LORD says: “For three transgressions of Tyre, even four, I will not revoke My judgment, because they delivered up a whole congregation of exiles to Edom and broke a covenant of brotherhood.

## Covenant

# Why Does Covenant Matter?

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Covenant is a key theme of the Bible. God made various covenants with us, His people, over the centuries. Arguably, the most important covenant is the New Covenant<sup>6</sup>, which we are still in.

Covenants also matter because they are binding. We obey God because we love Him and want to honor Him, but also because we are party to a binding covenant and are obligated to fulfill its requirements, including the requirement to obey our sovereign, but benevolent, Lord and Master.

Covenant is a major part of the Scarlet Thread of redemption. As we'll see, the animal sacrifices were both part of drawing up the covenant contract and were fulfillment requirements of the Old Covenant (specifically of the Mosaic Covenant or Law or Moses). The New Covenant "in Jesus' blood" is the key part of the Scarlet Thread of redemption.

### *What does a covenant with God mean to us?*

Because of covenant, it is actually possible to have relationship and fellowship with God, Himself, the Creator and sovereign ruler of the universe! That is astounding! (Deists don't understand this (see below).)

All too often, we tend to take God for granted or even ignore Him, but covenant requires that we acknowledge God's sovereignty and Who He is.

Covenant also implies that everyone has the capacity to obey God. The fact that the covenant requires obedience implicitly indicates that it is possible to obey. God would not require the impossible of us, nor could a covenant require the impossible.

Finally, covenant implies that our God is a living God, active in the lives of His people. Deists believe that God created the universe, "wound it up", then stepped back and let it run on its own without His interaction like a clock. They don't believe that God interacts with us or that it is possible to have a personal relationship with Him. Covenant contradicts this.

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<sup>6</sup> **The New Covenant:** [Jer 31:31](#) – Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

[1 Corinthians 11:25](#) – In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

## Covenant

# The Process of “Cutting” a Covenant

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## ... and elements of a covenant

Creating a covenant (“cutting” a covenant) was a significant process in biblical times, just as creating a treaty or a contract is a significant process today. Creating a covenant was always termed “cutting” a covenant, as it involved cutting in some form, whether cutting the sacrifice or in pagan cultures cutting oneself. In the culture of the day, it involved these steps:

### 1) *Exchange coats or robes*

Revelation says He’ll give us a new white robe.

### 2) *Exchange belts*

This might be part of exchanging robes or might be separate.

### 3) *Cut the covenant—literally*

Hence, it’s called a “blood covenant”. Why? Because “the life is in the blood”<sup>z</sup> and the parties are pledging their lives to each other (see below).

Pagans cut their arms and drank each other’s blood. Israelites cut their hands or arms and mixed their blood but of course were prohibited from drinking or eating blood<sup>8</sup>.

Animals were sacrificed and split in two. The parties walked in a figure eight between the split carcasses (see step 8, below).

The whole Levitical sacrificial system in the Mosaic Covenant (Law of Moses) is based on animal sacrifices and their animal blood substituting for the people’s own blood (their sin debt).

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<sup>z</sup> **The life is in the blood:** [Leviticus 17:11, 14](#) – For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for your souls upon the altar; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. ... For the life of all flesh is its blood. Therefore I have told the Israelites, ‘You must not eat the blood of any living thing, because the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it must be cut off.’

[Deuteronomy 12:23](#) – Only be sure not to eat the blood, because the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat.

<sup>8</sup> **Eating blood prohibited:** [Genesis 9:4](#) – But you must not eat meat with its lifeblood still in it.

[Leviticus 3:17](#) – This is a perpetual statute for the generations to come, wherever you live: You must not eat any fat or any blood.”

[Leviticus 7:27](#) – If anyone eats blood, that person must be cut off from his people.”



## Covenant

Christ shed His blood for us and He established “the New Covenant *in His blood*”<sup>9</sup>.

### 4) *Raise right arms and mix blood*

Conceptually, your blood becomes my blood and mine yours. This essentially adopts each other into their own families. They literally became “blood brothers”. Hence, like family and tribe members, they protect and defend each other if the other is attacked. They pledge their lives to each other (blood brothers also because “the life is in the blood”<sup>10</sup>).

This is the genesis of the (modern?) concept of “blood brothers”. What with blood borne diseases and all, we don’t do this today, but even when I was young, kids still did this on a minor scale.

The raised arm became a salute.

### 5) *Exchange names*

This again essentially adopts each other into their families.

We take His name: ***Christians***. He came as Emmanuel, *God with us*. He took our name by taking our sin on the cross. He is in us and we are in Him.

### 6) *Make a scar*

They rubbed salt in the wound so it would scar and a permanent witness. There were also “covenants of salt”, but even these blood covenants involved salting the wounds. Almost all covenants, it seems, involved salt in one way or another. Even the Levitical sacrificial system required salt in the grain offerings<sup>11</sup>.

Jesus’ scars on the cross and from the Roman beatings are His covenant scars.

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<sup>9</sup> **New Covenant in Jesus’ blood:** [1 Corinthians 11:25](#) – In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

<sup>10</sup> **Life is in blood, so don’t eat blood:** [Leviticus 17:11, 14](#) Lev – For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for your souls upon the altar; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. ... For the life of all flesh is its blood. Therefore I have told the Israelites, ‘You must not eat the blood of any living thing, because the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it must be cut off.’

[Deuteronomy 12:23](#) – Only be sure not to eat the blood, because the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat.

<sup>11</sup> **Salt in grain offerings:** [Leviticus 2:13](#) – And you shall season each of your grain offerings with salt; you must not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offering—you are to add salt to each of your offerings.

[Numbers 18:19](#) – All the holy offerings that the Israelites present to the LORD I give to you and to your sons and daughters as a permanent statute. It is a permanent covenant of salt before the LORD for you and your offspring.”

## **Covenant**

### *7) Covenant terms or stipulations—documentation*

Just as with a contract, it has to be documented. The terms and stipulations differ with the different types of covenant and are specific to each individual covenant (see “Elements of a Covenant Agreement (documentation)”, below).

### *8) Memorialize it—eat the covenant memorial meal*

The parties typically walked in a figure eight between the split halves of the sacrificed animals. Pagans then ate the sacrificed animals and drank their blood. The Israelites ate the animals, bread, and drank wine (but of course, not blood).

The Passover meal is the covenant meal of the Old Covenant.

The Last Supper eucharistic communion is the covenant meal of the New Covenant.

### *9) Memorialize it—plant a memorial*

The memorial could be a pile of rocks, a tree, a monument, an altar. Then they would sprinkle the blood of the animals on the altar.

Jesus’ cross is a memorial "tree" that we remember even today. (To the Israelites, once a tree, always a tree<sup>12</sup>.)

### *10) Have witnesses, a guarantor, enforcers*

While there were some exceptions (the documentation and rituals in some cases substituting for witnesses), just like signing most contracts today, there had to be witnesses to attest to the covenant in ancient times, as well.

Perhaps more to the point, a covenant had to have a guarantor or enforcers. Today, that would be like saying, if you break the contract then I can take you to court. Or if you break the law then the police can arrest you. Or if you don’t do what I want on the playground, my big brother will beat you up. In ancient times, the guarantor or enforcer was often the next higher ruler: If I had a covenant with the king, then the emperor would be the enforcer.

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<sup>12</sup> **Cursed for hanging on a tree, pole, or cross:** [Deuteronomy 21:22-23](#) Deut – If a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he is executed, and you hang his body on a tree, you must not leave the body on the tree overnight, but you must be sure to bury him that day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God’s curse. You must not defile the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

[Acts 5:30](#) – The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging Him on a tree.

[Acts 10:39-40](#) – We are witnesses of all that He did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. And although they put Him to death by hanging Him on a tree, God raised Him up on the third day and caused Him to be seen—

[Galatians 3:13](#) – Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”

## Covenant

# Example – Marriage is a Covenant

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### *Type of covenant:*

Unconditional covenant between equals

### *Exchange coats or robes*

Wedding dress and tuxedo

### *Exchange belts*

In a sense, a wedding ring is a sort of a belt (round, etc)

### *Cut the covenant; blood, sacrifice*

Become “one flesh”

And breaking of the hymen?

### *Raise the right arm and mix blood*

Exchange vows

And breaking of the hymen?

### *Exchange names*

Bride takes husband’s last name;

Sometimes both take each other's names (hyphenated)

### *Make a scar*

Breaking of the hymen??

### *Covenant terms or stipulations; documentation*

Vows, marriage license, etc.

### *Covenant memorial meal*

Share wedding cake (and usually a reception meal)

### *“Plant” a memorial*

Wedding rings (not a plant *per se*, but a memorial)

### *Witness, guarantor, enforcer*

Witnesses, guests, the state (“by the authority vested in me, I now pronounce you husband and wife”)

Most importantly, God



*Figure 4 - Wedding rings  
(public domain clip art)*

## Covenant

# Covenant Meals

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### *The Passover Seder Meal is a Covenant Meal.*

- The lamb is the meal
- The cups of wine represent the blood
- The covenant it celebrates is the Mosaic covenant
- To be Israel's God and for them to be His people



*Figure 5 - Seder meal plate  
(Wikipedia by Yonina CC BY 2.5)*

### *The Lord's Supper Communion is the Covenant Meal for our Christian New Covenant*

- "This is my body given for you"<sup>13</sup>
- He is the Lamb who was slain for us <sup>14</sup>
- "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood" <sup>15</sup>
- The covenant is the New Covenant<sup>16</sup>



*Figure 6 - Communion elements stained glass window  
(Wikipedia by Nheyob CC BY-SA 4.0)*

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<sup>13</sup> **Jesus' sacrifice for us:** [Matthew 26:26](#) – While they were eating, Jesus took bread, spoke a blessing and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is My body."

<sup>14</sup> **Jesus is the Lamb of God slain for us:** [Rev 13:8](#) – And all who dwell on the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written from the foundation of the world in the Book of Life belonging to the Lamb who was slain.

<sup>15</sup> **The cup of the New Covenant in Jesus' blood:** [Luke 22:20](#) – In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you."

[1 Cor 11:25](#) – In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

<sup>16</sup> **The New Covenant:** [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#) – Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant they broke, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD. I will put My law in their minds and inscribe it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they will be My people. No longer will each man teach his neighbor or his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquities and will remember their sins no more."

[continued...]

## **Covenant**

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[1 Corinthians 11:25](#) - In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

## Covenant

# Elements of a Covenant Agreement (documentation)

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The elements of a covenant agreement (documentation) are as follows (modern contracts include these elements, as did the Law of Moses):

### 1. *Preamble*

This identifies the parties.

### 2. *Prologue*

Background on the parties' relationship.

Sometimes the preamble or prologue includes an overview statement of purpose (i.e., why they're making this covenant).

### 3. *Stipulations*

The body of the agreement. All the details. The laws, rules, contractual materials, etc. This is by far the longest section of the agreement. In a modern contract, this might additionally include an inspections clause to set forth how to determine whether the stipulations have been followed.

### 4. *Sanctions*

The carrot and the stick: blessings or benefits for keeping the covenant and curses or penalties for breaking it. In a modern contract, this would include the amount to be paid for successful completion of the contract as well as fines and penalties for noncompletion or inadequate completion (e.g., for shoddy work).

### 5. *Witnesses, Guarantor, Enforcer*

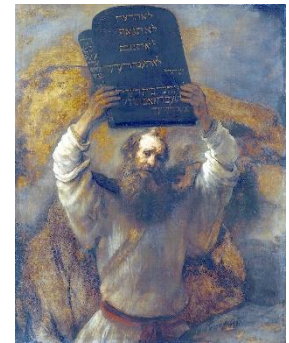
Identification and seal or signature of someone bigger than either party to enforce it (kings, "gods", etc). In a modern contract, this includes the signatures of the parties but also the clause that says something like "this contract will be enforced in accordance with the laws of the State of Delaware" or something like that.

### 6. *Documentation*

This all would be written down, for example on stone tablets, etc. Today, of course, modern contracts are written on paper and signed.

*The Law of Moses had all the elements of a covenant agreement.*

The Law of Moses was a covenant – the Mosaic Covenant (as we'll see below).

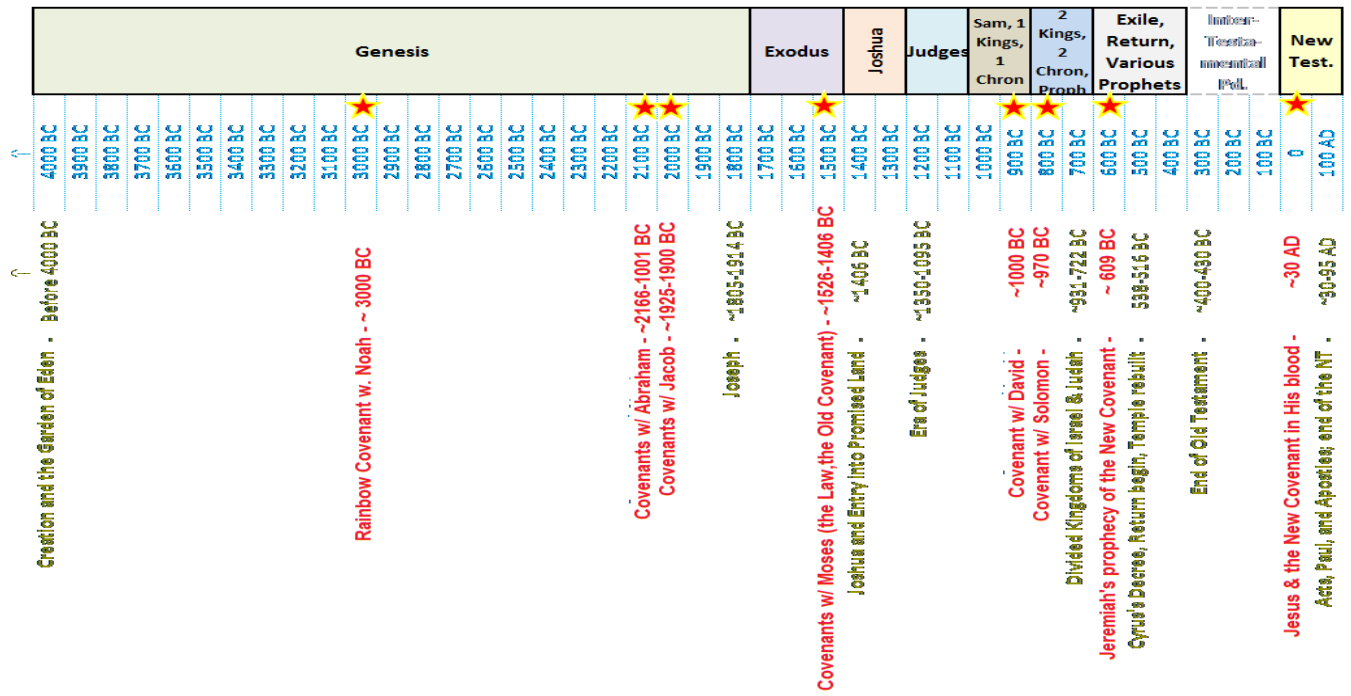


*Figure 7 - Moses  
Breaking the Tablets,  
by Rembrandt  
(public domain)*

## Covenant

# Major Covenants in the Old Testament

There were many covenants throughout the Old Testament. Here are a few of them. We can see types of covenants as we go over them briefly.



Copr. © KES 1980, 2008-2013 Data from: <http://bibletimeline.info/> and Rose *Bible Time Line* pamphlet (2001), Rose Publishing

*Figure 8 – Timeline of Covenants (by author)*

### Noah (“Noahic covenant”)–the rainbow–[Genesis 9:8-17](#)–~ 3000 BC

A *royal grant, unconditional* covenant – neither Noah nor the human race had to do anything to stay in covenant with God. God unilaterally promised to never again destroy the world by flood. His seal on the promise and evidence of the promise was the rainbow.

### Abraham (1st)–Promised land–[Genesis 15:9-21](#)–~ 2166 BC

God promised to make Abram (Abraham) a great nation and to give Him the land (Canaan, the Promised Land) that He would lead Him to. It was a *royal land grant, unconditional* covenant.

### Abraham (2nd)–Circumcision–[Genesis 17](#)–~ 1925 BC

God renewed the covenant with Abraham, promising again to make his descendants great nations and to give them the land of Canaan. This time, however, God made it *conditional* – if Abraham and his descendants followed the LORD and kept the covenant, then God would ensure that all His promises were fulfilled. But if Abraham’s descendants strayed from the LORD, the deal would be off. So this is a *conditional Suzerain-vassal* covenant.



## Covenant

As part of this covenant, God changed Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai's name to Sarah. As another conditions of the covenant, God also required Abraham and his descendants to be circumcised.

*Jacob—~ 1900 BC ±*

Jacob made several covenants, some with God ([Genesis 35](#)), some with other people such as Laban his father-in-law ([Genesis 31:43-54](#)).

When Jacob fled from Esau, he had a dream in Bethel of angels ascending and descending on a ladder from Heaven. At that time, God renewed Abraham's covenant with Jacob ([Genesis 28:10-22](#)). He made a stone monument to God and the covenant there at Bethel.

In [Genesis 32:24-32](#), Jacob wrestled with God and "saw Him face to face yet lived". He may have made another covenant with God at that time because several covenant elements were evident.

When God made another of His covenants with Jacob (again in Bethel), He changed Jacob's name to Israel<sup>17</sup>. Jacob/Israel set up another stone pillar as a monument to God and the covenant.

*The Mosaic Covenant ("Sinaitic" covenant)—Ten Commandments—[Exodus 19-24](#) and all of Deuteronomy—~ 1500 BC*

In spite of the name, neither the Law of Moses nor the covenant were originated or given by Moses, but rather by God. They and were given *through* Moses to and on behalf of the Israelite people. Moses was the intermediary representing the people to God (and in a sense, representing God to the people).

The Ten Commandments ([Exodus 20](#)) is a summary but is not the whole documentation and stipulations of the covenant. Rather, the documentation and stipulations are the Law of Moses given in Deuteronomy and Leviticus (and Exodus 21-24).

In the Mosaic Covenant, God promised that the people would be His chosen people and He would be the people's (only) God. He promised many blessings if they obeyed and many "curses" or consequences if they did not. So this was a *conditional Suzerain-vassal* covenant and the promises were void if the people failed to comply.

*Covenant with High Priest Phinehas—[Numbers 25:10-18](#)—~ 1425 BC*

In this perhaps lesser known covenant , God promised to make Phinehas's descendants a lasting priesthood to Him forever. This essentially renewed the promise of the priesthood to Aaron's priestly line out of the family of Levi. While the occasion of the covenant was Phinehas's obedience and zeal, it was not *conditional* upon this. Consequently, this was an *unconditional royal grant* covenant.

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<sup>17</sup> **God changed Jacob's name to Israel:** [Gen 35:9-10](#) - After Jacob had returned from Paddan-aram, God appeared to him again and blessed him. And God said to him, "Though your name is Jacob, you will no longer be called Jacob. Instead, your name will be Israel." So God named him Israel.



## Covenant

### *The Davidic Covenant—[2 Samuel 7:5-16](#)—~ 1000 BC*

In this covenant, God promised David that He would always have a descendant on the throne. Rather than cancel the covenant for nonobedience, even “when he [David’s descendant king] commits iniquity, I will correct him ... but My lovingkindness will not depart from him”<sup>18</sup>. This covenant is implicitly a pledge that the promised Messiah would come of David’s line and that He, Jesus Christ, would be on the [heavenly] throne forever. Of course, David may not have realized that at the time.

In fact, this, not only is Jesus of David’s line, but David’s descendants did constitute an unbroken Davidic dynasty (until the exile to Babylon), and the majority of them did remain righteous and loyal to the Lord (unlike the non-Davidic rulers of the northern splinter kingdom of “Israel”).

Similar to Phinehas’s situation, the occasion of this covenant was upon David’s obedience and adoration when he wanted to build a Temple for the Lord. However, that was not a condition of the covenant.

So this, too, was an *unconditional royal grant* covenant.

### *Covenant with Solomon upon dedication of the Temple—[2 Chronicles 7:12-22](#)—~ 970 BC*

As with David, the occasion of this covenant was upon Solomon’s devotion when he dedicated the Temple for the Lord. However, while that was not a condition of the covenant the people’s obedience was: “If God’s people ... will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways *then* I will hear from Heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land”<sup>19</sup> – and if not, *not* (as [2 Chronicles 7:19-22](#) makes clear).

So this was a *conditional suzerain-vassal* covenant with the people of Israel and with Solomon as their representative.

### *Jeremiah’s prophecy of the New Covenant—[Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)—~ 609 BC*

This was the promise of a future *unconditional royal grant* covenant to put His Law in our hearts (via the Holy Spirit) and to be our God and us to be His people (see below).

### *Jesus’ New Covenant “in My blood”—~ 30 AD*

Okay, this one is New Testament, but it is the fulfillment of the New Covenant promised to Jeremiah 600 years earlier. It is an *unconditional, royal grant* covenant. It is based on Who

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<sup>18</sup> **God will correct in lovingkindness:** [2 Samuel 7:14-15](#) – I will be his Father, and he will be My son. When he does wrong, I will discipline him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My loving devotion will never be removed from him as I removed it from Saul, whom I moved out of your way.

<sup>19</sup> **Obedience required and blessings promised:** [2 Chronicles 7:13-14](#) – If I close the sky so there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send a plague among My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land.

## Covenant

Jesus is and what Jesus did, not on anything we can do. If it were based on our works or even compliance, it would be *conditional*.

*And more*

There were several more covenants, but these are representative.

Now let's look at some of the key covenants in more detail, as we look at their elements.

### **Abraham's Covenant in Genesis 15:9-21**

- Five animals were sacrificed<sup>20</sup>. These were both the *sacrifice* and the *covenant meal*. They were each cut in two.
- A flaming torch and smoking oven passed between the pieces in a figure eight pattern<sup>21</sup>. They represented God, similarly to the pillar of fire and of smoke did to Moses.
- God's promises were the *terms and stipulations* of the covenant<sup>22</sup>. These included the Promised Land of Canaan and having many descendants forming many nations.
- God Himself was *witness and guarantor*<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> **Animals sacrificed:** [Genesis 15:9](#) – And the LORD said to him, “Bring Me a heifer, a goat, and a ram, each three years old, along with a turtledove and a young pigeon.”

<sup>21</sup> **Fire in a figure eight:** [Genesis 15:17](#) – When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, behold, a smoking firepot and a flaming torch appeared and passed between the halves of the carcasses.

Splitting the sacrifice into pieces and walking between them in a figure eight pattern was a key part of the covenant ritual of those times, according to scholars. Even if other elements of the covenant ritual were not recorded, the split sacrifices and figure eight pattern alone were sufficient indication that a covenant had been cut.

<sup>22</sup> **God's promises to Abram / Abraham:** [Genesis 15:1, 4-5, 13-15, 18](#) – After these events, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.” ... Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “This one will not be your heir, but one who comes from your own body will be your heir.” And the LORD took him outside and said, “Now look to the heavens and count the stars, if you are able.” Then He told him, “So shall your offspring be.” ... Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not their own; they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will judge the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will depart with many possessions. You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a ripe old age. ... On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I have given this land—from the river of Egypt to the great River Euphrates—

<sup>23</sup> **God the witness and guarantor:** [Genesis 15:7](#) – The LORD also told him, “I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.”

## Covenant

# Abraham's Covenant in Genesis 17

- Circumcision was the *pledge or seal*. Abraham himself was cut, rather than an animal sacrifice.
- They *exchanged names*: God changed Abram's name (meaning exalted Father, though at that time Isaac had not been conceived, ) to Abraham (Father of multitudes) by inserting the breath letter "h", representing the Holy Spirit. (*Spirit* and *breath* are the same word in Hebrew.)
- Sarai, too, became Sarah (princess), again adding an "h".
- Abraham became known as the "friend of God"<sup>24</sup>, adding God's name to Abraham's
- God himself became known as "the God of Abraham" (and later, also of Isaac and Jacob), adding Abraham's name to God's.

## Covenant with Isaac

God also established a covenant with Isaac<sup>25</sup>; etc). It extended Abraham's covenant to Isaac. God promised to give him multitudes of descendants and to give him the Promised Land. Again, God took his name, in a sense, becoming "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob".

### *What about Hagar and Ishmael?*

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<sup>24</sup> **Abraham the friend of God:** [2 Chron 20:7](#) – Our God, did You not drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham Your friend?

[Isaiah 41:8](#) – "But you, O Israel, My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, descendant of Abraham My friend—

[James 2:23](#) – And the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called a friend of God.

<sup>25</sup> **God's covenant with Isaac:** [Genesis 17:19, 21](#) – But God replied, "Your wife Sarah will indeed bear you a son, and you are to name him Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. ... But I will establish My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time next year."

[Exodus 2:24](#) – So God heard their groaning, and He remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[Leviticus 25:42](#) – Because the Israelites are My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt, they are not to be sold as slaves.

[2 Kings 13:23](#) – But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion on them, and He turned toward them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And to this day, He has been unwilling to destroy them or cast them from His presence.

## Covenant

The Bible records no covenant with Ishmael, *per se*, however His covenant with Abraham included the promise that Ishmael, too, would become a great nation and father of 12 princes<sup>26</sup>.

“*Allegorically speaking*” (that’s what [Galatians 4:24](#) literally says regarding this<sup>27</sup>), God seems to have made an unrecorded “covenant” with Hagar, Ishmael’s Egyptian mother, on his behalf. However, it was a negative covenant, promising that neither Hagar nor Ishmael would be heirs<sup>28</sup>.

## Jacob’s Covenants: Stone Pillow & Wrestling Match – [Genesis 28](#), [32](#), and [35](#)

Jacob set up a stone and a pillar as the *memorial*.

In [Genesis 35](#), he also poured out a *drink offering* and anointed it with oil.

Jacob, himself, was injured, rather than animals *sacrificed*.

As with Abraham, God *changed Jacob's name* (to Israel).

## The Law, the Mosaic Covenant (Old Covenant, Old Testament)

*“I will be your God and you will be My people”*

([Exod 6:7](#); [Lev 26:12](#))

### ***Does the Law of Moses meet the definition and have the elements of a covenant?***

The Law of Moses is important enough that we should take a more detailed look at it.

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<sup>26</sup> **God’s promises for Ishmael:** [Genesis 17:20](#) – As for Ishmael, I have heard you, and I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He will become the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation.

<sup>27</sup> **Allegorical illustrations:** [Galatians 4:24](#) – These things serve as illustrations, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children into slavery: This is Hagar.

<sup>28</sup> Ishmael and Hagar not Heirs of Abraham: [Galatians 4:30](#) – But what does the Scripture say? “Expel the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son.” [For the whole passage, see: [Galatians 4:22-31](#)]

[Genesis 21:10-12](#) – And she said to Abraham, “Expel the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac!” Now this matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son Ishmael. But God said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to everything that Sarah tells you, for through Isaac your offspring will be reckoned.

## **Covenant**

### *Type of Covenant*

Suzerain-vassal (conditional)

### *Blood, sacrifices*

the Levitical system

### *Covenant meal*

The Passover Seder meal

### *Terms of covenant*

the Ten Commandments, the Law, all of Deuteronomy and Leviticus

### *Guarantor, witnesses, enforcer*

God Himself

### *Penalties and blessings*

[Deuteronomy 11:26-29](#)<sup>29</sup>; [Deuteronomy chapter 23](#); [Deuteronomy chapters 27-30](#)

### *Sharing of names*

Moses, “the Man of God” [30](#)

“People of God”, “God’s people”

### *Mediator*

Priests, Moses, “angels” ([Galatians 3:19-20](#))

Priests mediate – are in the middle – representing the people to God (by bringing the sacrifices, performing the rituals, praying, etc.), and representing God to the people (by bringing His word and instructions to the people, teaching them, etc.). Moses (who was a prophet) performed some of these functions, too.

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<sup>29</sup> **Blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience:** [Deuteronomy 11:26-29](#) – See, today I am setting before you a blessing and a curse— a blessing if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am giving you today, but a curse if you disobey the commandments of the LORD your God and turn aside from the path I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known. When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess, you are to proclaim the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.

<sup>30</sup> **Moses the Man of God:** [Deuteronomy 33:1](#) – This is the blessing that Moses, the man of God, pronounced upon the Israelites before his death.

[Joshua 14:6](#) – Then the sons of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, “You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh-barnea about you and me.

## Covenant

“Angels” in [Galatians 3:19-20](#) may have meant *messengers*, which is the same word as angel (in both Greek and Hebrew), which would include Moses, the priests, and the prophets. Or perhaps actual angels of God in some undefined way were involved in the process.

Incidentally, we see no other mention of mediators of covenants other than this and the fact that Jesus is the (only) mediator of the New Covenant <sup>31</sup> and that we now need no intermediary between us and God than Jesus, Who is Himself God.

## The Kinsman-Redeemer

The Law provided for people who couldn't do it for themselves. If an Israelite became so impoverished that he had to sell off his farmland (or had to sell himself into slavery in indentured servitude), then his nearest relative – his “kinsman-redeemer” – had the right and responsibility to redeem the property by buying it back from the creditor<sup>32</sup>. This is a major theme throughout the book of Ruth<sup>33</sup>. It was executed via covenant contract (parity covenant between equals). (As part of the Law it also was part of an asymmetrical covenant with God.) This is also a picture of Jesus, our great Kinsman-Redeemer Who redeems us from slavery to sin.

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<sup>31</sup> **Christ the only mediator of the New Covenant:** [1 Timothy 2:5](#) – For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

[Hebrews 8:6](#) – Now, however, Jesus has received a much more excellent ministry, just as the covenant He mediates is better and is founded on better promises.

[Hebrews 9:15](#) – Therefore Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, now that He has died to redeem them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

[Hebrews 12:24](#) – To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

<sup>32</sup> **Right and responsibility to redeem:** [Leviticus 25:25](#) – If your brother becomes impoverished and sells some of his property, his nearest of kin may come and redeem what his brother has sold.

[Deuteronomy 15:12](#) – If a fellow Hebrew, a man or a woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, in the seventh year you must set him free.

<sup>33</sup> **Some examples in the book of Ruth:** [Ruth 2:1](#) – Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side, a prominent man of noble character from the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

[Ruth 3:2](#) – Now is not Boaz, with whose servant girls you have been working, a relative of ours? In fact, tonight he is winnowing barley on the threshing floor.

[Ruth 4:14](#) – Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a kinsman-redeemer. May his name become famous in Israel.

## Covenant

# The New Covenant

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The New Covenant of Jeremiah [34](#) is the prophecy and *promise* of what was to come:

***“I will put My law... on their heart... I will be their God, and they will be My people.”*** ([Jeremiah 31:31, 33](#))

The promise *fulfilled*, is the New Testament (New Covenant).

“Testament” and “covenant” are the same Greek word, *diatheke*<sup>3</sup>.

The New Covenant provides Jesus (God with Us, Emmanuel), the Holy Spirit in us, and the promised Second Coming of Jesus. Jesus fulfills the Law, the Old Covenant<sup>35</sup>, which is then obsolete<sup>36</sup>. It is obsolete not because it is abolished (it is not), but because it has been *fulfilled*, completed, and is no longer necessary. Instead, there is now a New Covenant in Jesus' blood in its place.

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<sup>34</sup> **New Covenant promised:** [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#) – Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant they broke, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. “But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD. I will put My law in their minds and inscribe it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they will be My people. No longer will each man teach his neighbor or his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquities and will remember their sins no more.”

<sup>35</sup> **New Covenant fulfills Old:** [Matthew 5:17](#) – Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them.

[Hebrews 8:7-13](#) – For if that first covenant had been without fault, no place would have been sought for a second. But God found fault with the people and said: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they did not abide by My covenant, and I disregarded them, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord. I will put My laws in their minds, and inscribe them on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they will be My people. No longer will each one teach his neighbor or his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their iniquities and will remember their sins no more.” By speaking of a new covenant, He has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

<sup>36</sup> **Fulfilled Old Covenant obsoleted by New:** [Hebrews 8:13](#) – By speaking of a new covenant, He has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.



## Covenant

"Covenant" in Hebrew and Greek

Hebrew *berit* from which we get *b'nai brith*, etc).

In the Old Testament there were 3 kinds of covenants:

1. Royal grant (or patron) covenant
2. "Suzerain-vassal" covenant (*berit*)
3. Parity covenant between equals

New Testament Greek has two words for Covenant:

*diaktheke* – covenant between non-equals, unilateral covenant, Equivalent to the Heb *berit* suzerain-vassal covenant with God. The same word as "testament" in "New Testament"<sup>37</sup>

*suntheke* – negotiated agreement between equals, treaty, alliance, contract, parity covenant. The common Greek word. Never used in the Bible.

This does not mean that the Old Covenant, the Law, was bad. "May it never be!"<sup>38</sup> Rather, one of the major purposes of the Old Covenant and its Law was to prove to us that we could not keep it perfectly, and thus be saved; that we need a sinless Savior Who can and did both *fulfill* the Law and pay our sin penalty our death penalty for our sin because we can't do it ourselves. In other words, a major purpose of the Old Covenant and the Law was to point to Jesus and the New Covenant in His blood<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> "Testament", as used here, does not imply that the OT and NT are "last wills and testaments". Rather, they are the documentation, witness, or evidence of the Old and New Covenants. More like a testimony than a last will and testament.

<sup>38</sup> **The Old Covenant is not bad:** [Galatians 3:21](#) – Is the law, then, opposed to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come from the law.

<sup>39</sup> **The Old Covenant points to the New Covenant in Jesus' blood:** [Galatians 3:19, 21-22, 24](#) – Why then was the law given? It was added because of transgressions, until the arrival of the seed to whom the promise referred. It was administered through angels by a mediator. ... Is the law, then, opposed to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come from the law. But the Scripture pronounces all things confined by sin, so that by faith in Jesus Christ the promise might be given to those who believe. ... So the law became our guardian to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

[Romans 10:4](#) (MSG) -- - The earlier revelation was intended simply to get us ready for the Messiah, who then puts everything right for those who trust him to do it.

[Galatians 2:21](#) – I do not set aside the grace of God. For if righteousness comes through the law, Christ died for nothing."



## Covenant

# The New Covenant

### *Does it meet the definition and have the elements of a covenant?*

#### *Type of covenant*

- “Diatheke” unilateral unconditional covenant

#### *Exchange coats or robes*

- He’ll give us a new white robe [40](#)

#### *Exchange belts*

- Gird ourselves with the belt of His truth<sup>41</sup>?

#### *Cut the covenant; blood, sacrifice*

- Jesus’ scourging and crucifixion
- “My body given for you”
- His substitutionary death for us to pay our sin penalty
- “The New Covenant in My blood”<sup>42</sup>

#### *Raise the right arm and mix blood*

- Blood from scourging and crucifixion
- “The New Covenant in My blood” (see above)

#### *Exchange names*

- We take His name: Christians
- He came as Emmanuel, God with us
- He took our name by taking our sin on the cross

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<sup>40</sup> **New white robe:** [Revelation 6:11](#) – Then each of them was given a white robe and told to rest a little while longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers, were killed, just as they had been killed.

[Revelation 22:14](#) – Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by its gates.

<sup>41</sup> **Belt of truth:** [Ephesians 6:14](#) – Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness arrayed,

<sup>42</sup> **New Covenant in Jesus’ blood:** [Luke 22:20](#) – In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you.”

## Covenant

- We're in Him<sup>43</sup>

*Make a scar*

- His scars from scourging and nail holes on the cross <sup>44</sup>

*Covenant terms or stipulations; documentation*

- Written on our hearts
- No Law, but the Holy Spirit as guide
- The New Testament

*Covenant meal*

- The Last Supper communion meal
- The bread/body and the blood/wine

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<sup>43</sup> **We're in Him:** [Ephesians 1:13](#) – And in Him, having heard and believed the word of truth—the gospel of your salvation—you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

[Philippians 3:9](#) – And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God on the basis of faith.

[Colossians 2:6-11](#) – Therefore, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, established in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, which are based on human tradition and the spiritual forces of the world rather than on Christ. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity dwells in bodily form. And you have been made complete in Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority. In Him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of your sinful nature, with the circumcision performed by Christ and not by human hands.

[2 Thessalonians 1:12](#) – So that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1 John 2:5-10, 28](#) – But if anyone keeps His word, the love of God has been truly perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him:

[Ephesians 3:9, 24](#) – And to illuminate for everyone the stewardship of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

[Eph 4:13-16](#) – Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, as we mature to the full measure of the stature of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed about by the waves and carried around by every wind of teaching and by the clever cunning of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Christ Himself, who is the head. From Him the whole body, fitted and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love through the work of each individual part.

[Ephesians 5:20](#) – Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>44</sup> **Scars from scourging and nails:** [Isaiah 53:5](#) – 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 stripes we are healed.

## **Covenant**

- “I AM the living bread.... He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood will have eternal Life.” ([John 6.51-55](#)) refers to the New Covenant and to Last Supper communion

*“Plant” a memorial*

- The Holy Spirit is our seal, pledge<sup>45</sup>
- The cross was a planted tree, in a sense
- It’s a reminder to us even today

*Witness, guarantor, enforcer, mediator*

- God, Himself <sup>46</sup>
- The New Covenant
- Jesus is our only mediator <sup>47</sup>

### ***Why do the Jews have such a big beef about the New Covenant?***

Among other things, ...

- Jews view the New Covenant as replacing, rather than fulfilling, the Old Covenant<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> **Holy Spirit is our seal and pledge:** [2 Corinthians 1:22](#) – Placed His seal on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a pledge of what is to come.

[Ephesians 1:13](#) – And in Him, having heard and believed the word of truth—the gospel of your salvation—you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

[Ephesians 4:30](#) – And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

<sup>46</sup> **God is guarantor:** [Hebrews 7:22](#) – Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

<sup>47</sup> **Jesus is the only mediator:** [1 Timothy 2:5](#) – For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

[Hebrews 9:15](#) – Therefore Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, now that He has died to redeem them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

[Hebrews 12:24](#) – To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

<sup>48</sup> **New Covenant fulfills Old:** [Matthew 5:17](#) -- (BSB) Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them.

## **Covenant**

- They view eucharistic communion (“the New Covenant in My blood”,<sup>49</sup>) as both cannibalistic and as drinking blood, which is expressly forbidden in the Old Testament. They view [John 6:51-55](#) in the same light. (Yet Jesus was referring to the Last Supper covenant meal of the New Covenant and to the Crucifixion).
- Further, the idea that Gentiles could be part of the Covenant without the covenant-“cutting” of circumcision was anathema.
- And, of course, they don’t (yet) recognize Jesus as their long-promised Messiah <sup>50</sup>
- Test <sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> **New Covenant in Jesus' blood:** [Luke 22:20](#) – In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you.

[1 Corinthians 11:25](#) – In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

<sup>50</sup> **Jesus is the long-promised Messiah:** [John 8:48](#) – The Jews answered Him, “Are we not right to say that You are a Samaritan and You have a demon?”

[John 10:24](#) – So the Jews gathered around Him and demanded, “How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.”

## Covenant

# Conclusion

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*The New Covenant meets all the requirements of a covenant.*

## What does it all mean?

Many people think that God is a softie, such a nice God that He wouldn't require anything of us and would automatically forgive us for anything, without even asking. But *covenant* teaches us otherwise. He is indeed a loving God and a forgiving God, but also a righteous and a *just* God, and His covenants impose requirements upon us.

Covenant is a key theme of the Bible and the Bible has many covenants. In fact, the Bible *is* a covenant – or actually, two covenants, Old and New. We Christian believers are part of, included in, these covenants various – most notably in the New Covenant. The people with whom made them, represented all us and made them on behalf of all of us.

Covenants also matter because they are binding. Since we are part of these covenants, we are obligated to fulfil our part of their requirements.

Covenants show us that it is possible to have relationship and fellowship with God, Himself! That is literally *awesome!* Covenants also show that everyone has the capacity to obey God, since He would not require the impossible of us.

## So What? What should we do about it?

As we are in covenant with God, we need to fulfill our end of the bargain. We need to obey the requirements of the covenants that apply to us. But since covenant implies a relationship with God, we also should capitalize on that relationship: We should love God, pray, listen, follow Him, and *enjoy* God. It is a precious privilege that other religions – which don't have covenants – do not have!

## Covenant

# Appendix – Summaries

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## Attributes of covenants

- Conditional -or- unconditional
- Symmetrical between equals -or- asymmetrical master-subordinate

## Kinds of covenants

- Royal grant, patron, or land grant covenant
  - Asymmetrical master-subordinate
  - Unconditional
- Suzerain-vassal
  - Asymmetrical master-subordinate
  - Conditional
- Parity
  - Symmetrical between equals
  - Conditional

## Elements of a Covenant

### *... and process of cutting a covenant*

- Exchange coats or robes
- Exchange belts
- Cut the covenant; blood, sacrifice
- Raise the right arm and mix blood
- Exchange names
- Make a scar
- Covenant terms or stipulations, documentation (see below)

## **Covenant**

- Covenant memorial meal
- “Plant” a memorial
- Witness, guarantor, enforcer

## **Elements of Covenant agreement documentation**

- Preamble
- Prologue
- Stipulations, body
- Sanctions – benefits and penalties, blessings and curses
- Witnesses, Guarantor, Enforcer
- Documentation – stone tablets, scroll, paperwork, etc