
COVENANTS

1. Definition

DEFINITION: A formal agreement, a contract¹

SYNONYMS: Contract, deal, pact, agreement, treaty, alliance, pledge, constitution, testament or will.

A covenant, in contract law, is a legally enforceable agreement between two or more persons to do or to refrain from doing a certain act, or specifying that a given state of facts does or does not exist.²

A modern legally binding contract between people could be described as follows:

- ✚ There must be at least 2 parties.
- ✚ Both parties must voluntarily agree to enter into the contract (no duress).
- ✚ The contract might have all terms stipulated by one party (e.g. hire purchase) or could have terms negotiated by both parties (e.g. business partnership).
- ✚ There might be conditions (about either promised action and/or non-action) attached to one or both parties (e.g. inter-country alliance treaty) or it may be unconditional (e.g. last will or testament).
- ✚ A contract with conditions attached might require mediation by a third party.
- ✚ If either party breaches the agreement by not adhering to the stipulated conditions, the other party is automatically released from their obligations, and the contract becomes null and void. There may be a penalty clause to penalise the offending party.
- ✚ The conditions of the contract can only be legally changed by consent of both parties, or by the existence of a more recent contract, which supersedes the previous one.

¹ Oxford dictionary

² New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopaedia

- ✚ The contract must be signed by both parties and countersigned by witnesses to make it legally binding.

Typical commonplace contracts are marriage, business partnerships, sale of property, insurance policies, hire-purchase agreements, rental or lease contracts, inter-country treaties etc.

A CONTRACT OR COVENANT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CRUCIAL PART OF GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PEOPLE.

Covenant is a legal concept often used in the Bible as a metaphor to describe the relationship between God and humankind... The idea of a covenant between God and humankind lies at the heart of the Bible. This idea explains the selection of the word testament, a synonym for covenant, in naming the two parts of the Bible.³

God always honours his covenants, unlike people who often make covenant vows and then dishonour them. The marriage covenant where people swear "until death us do part" with God as a witness, and then lightly disregard this is but one example.

Malachi 2:13-16 Another thing you do: You flood the LORD's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, "Why?" It is because **the LORD is acting as the witness** between you and the wife of your youth, because **you have broken faith with her**, though she is your partner, **the wife of your marriage covenant**. Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, **and do not break faith** with the wife of your youth. "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, "..."

³ New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopaedia

2. Types of covenants

2.1 Equals and non-equals

In ancient times, a covenant was a treaty between two parties. There were two kinds of covenants: **a voluntary agreement between equals** (as with David and Jonathan - 1 Samuel 18:3) **and treaties of loyalty between a great king and a lesser king** (his vassal). In the Bible, **covenants between God and his people are always of the second type. God always dictates the terms of His covenants**, which assert His sovereignty and kingship, and the people's obligation of faith and obedience.⁴

The Hebrew for covenant is “berîth”.

In the OT⁵ *berîth* identifies three different types of legal relationships.

- ✚ A two-sided covenant between human parties, both of which voluntarily accept the terms of the agreement... **God however never "enters in" to such a covenant of equality with men.**
- ✚ A **one-sided disposition imposed by a superior party** (Ezekiel 17:13-14) ⁶. God the Lord thus "commands" a *berîth* which man, the servant, is to **"obey"** (Joshua 23:16).

⁴ NIV Bible dictionary

⁵ OT: Old Testament

⁶ Imposed by the king of Babylon on his vassal, the king of Israel

🚩 God's self-imposed obligation, for the reconciliation of sinners to himself (Deuteronomy 7:6-8, Psalm 89:3-4)⁷

Not only the Hebrew, but also the Greek, emphasises that God's covenants are not an agreement between equals. The Septuagint (LXX), which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament by 72 Hebrew scholars before the time of Christ, is useful in ascertaining the equivalent Greek terms for the Old Testament Hebrew. In its translation of the Hebrew *berîth*, more light is thrown in this regard:

The LXX avoided the usual Greek term for covenant, *synthêke* (Meaning a thing mutually "put together"), as **unsuitable for the action of the sovereign God** and substituted *diathêke* (a thing, literally, "put through"), the primary meaning of which is "a disposition of property by a will."⁸

We are familiar in modern times with contracts where we are not able to negotiate conditions but are obliged to accept what the initiating party has stipulated (e.g. a rental agreement). Our extent of negotiation is in accepting or rejecting the terms altogether, but not in modifying them.

Likewise, the covenants between God and man do not have the conditions negotiated by both parties. God stipulates the conditions for men, but in his love, also imposes conditions on himself, albeit not due to pressure or bargaining by men (e.g. the Abrahamic covenant). Man's freedom of choice allows for acceptance or rejection of the contract, but not for variation of God's stipulated terms.

Joshua 23:16 If you violate **the covenant** of the LORD your God, **which he commanded you**, and go and serve other gods and bow

⁷ Zondervan Pictorial Bible dictionary

⁸ Zondervan Pictorial Bible dictionary

down to them, the LORD's anger will burn against you, and you will quickly perish from the good land he has given you.⁹

2.2 Major types of Covenants

In the ancient Near East there were 3 main types of covenants; the Covenant of Parity, a Royal Grant and the Suzerain-Vassal Covenant.

Commitments made in these covenants were accompanied by self-maledictory oaths (made orally, ceremonially, or both). The gods were called upon to witness the covenants and implement the curses of the oaths if the covenants were violated.¹⁰

2.2.1 Parity

Parity: A covenant between equals, binding them to mutual friendship or at least to mutual respect for each other's spheres and interests, Participants called each other "brothers".¹¹

This was the type of covenant entered into by Abraham and Abimelech, Jacob and Laban, and David and Jonathan.

2.2.2 Royal Grant

Royal grant (unconditional): A king's grant of land or some other benefit to a loyal servant for faithful or exceptional service. The grant was normally perpetual and unconditional, but the servant's heirs benefited from it only as they continued their father's loyalty and service.¹²

There were different kinds of covenants in the biblical world, however, just as there are different kinds of contracts today. One type of ancient covenant that

⁹ NIV: Unless otherwise stated all future quotations are from the NIV.

¹⁰ NIV Study Bible notes

¹¹ NIV Study Bible notes

¹² NIV Study Bible notes

serves as a model for certain biblical passages is the **royal grant**. In this type of covenant, a king or other person in authority rewards a **loyal subject** by granting him an office, land, exemption from taxes, or the like. It is typical of such covenants that **only the superior party binds himself; conditions are not imposed on the inferior party**. Such covenants are also referred to as covenants of promise or **unconditional covenants**. The covenants God made with NOAH (Genesis 9:8-17), ABRAHAM (Genesis 15:18), and DAVID (2 Samuel 7; 23:5) fit this pattern. In each of these cases, it is God alone who binds himself by a solemn oath to keep the covenant.¹³

2.2.3 Suzerain-Vassal

Suzerain-Vassal (conditional): A covenant regulating a relationship between a great king and one of his subject kings. The great king claimed absolute right of sovereignty, demanded total loyalty and service (the vassal must "love" his suzerain) and pledged protection of the subject's realm and dynasty, conditional on the vassal's faithfulness and loyalty to him. The vassal pledged absolute loyalty to his suzerain - whatever service his suzerain demanded - an exclusive reliance on the suzerain's protection. Participants called each other "lord" and "servant", or "father" and "son".¹⁴

The Mosaic covenant (Exodus 19-24; Deuteronomy; Joshua 24) seems to have been modelled on another type of ancient covenant, the political treaty between a powerful king and his weaker vassal. Following the standard form of such treaties, God, the suzerain, reminds Israel, the vassal, how God has saved it, and Israel in response accepts the covenant stipulations. Israel is promised a blessing for obedience and a curse for breaking the covenant.¹⁵

All covenants between God and man before the New Covenant are either of the **Royal Grant or Suzerain-Vassal** type, or both.

2.2.4 Testament or will

Jesus Christ added another model, that of a last will and testament. At the Last Supper, he interpreted his own life and death as the perfect covenant (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20).¹⁶

¹³ New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopaedia

¹⁴ NIV Study Bible notes

¹⁵ New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopaedia

¹⁶ New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopaedia

COVENANT	TYPE	PARTICIPANTS
Edenic	Suzerain-Vassal	Adam & Eve
Adamic	Royal Grant	All mankind
Noachic	Royal Grant / Suzerain-Vassal	Noah, his descendants and every living thing on earth
Abrahamic	Royal Grant / Suzerain-Vassal	Abraham
Mosaic	Suzerain-Vassal	Israel
Phinehas	Royal Grant	Phinehas
Davidic	Royal Grant	David
New	Last will or testament	All men who believe

Table 1: Types of covenants

3. Covenants of parity

Abraham and Abimelech made a covenant of parity. In return for securing property rights for water wells in Beersheba, Abraham promises to be kind to Abimelech and his offspring. The covenant was sealed with an oath and the 7 lambs set apart from the others as a witness were probably used in the treaty ceremony. As equals they negotiate the terms of the treaty.

Genesis 21:22-31 At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his forces said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do. Now **swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or my descendants.** Show to me and the country where you are living as an alien the same kindness I have shown to you." Abraham said, "I swear it." Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized. But Abimelech said, "I don't know who has done this. You did not tell me, and I heard about it only today." So Abraham brought sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech, and **the two men made a treaty.** Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs from the flock, and Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs you have set apart by themselves?" He replied, "**Accept these seven lambs** from my hand **as a witness** that I dug this well." So that place was called Beersheba, because the two men **swore an oath** there.

The Philistine Abimelech who was originally hostile to Isaac, decided to negotiate a covenant of parity indicating mutual respect. (Note the characteristic covenant meal and oath.)

Genesis 26:26-31 (ESV) When Abimelech went to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath his adviser and Phicol the commander of his army, Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?" They said, "We see plainly that the LORD has been with you. So we said, let there be a sworn pact between us, between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you, that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD." So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. In the morning they rose early and exchanged oaths. And Isaac sent them on their way, and they departed from him in peace.

Jacob and Laban entered into a covenant of parity sealed with an oath. Boundaries were agreed upon and Jacob promises to be kind to Laban's daughters. A sacrifice was made to seal the covenant and God was called as a witness. Despite their differences Jacob and Laban agree to a covenant of mutual respect.

Genesis 31:43-54 Laban answered Jacob, "... Come now, **let's make a covenant**, you and I, and let it serve as a witness between us." So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. He said to his relatives, "Gather some stones." So they took stones and piled them in a heap, and they ate there by the heap. Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, and Jacob called it Galeed. Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me today." That is why it was called Galeed. It was also called Mizpah, because he said, "**May the LORD keep watch** between you and me when we are away from each other. If you mistreat my daughters or if you take any wives besides my daughters, even though no one is with us, remember that **God is a witness** between you and me." Laban also said to Jacob, "Here is this heap, and here is this pillar I have set up

between you and me. **This heap is a witness**, and **this pillar is a witness**, that I will not go past this heap to your side to harm you and that you will not go past this heap and pillar to my side to harm me. May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us." So **Jacob took an oath** in the name of the Fear of his father Isaac. **He offered a sacrifice** there in the hill country and **invited his relatives to a meal**. After they had eaten, they spent the night there.

In return for offering the Israelite spies protection, Rahab negotiates a covenant for her family's protection. The scarlet cord, which symbolised this agreement, has been regarded as typical of the blood, which would symbolise the New Covenant, which protects us from God's righteous anger against sin.

Joshua 2:17-21 The men said to her, "This **oath you made us swear** will not be binding on us unless, when we enter the land, you have **tied this scarlet cord in the window** through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. If anyone goes outside your house into the street, his blood will be on his own head; we will not be responsible. As for anyone who is in the house with you, his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on him. But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear." "Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say." So she sent them away and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

To confirm certain oaths or seal a contract in Biblical times, a man plucked off his shoe and gave it to the other party, as was the case with Boaz .

Ruth 4:7-8 (Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalising transactions in Israel.) So the kinsman-redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it yourself." And he removed his sandal.

When Jonathan made a covenant of parity with David, he went even farther than this and gave him his own garments.

1 Samuel 18:3-4 And Jonathan **made a covenant** with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan **took off the robe** he was wearing and gave it to David, along with **his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.**

God does not enter into covenants of parity with men as we are not his equals.

Isaiah 40:25 "To whom will you compare me? **Or who is my equal?**" says the Holy One.

4. Dispensational covenants

A dispensation can be defined as a period during which God deals with His people in a particular manner. Each one is ushered in by a distinct covenant and terminated by a judgement. These dispensational covenants are as follows:

1. The **Age of Innocence** was ushered in by the **Edenic covenant** and ended with the **judgement of man and the serpent.**
2. The **Age of Conscience** commenced with the **Adamic covenant** and ended with the **judgement of the Deluge (flood).**
3. The **Age of Human Government** commenced with the **Noachic covenant** and ended with the **judgement at Babel.**
4. The **Age of Patriarchal Rule** started with the **Abrahamic covenant** and ended with the **judgement of the 10 plagues** in Egypt. While normally the covenant also ended with the dispensation, in this case Scripture teaches that the Abrahamic covenant didn't cease when the newer Mosaic covenant was put in place (see next section for elaboration).
5. The **Age of Law** began with the **Mosaic covenant** and ended with the **judgement of man's sin through Jesus' crucifixion.**

6. The present **Age of Grace** began with the **New Covenant** in Christ and will end with the **judgement of the tribulation**.

Dispensation	Covenant started with	Judgement ended with
Innocence	Edenic covenant	Judgement of serpent and man
Conscience	Adamic covenant	The flood
Human Government	Noachic covenant	The tower of Babel
Patriarchal Dispensation	Abrahamic covenant	The 10 plagues
The Law	Mosaic covenant	The crucifixion
Grace	New covenant in Christ	The tribulation
The Millennium	New covenant with Israel	The Great White Throne

Table 2: Dispensational covenants

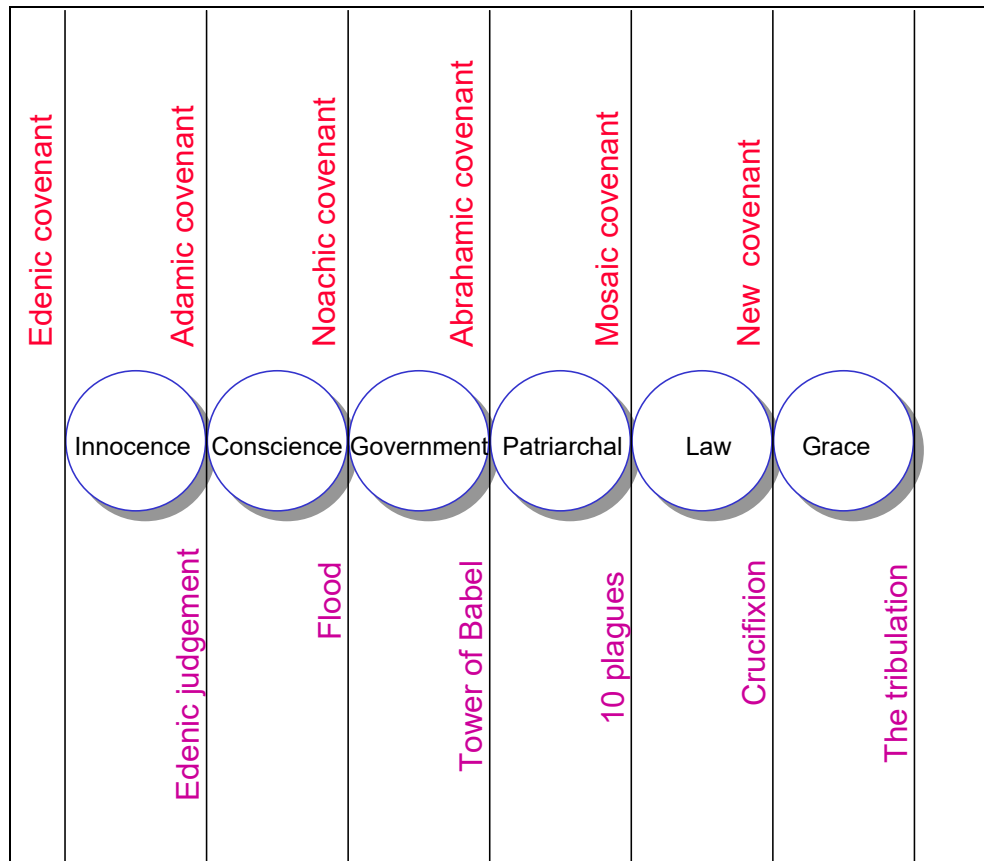


Figure 1: Dispensational covenants and judgements

4.1 The uniqueness of the Abrahamic covenant from a dispensational view

While normally the newer covenant displaced the previous, Paul indicates in Galatians that this was not true of the Abrahamic covenant. The Abrahamic covenant did not cease with the Mosaic covenant and we remain recipients of the main promise of the covenant which is:

Genesis 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed

Paul makes it clear that Jesus is the seed referred to and all nations being blessed refers to the blessing of salvation we have received by virtue of Jesus who was Abraham's seed.

In fact, in Galatians Paul explicitly says that the Mosaic covenant did not set aside the previous Abrahamic covenant, although it was more recent.

Gal 3:17 What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.

4.1.1 Is the Abrahamic covenant no longer applicable to Israel but only to the church?

However although the Abrahamic covenant is still intact and we are recipients of the blessing of the seed – most of the Abrahamic covenant does not apply to the church. This is because the covenant also included very specific promises regarding land to Abraham's physical descendants (i.e. the land of Israel) which is still to be fulfilled in the future Millennial kingdom. Abraham's covenant also included the seal of circumcision (not required by New Covenant believers).

Most Amillennialists take the view that the promises made to Abraham have all been passed on to the church and that God has finished with Israel. However the Premillennial view is that God deals with man in dispensations and that while "Israel has experienced a hardening in part" (Romans 11:25) – Paul qualifies this statement by saying that this is only until "until the full number of the Gentiles has come in." He then adds "And so all Israel will be saved" (Rom

11:26). So God will restore Israel as promised in Romans 11 and then they will receive all the other promises (of land) that were part of Abraham's covenant.

Stephen indicates that Abraham's covenant included the sign or circumcision and the NT makes it clear that we are no longer required to be circumcised.

Acts 7:8 Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision.

Rather the sign of our new covenant is baptism:

Col 2:11-12 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

So in summary:

1) Jesus indicates that he instituted a 'new covenant' (contrasted with the old Mosaic covenant of Law) with the cross:

Luke 22: 20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

2) And the book of Hebrews says our covenant is not only new – but better than the Mosaic covenant:

Heb 7:22 Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

3) So while we have a distinct “new and better” covenant, the church has still received the specific promise of the Abrahamic covenant that was made to “all nations of the earth” (i.e. Abraham’s spiritual sons in faith as opposed to Abrahams physical descendants).

5. The necessity of blood

Just as a contract without signatures is not legally binding, so God's covenants with man (except the Edenic because of innocence) are all sealed with a "blood signature". Blood contains the essence of life, and for this reason God forbids Noah and his descendants to consume it.

Genesis 9:4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.¹⁷

This was one of the few regulations that was carried through in the New Covenant as indicated by the letter from the Council at Jerusalem to the Gentile believers.

*Acts 15:28-29 It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: **You are to abstain** from food sacrificed to idols, **from blood**, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.*

From the beginning we see that the shedding of blood was necessary to clothe man’s spiritual nakedness. After the Fall in Eden man attempted to clothe his nakedness (type of sin) with fig leaves (type of “good works”). God, however, clothed them with garments of skin, which would have necessitated the shedding of blood of an animal (type of Jesus’ sacrifice).

Likewise Cain's sacrifice of the fruit of his labour (which speaks of good works) was not acceptable, while Abel's sacrifice of fat portions from the firstborn of his

¹⁷ KJV

flock was (the blood of the innocent being shed for the guilty). Even at this stage it appears that the significance of the blood pointing to future redemption by the “seed of the woman” was accepted by the righteous through faith.

Hebrews 11:4 **By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice** than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

Noah sacrificed animals when God established His covenant with him, as did Abraham. The blood of the Passover lamb “covered” or protected those who sprinkled it on their doorframes from God’s wrath.

Exodus 12:13 The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and **when I see the blood, I will pass over you.** No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

Notice that charismatic religious fetishes like “pleading the blood” over places are on a par with lucky rabbit’s feet and good luck charms. **The blood in the Scripture is never to protect us from Satan’s wrath but from God’s wrath.** Remember the Passover when God’s destroyer passed over the houses when he saw the blood; likewise God “passes over us” when he sees the blood of Christ.

The Covenant with Israel was a “blood covenant”.

Exodus 24:8 Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, “This is **the blood of the covenant** that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

The Law required that the blood of animals be sprinkled on the altar for a sin offering, indicating the substitution of the victim’s blood for that of the sinner.

Hebrews 9:22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, **and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.**

To bring about atonement and to establish the New Covenant it was necessary for Jesus to shed His blood.

Luke 22:20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is **the new covenant in my blood**, which is poured out for you."

COVENANT	BLOOD
Adamic	Animals killed for garments
Noachic	Sacrifice of clean animals and birds
Abrahamic B	Sacrifice of heifer, a goat and a ram, along with a dove and a young pigeon.
Abrahamic C	Sacrifice of the ram in Isaac's place
Mosaic	Blood of lambs, bulls and goats
New	Jesus' blood on the cross

Figure 2:Blood covenants

6. The covenant sign

A covenant sign was a visible seal and reminder of covenant commitments. The rainbow was the sign of the covenant with Noah.

Genesis 9:12-16 And God said, "**This is the sign of the covenant** I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: **I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.** Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never

again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life, Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, **I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant** between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."

Circumcision was the sign of the covenant with Abraham, and the Sabbath was the sign of the covenant with Israel at Sinai. Both of these practices have been contentious issues in the church. However as **they are remnants of previous covenants, it is important to remember that legally a more recent covenant supersedes previous ones**. This explains why neither of these apply to the those who partake of the New Covenant.

The sign of the Abrahamic Covenant is circumcision.

Genesis 17:9-11 Then God said to Abraham, "...This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. **You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you..**"

But Paul writes to those partaking of the New Covenant:

Galatians 5:6 For in **Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value**. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

COVENANT	SIGN
Noachic	Rainbow
Abrahamic	Circumcision
Mosaic	Sabbath
Davidic	A son
New	Baptism, the table

Figure 3:The covenant sign

The sign of the Mosaic Covenant is the Sabbath.

Exodus 31:13 "Say to the Israelites `You must observe my Sabbaths, This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come..."

But Paul writes to those partaking of the New Covenant:

Colossians 2:16-17 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

7. The oath

As was typical of covenants of parity, the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech was sealed with an oath¹⁸. So too were the covenants between Isaac and Abimelech¹⁹, and Jacob and Laban²⁰. The oath made the covenant binding.

Hebrews 6:16 Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument.

Jacob insisted on Esau swearing an oath when he covenanted to give him the birthright.

¹⁸ Genesis 21:31

¹⁹ Genesis 26:31

²⁰ Genesis 31:53

Genesis 25:33 But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

Jehoida's covenant with the commanders ²¹, and David's covenant with Jonathan²² were also sealed with oaths. The oath was seen as a ratification of the covenant, as evidenced by Joshua's treaty with the Gibeonites.

Joshua 9:15 Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly **ratified it by oath**.

So too God confirms his covenants with an oath.

Deuteronomy 4:31 For the LORD your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget **the covenant with your forefathers, which he confirmed to them by oath**.

Abraham tells Eliezer about God's oath:

Genesis 24:7 "The LORD, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father's household and my native land and who spoke to me and **promised me on oath**, saying, 'To your offspring I will give this land'

Moses emphasises to Israel that their covenant is sealed with an oath from God:

²¹ 2KI 11:4 In the seventh year Jehoiada sent for the commanders of units of a hundred, the Carites and the guards and had them brought to him at the temple of the LORD. He **made a covenant with them and put them under oath** at the temple of the LORD. Then he showed them the king's son.

²² 1 Samuel 20:17 And **Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath** out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.

Deuteronomy 29:12-15 You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the LORD your God, a **covenant the LORD is making with you** this day and **sealing with an oath**, to confirm you this day as his people, that he may be your God as he promised you and as he swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I am making **this covenant, with its oath**, not only with you who are standing here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God but also with those who are not here today.

The Davidic covenant was bound with the surety of an irrevocable oath:

Psalms 132:11 **The LORD swore an oath to David, a sure oath that he will not revoke:** "One of your own descendants I will place on your throne..."

When Jesus is appointed the high priest of the New Covenant forever, God guarantees this with an oath.

Hebrews 7:20-22 And **it was not without an oath!** Others became priests without any oath, but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: You are a priest forever." " **Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.**

We too as the "heirs of what was promised" in the New Covenant have our covenant confirmed by God's oath.

Hebrews 6:17 Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.

8. The covenant meal

In the ancient Middle East there was often a covenant meal, celebrating the sealing of the covenant. Hence we read regarding the treaty between Isaac and Abimelech:

Genesis 26:26-31 Let us make a treaty with you Isaac then made a feast for them, and they ate and drank.

When Jacob and Laban entered into a covenant we also read of a covenant meal.

*Genesis 31:43-54 Laban answered Jacob, "...Come now, **let's make a covenant**, ... So **Jacob took an oath** in the name of the Fear of his father Isaac. **He offered a sacrifice** there in the hill country and **invited his relatives to a meal**.*

The first Passover and all subsequent ones were associated with a covenant meal.

*Exodus 12:3-11 Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.**That same night they are to eat the meat** roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; **it is the LORD's Passover**.*

Jesus used his last Passover meal with his disciples as a covenant meal to institute the New Covenant in which he would be the Passover lamb. Thus the bread and the wine have become the symbols or sign of this covenant

*John 13:1-2 It was **just before the Passover Feast**. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the*

Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. **The evening meal was being served, ...**

Luke 22:20 In the same way, **after the supper** he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you.

At his last Passover meal, Jesus referred to his body as bread and to his blood as wine--he was the Passover Lamb who was symbolically eaten by his disciples as **a covenant meal**.²³

9. Covenant mediators

A mediator is someone who acts as a **negotiator** between **2 or more parties** either to settle a dispute, or to bring about a settlement or agreement. A covenant mediator belongs to the latter group.

A **covenant mediator** is someone who **arbitrates** between the covenant parties to **bring about agreement** on the covenant terms.

Galatians 3:20 **A mediator, however, does not represent just one party**; but God is one. Since the promise God covenanted with Abraham involved commitment only from God's side, no mediator was involved.²⁴

Thus a royal grant requires no mediator, while a Suzerain-Vassal does.

²³ NIV Bible dictionary

²⁴ NIV Study Bible notes

Once more Joshua assembled the tribes at Shechem to call Israel to a renewal of the covenant. It was his final official act as the Lord's servant, mediator of the Lord's rule over his people. In this he followed the example of Moses, whose final official act was also a call to covenant renewal--of which Deuteronomy is the preserved document.²⁵

Following is the dialogue of Joshua acting as mediator between Israel and God for the covenant renewal.

Joshua 24:19-27 Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD, He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you."

But the people said to Joshua, "No! We will serve the LORD."

Then Joshua said, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the LORD."

"Yes, we are witnesses," they replied.

"Now then," said Joshua, "throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."

And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and obey Him."

On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and then at Shechem he drew up for them decrees and laws. And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took

²⁵ NIV Study Bible notes

a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of the LORD.

"See!" he said to all the people. "This stone will be a witness against us, it has heard all the words the LORD has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God."

The 2 central mediators in the Bible are:

✚ Mediator of the Old Covenant (Testament): Moses

✚ Mediator of the New Covenant (Testament): Jesus

John 1:17 For the **Law** was given through **Moses**; **Grace and Truth** came through **Jesus Christ**.

The Mosaic covenant was a formal arrangement of mutual commitments between God and Israel, with **Moses as the mediator** between **the Israelites** and **the angels** who put the covenant into effect.

Acts 7:53 ... you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels...

Galatians 3:19 ...The law was put into effect **through angels** by a **mediator**.

With the New Covenant between God and all mankind, **Jesus acted as mediator** between **God** and **men**:

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and **one Mediator between God and men**, the man **Jesus Christ**.

Hebrews 9:15 ...CHRIST is the MEDIATOR of a NEW COVENANT

10. The Seed

10.1 Adamic Covenant

From the time of the Adamic Covenant when the seed was promised, all future dispensational covenants have reference to this original promise of the “seed of the woman”. God promised to Adam and Eve that **mankind’s redemption** and **Satan’s destruction** will be brought about by the “seed of the woman”. Consequently Satan consistently tried to destroy whoever he thought might be the promised seed. As Abel was the seed of Eve he incited Cain to murder him. God therefore allowed the seed to come through Seth:

Genesis 4:25 And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For **God**, [said she], **hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel**, whom Cain slew. ²⁶

Noachic Covenant

Because of Abel’s murder God, in the following Noachic covenant, forbids murder and institutes capital punishment to ensure the “preservation of the seed”. In fact the reason God brought about the flood is because Satan tried to corrupt the seed through fallen angels intermarrying with woman. The reason the entire population was destroyed with the exception of Noah, was because Noah’s family alone had not been directly or indirectly affected by this, and future intermarriage by Noah’s line and the line of the corrupted seed would preclude the possibility of a redeemer for man.

Genesis 6:8-10 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. These [are] the **generations** (Hebrew: *toledah*) of Noah: **Noah was**

²⁶ KJV

a just man [and] **perfect in his generations** (Hebrew: *toledah*), [and] Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.²⁷

Noah was “perfect in his generations”, not “perfect in his generation” as is commonly assumed when reading the passage. In the context the Hebrew for generations *toledah* is a reference to the offspring of Noah (Shem, Ham and Japheth) and not his contemporaries. This seems to reinforce the fact that Noah alone had not been affected by this corruption of the seed.

The following passage indicates that it was this exact series of incidents regarding the corruption of the seed which prompted God to take this seemingly severe form of action of destroying virtually all mankind.

Genesis 6:1-7 When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years." The Nephilim were on the earth in those days--and also afterward--when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown. The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth--men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air--for I am grieved that I have made them."

Some who find the supernatural hard to accept, have attempted to equate the “sons of God” with the line of Seth and the “daughters of men” with the line of

²⁷ KJV

Cain, but William Whiston²⁸ in his translation of Josephus's "Antiquities of the Jews" in 1737 notes on the equivalent section:

This notion, that the fallen angels were, in some sense, the fathers of the old giants, was the constant opinion of antiquity.²⁹

The term "sons of God" (Hebrew - *bene 'elohim*) is used of angels in the Old Testament not only in Genesis but also in Job (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7) and Psalms (Psalms 29:1; 89:6) where it clearly refers to angelic beings.

Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God (*bene 'elohim*) came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.³⁰

Psalm 89:6-7 For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings? (*bene 'elohim*). In the council of the holy ones (*bene 'elohim*) God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him.

There are certain passages where the term *bene 'elohim* could also refer to men (Deuteronomy. 14:1; 32:5; Ps. 73:15; Hosea. 1:10). In Genesis, however, the Jews interpreted this to be angels, as evidenced by the Jewish historian Josephus whose account of this in the 1st century (93 A.D.) seems to verify the attempt to corrupt the seed.

...for many angels of God accompanied with women, and begat sons that prove unjust, and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength, for the tradition is that these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the

²⁸ Whiston was appointed deputy to Isaac Newton's professorship in 1701, and succeeded Newton at Cambridge in 1703.

²⁹ Antiquities of the Jews, BOOK 1, Chapter 3:1 footnote

³⁰ KJV

Grecians called giants. But Noah was very uneasy at what they did; and, being displeased at their conduct, persuaded them to change their dispositions and their acts for the better; - but, seeing that they did not yield to him, but were slaves to their wicked pleasures, he was afraid they would kill him, together with his wife and children, and those they had married; so he departed out of that land. Now God loved this man for his righteousness; yet he not only condemned those other men for their wickedness, but determined to destroy the whole race of mankind, and to make another race that should be pure from wickedness ³¹

Josephus makes the observation that Greek mythology contains numerous corrupted versions of this original truth in their accounts of the “gods” marrying woman and producing super-human offspring. Such was the case with the mighty Hercules³² who was reputed to be the offspring of a mortal woman Alcmena and the “god” Zeus. How, to some interpreters, the line of Cain could produce giant offspring seems unclear.

Immediately after God determines to destroy the world we read:

Genesis 9:8-9. And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you ³³

10.2 Abrahamic Covenant

The covenants with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob indicated the **lineage** or **ancestral line of the seed**. God promises to:

✚ Abraham

³¹ Antiquities of the Jews, BOOK 1, Chapter 3:1-2

³² Roman version of the Greek Heracles

³³ KJV

Genesis 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. ³⁴

✚ Isaac

Genesis 26:4 And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. ³⁵

✚ Jacob

Genesis 28:14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. ³⁶

Satan has thus tried on numerous occasions to prompt wicked men like Pharaoh and Haman to destroy the Israelites. Much of anti-Semitism is not racial, but inspired directly by Satan who knows that if he could destroy the Israelites he could invalidate the covenant promises to Abraham.

10.3 Mosaic Covenant

The Mosaic Covenant saw the institution of sacrifices that would typify the sacrifice "the seed" would make.

Once again Satan attempts to thwart God's plan. The original account of the Nephilim (Hebrew - "fallen ones") in Genesis 6 indicates that this happened again in the same manner as before.

³⁴ KJV

³⁵ KJV

³⁶ KJV

Genesis 6:4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days--and also afterward--when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them.

If the Nephilim were offspring from Cain it poses a problem in that they appear once again after the Flood, bearing in mind that the line of Cain was destroyed by the Deluge. Thus the Canaanites appear to have corrupted their seed, with giant offspring resulting once again. This is borne out by the testimony of the spies sent to Canaan by Moses.

Numbers 13:31-33 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."

Again this explains God's seemingly severe instructions to the Israelites to utterly annihilate the Canaanites off the face of the earth in order to prevent intermarriage and corruption of the seed.

Deuteronomy 7:1-3 When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations--the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you—and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them.

This corruption of the seed by the Canaanites also explains the curse placed by Noah on the descendants of Canaan.

The Anakim³⁷ and the Rephaim³⁸ were related to the Nephilim. The Israelites destroyed the giant king Og of Bashan³⁹ who was one of the last of the Rephaim⁴⁰. Caleb destroyed the Anakim chiefs at Hebron ⁴¹ who had been there from the time of the spies⁴². Although Israel did not destroy all the Canaanites as they were instructed, Joshua totally destroyed the corrupted seed line of the Anakim, a remnant remaining only in Philistia.

Joshua 11:20-22 For it was the LORD himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses. At that time Joshua went and destroyed the Anakites from the hill country: from Hebron, Debir and Anab, from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua totally destroyed them and their towns. No Anakites were left in Israelite territory; only in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod did any survive.

10.4 Davidic Covenant

It was from this remnant in Gath that the 9-foot Philistine giant Goliath came. ⁴³ The covenant with David included the promise that the lineage of the seed would come through his descendants, and part of the reason could well be that it was David himself who destroyed Goliath, one of the last of the corrupted Nephilim seed.

2 Samuel 7:12-13 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.

³⁷ Numbers 13:33

³⁸ Deuteronomy 2:11

³⁹ Og had a 13-foot bed - Deuteronomy 3:11

⁴⁰ Joshua 12:4

⁴¹ Joshua 15:13-14

⁴² Number 13:22

⁴³ 1 Samuel 17:4

He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.⁴⁴

The constant battle between the line of the “seed of the woman” and the “corrupted seed” is thus perpetuated in the battle between David and Goliath. This battle continues when the Rephaim (i.e. descendant from Rapha) giant Ishbi-Benob then vows to kill David, but is killed by Joab’s brother Abishai:

2 Samuel 21:16-17 And Ishbi-Benob, one of the descendants of Rapha, whose bronze spearhead weighed three hundred shekels and who was armed with a new sword, said he would kill David. But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David's rescue; he struck the Philistine down and killed him. Then David's men swore to him, saying, "Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished."

David’s men battled continuously against the Philistines, killing the remnants of the Rephaim, including Goliath’s brother Lahmi.

1 Chronicles 20:4-5 In the course of time, war broke out with the Philistines, at Gezer. At that time Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Sippai, one of the descendants of the Rephaites, and the Philistines were subjugated. In another battle with the Philistines, Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver's rod.

David’s nephew killed another of the Rephaim from Gath.

1 Chronicles 20:6-7 In still another battle, which took place at Gath, there was a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot--twenty-four in all. He also was descended from

⁴⁴ KJV

Rapha. When he taunted Israel, Jonathan son of Shimea, David's brother, killed him.

The Hebrew word *rapha'* translated deceased or dead, has the same root as *raphah* which is translated Rephaim. Some believe that the following passages in Psalms and Isaiah indicate that the Rephaim will not be resurrected.

Psalm 88:10. Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead ? shall the dead (Strong's ref 7496) arise [and] praise thee? Selah .⁴⁵

Isaiah 26:14 [They are] dead, they shall not live; [they are] deceased (Strong's ref 7496), they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.⁴⁶

The word translated deceased (Isaiah 26:14) or dead (Psalm 88:10) has the following definition in the Strong's:

7496 rapha' {raw-faw'} - **from 7495** in the sense of 7503; TWOT - 2198c; **n m pl**

The word translated Rephaim has the following definition in the Strong's:

7497 rapha' {raw-faw'} or raphah {raw-faw'} - **from 7495** in the sense of invigorating; TWOT - 2198d; **n pr gent**

Both have the same root, which is a verb:

7495 rapha' {raw-faw'} or raphah {raw-faw'}

Rapha' <7496> is a noun but in Isaiah it appears as a verb in the English translation. The use of a noun could mean a reference to the Rephaim.

Isaiah 26:14 [They are] dead, they shall not live; **[they are] deceased <07496>, they shall not rise:....**

⁴⁵ KJV

⁴⁶ KJV

10.5 New Covenant

The promises regarding the seed were all fulfilled in Jesus the “son of David”, who crushed the serpent’s (Satan) head through his redemptive death on the cross.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. ⁴⁷

Galatians 3:19 ...What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come.

The virgin birth was a fulfilment of the prophecy that the redeemer of mankind would be the “seed of the woman”.

Matthew 1:20-23 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" --which means, "God with us."

The “last Adam” Jesus established a new line in opposition to the line of the first Adam.

⁴⁷ KJV

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put [him] to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see [his] seed, he shall prolong [his] days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.⁴⁸

This new line of Jesus was not corruptible like Adam's line. We can partake of this incorruptible new line by being "born again".

1 Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

This seed of God in us gives us the power to overcome sin.

1 John 2:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ KJV

⁴⁹ KJV

Adamic Covenant	The seed is promised
Noachic Covenant	Preservation of the seed
Abrahamic Covenant	lineage of the seed
Isaachic Covenant	lineage of the seed
Jacobic Covenant	lineage of the seed
Judahic Covenant	lineage of the seed
Mosaic Covenant	Institution of sacrifices that would typify the sacrifice the seed would make
Davidic Covenant	lineage of the seed
The New Covenant	The promise fulfilment, the seed of the woman comes to crush the serpents head

Table 3: The references to the seed

11. Edenic covenant

In the Edenic covenant, man was given dominion over creation.

Gen 1:27-30 (NIV) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

Adam's part of the bargain was only one condition i.e. not to eat from the forbidden tree.

Gen 2:15-17 (NIV) The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the

garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

The Scriptures plainly teach that the serpent deceived only Eve.

1 Tim 2:14 (NIV) And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.

Adam wilfully sinned by choosing to obey the will of his wife rather than the will of God. This is why God says "Because you listened to your wife...Cursed is the ground..."⁵⁰. As the covenant had been made with Adam, he was held responsible for the "breach of contract" or Fall.

Hosea 6:7 (NIV) Like Adam, they have broken the covenant--they were unfaithful to me there.

Although Eve "became a sinner"⁵¹ through Satan's deception, Adam as the God-appointed head of the human race and earthly creation, made all his descendants sinners through his wilful act of disobedience.

1 Cor 15:22 (NIV) For as in Adam all die...

Romans 5:14 (NIV) Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

Besides spiritual death (separation from God), the termination of the Edenic covenant through breach on man's part brought about a curse.

⁵⁰ Genesis 3:17

⁵¹ 1 Timothy 2:14

Genesis 3:16-19 To the woman he said; "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through pain and toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field, By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return..."

In the original languages of the Bible death never means cessation of existence, but rather "separation". Thus physical death is separation of the spirit and soul from the body, while spiritual death is the separation of man's spirit from God. Eternal death (the second death) is eternal separation from God, and not the cessation of existence as some teach. The curse included:

- ✚ cursed ground (thorns & thistles)
- ✚ cursed serpent for being Satan's instrument (crawl on belly)
- ✚ Woman to have labour pains
- ✚ Man to earn living by the sweat of his brow
- ✚ man's mortality (return to dust)
- ✚ Enmity between Satan and man

2 parties	God and Adam
Type	Suzerain-vassal (conditional)
Dispensation	Innocence
Man's privileges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • populate the earth • subdue the earth • exercise dominion over the animals • vegetarian diet (animals as well)⁵² • take care of the garden of Eden • eat the fruit of all trees but one
Man's conditions	abstain from eating the fruit of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil"
Penalty clause	Spiritual death if man disobeyed (separation from God)
Terminating Judgement	Judgement of man and serpent

Table 4: The Edenic covenant

12. Adamic covenant

With the demise of the Edenic covenant God immediately establishes a new covenant with man, or more specifically with "the seed of the woman".

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.⁵³

As Adam was given dominion over the earth, it is quite likely that he could have "redeemed" the woman had he not sinned.

Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" - Jesus loved the church redemptively and husbands are instructed to love their wives in the same manner.

⁵² Both men and animals had a vegetarian diet until after the flood (Noachian covenant). In the millennium animals will resume back to this vegetarian diet. See ISAIAH 11:6-7 "The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together... The cow will feed with the bear... and the lion will eat straw like the ox."

⁵³ NASB

As we have seen it was not Eve but Adam who was held responsible for the Fall of the human race. Because of this God chose to bring redemption for all mankind through the "seed of the woman". Immediately after promising the seed, God speaks of the woman's childbirth pains. From the context it indicates that the seed was referring to the woman's offspring.

This may explain what many have found to be a difficult verse:

1 Timothy 2:15 But women will be saved through childbearing...

This obviously does not mean, as it might seem at first reading that women have to bear children in order to be saved, as this is contrary to the doctrine of salvation through faith in Christ. What it means is that indirectly salvation came about through the childbearing act of woman i.e. the "seed of the woman".

It is interesting that this promise of the "seed of the woman" was made by the one (Jesus) who would later fulfil it, because all incarnations of God in the Old Testament were Jesus ⁵⁴.

Genesis 3:21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

The shedding of the blood of this animal to provide a covering for their nakedness was God's way of teaching Adam and Eve about the necessity for blood to atone for sin. That God expected them to understand this and to teach it to their children is apparent in God's handling of Cain and Abel, where only the blood sacrifice of the firstborn of Abel's flock was acceptable to God. The blood was also the seal or signature on this first blood covenant.

There are no conditions attached to this covenant so it is most like a royal grant. However it was not earned through the faithfulness of man, but rather granted through the future faithfulness of the promised seed.

⁵⁴ JN 6:46 - "No one has seen the Father"

2 parties	God	the seed of the woman
Type	Royal Grant	
Dispensation	Conscience	
Royal Grant & reason	Serpent's head would be crushed by the "seed of the woman" (Messianic)	future faithfulness of the "seed of the woman"
Reference to the "seed"	The "Seed" is promised	
Blood covenant	animals killed for garments	
Terminating Judgement	The flood	

Figure 4: The Adamic covenant

13. Noachian

Before God establishes His covenant with Noah, He gives him some preconditions.

Genesis 6:14-21 "So make yourself an ark of cypress wood: make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out, ...I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark--you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you, You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."

2 parties Man's privileges Man's conditions	God and Noah lives spared from flood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make an ark • bring into the ark 2 of all living creatures⁵⁵ • take food and store it away as food for the humans and animals
--	--

Table 5:Pre-conditions to the Noachian covenant

After Noah had met these pre-conditions, and experienced the subsequent benefit of having his own life and the lives of his family spared during the flood, God establishes a covenant with Noah after he leaves the ark.

Genesis 8:20-9:13 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart:" Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease." Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.. The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of' the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you, just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man, Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man. As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it." Then God said to Noah and to his sons

⁵⁵ Actually, only 2 of the "unclean" animals and 7 of the "clean" animals

with him:" I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you--the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you--every living creature on earth.. I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

Some maintain that the rainbow was a new sign because it did not rain before the flood based on the following verse.

Genesis 2:5-6:When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens--and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground; but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.

Could this condition of no rain have lasted until the Flood? This is the belief of those who hold to the canopy theory. If so, this might explain why Noah appears to have had difficulty convincing people about a judgement involving rain. But the Bible is actually silent on this issue; it mentions Noah preaching (2 Pet 2:6), but not being mocked.

As the rainbow was the covenant sign with Noah some assume that it must be something new after the Flood. Yet it is a natural spectrum appearing in the sky after rain. So if there was rain before the Flood surely Noah would have already been familiar with the rainbow. However if rainbows did exist before the flood, this would not be the only time God used an existing thing as a sign of a covenant e.g. bread and wine in the Lord's Supper.

The sanctity of human life as viewed by God is revealed here. Capital punishment predates the Mosaic Law and is part of an everlasting covenant

(**“for all generations to come”**) with Noah and his descendants, namely all members of the human race. God calls it the “everlasting covenant.”

Gen 9:16 (NIV) “Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.”

God rebukes the inhabitant of the earth for breaking it. (How can you break an unconditional covenant?)

Isa 24:5 (NIV) “The earth is defiled by its people; they have ... broken the everlasting covenant.”

He clearly indicates that the breach carries a penalty.

Isa 24:6 (NIV) “Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left.”

2 parties	God and “all living creatures of every kind on the earth”
Type	Royal Grant / Suzerain Vassal
Dispensation	Human Government
Royal Grant	Never again would God destroy the earth by water
Reason for grant	Faithfulness of Noah
Reference to the “seed”	Preservation of the seed
Man’s responsibility (not conditions to the grant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it • Sanctity of human life
Blood covenant	Sacrifice of clean animals by Noah
Terminating Judgement	The tower of Babel

Table 6: The Noachian covenant

14. Abrahamic

God sequentially expanded on the covenant to Abraham:

14.1 Abramic (A)

God first appears to Abram while he is still in Ur.

Genesis 12:1-3 The LORD said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

In return for stepping out in faith and leaving his hometown to go to a place later designated by God, Abram receives the following promises from God:

- ✚ God would make him into a great nation - fulfilled by his descendants, the Israelites
- ✚ God would bless him - Abraham prospered both spiritually and materially as evidenced by the Genesis account.
- ✚ God would make his name great - Abraham was not only revered by the Jews of Jesus day but is still known to us as a champion of faith.
- ✚ God would make him a blessing - to his contemporaries and future generations.
- ✚ God would bless those who blessed him, and curse those who cursed him - the witness of history shows that all world Empires who persecuted the Jews have encountered God's judgement.
- ✚ All peoples on earth will be blessed through him - This is a Messianic prophecy fulfilled in Jesus who was the seed of Abraham.

2 parties	God	Abraham, Isaac, Jacob & their descendants
Type conditions (must do)	Suzerain-vassal (conditional) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make him into a great nation • Bless him • Make his name great • Make him a blessing • Bless those who bless him, and curse those who curse him • All peoples on earth will be blessed through him 	Leave his country, his people and father's household and go to the land God would show him

Table 7:Abramic covenant (A)

14.2 Abramic (B)

God not only re-affirms the original covenant but adds promises of land and confirms it with a blood covenant.

Genesis 15:1-21 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:" Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward, " But Abram said; "O Sovereign LORD, what can you

give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." He took him outside and said; "Look up at the heavens and count the stars--if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be. " Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness. He also said to Him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it." But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?" So the LORD said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon." Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. Then the LORD said to him "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years, But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure." When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said; "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates-- the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kanaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites."

Genesis 15:18 - made a covenant, Literally, "cut a covenant," referring to the slaughtering of the animals (the same Hebrew verb is translated "made" and "cut" in Jeremiah 34:18).⁵⁶

Passing between the pieces of the slaughtered animals had the following significance. In ancient times the parties solemnised a covenant by walking down an aisle flanked by the pieces of slaughtered animals. The practice signified a self-maledictory oath: "May it be so done to me if I do not keep my oath and pledge." Note the following example of this in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 34:18-20 The men who have violated my covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the Covenant they made before me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two and then walked between its pieces. The leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the court officials, the priests and all the people of the land who walked between the pieces of the calf, I will hand over to their enemies who seek their lives. Their dead bodies will become food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth.

"How can I know that I will gain possession of it ", was the question posed by Abraham. God enters into a blood covenant to guarantee His royal grant.

⁵⁶ (NIV Study Bible Notes)

2 parties	God	Abraham, Isaac, Jacob & their descendants
Type	Royal grant (unconditional)	
Reference to the "seed"	lineage of the "seed"	
Dispensation	Patriarchal	
Royal Grant & reason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promise of a natural heir • offspring like the stars • To his descendants the land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates 	His faith (Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness)
Blood covenant	sacrifice of heifer, a goat and a ram, along with a dove and a young pigeon.	

Table 8:Abramic covenant (B)

14.3 Abrahamic (C)

God once again reiterates his promises and changes Abram's name to Abraham which was a statement of faith for a childless man, meaning "father of many nations".

Genesis 17:1-16 When Abraham was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my covenant between Me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish My covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God." Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep

my covenant. you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you.. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner--those who are not your offspring. Whether born in your household or bought with your money. They must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant." God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her".

God establishes an everlasting covenant with Abraham of which circumcision is the sign.

Acts 7:8 Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision.

Romans 4:16-17 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written:" I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed...

2 parties	God	Abraham, Isaac, Jacob & their descendants
Type	Suzerain-vassal (conditional)	
Reference to the “seed”	lineage of the “seed”	
conditions (must do)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • father of many nations • descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky • All peoples on earth will be blessed through him and his offspring (Messianic) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • walk before God and be blameless • Every male to be circumcised
Blood covenant	Sacrifice of the ram in Isaac’s place	
The sign	Circumcision	

Table 9:Abrahamic covenant (C)

The covenant is once again confirmed with Abraham when he is prepared to offer Isaac on the altar:

Genesis 22:15-18 The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said; "I swear by myself declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

Why did God ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac when human sacrifice is consistently forbidden by God himself? It was to test Abraham’s faith in God’s loyalty to his covenant. God had previously said “my covenant I will establish with Isaac”⁵⁷ and “it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned”.⁵⁸ Abraham’s faith in God keeping his terms of the covenant was such, that when

⁵⁷ Genesis 17:21

⁵⁸ Genesis 21:12

God asked him to sacrifice Isaac, he believed that God would be obliged to raise him from the dead in order to fulfil his promises.

Hebrews 11:17-19 By faith Abraham, when God tested Him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

14.4 Isaachic Covenant

God had insisted that the covenant would be established with Sarah's son, even though Abraham originally tried to convince God that it would be simpler to establish it with Ishmael instead.

Genesis 17:17-22 Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself; "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at her age of ninety?" And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" Then God said; "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year." When he had finished speaking with Abraham, God went up from him.

When Abraham was perturbed at the friction between Isaac and Ishmael, God assures him that he will make Ishmael into a great nation (forefather of most of the Arabic races), but that the Messianic promises regarding the seed (or "offspring" i.e. Jesus) would be fulfilled in Isaac.

Genesis 21:8-13 The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast. But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac." The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring."

God subsequently appears to Isaac himself and re-affirms the Abrahamic covenant.

Genesis 26:2-5 The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. Stay in this land for a while and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because Abraham believed me and kept My requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws."

14.5 Jacobic Covenant

Jeremiah 49:10 But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbours, and he [is] not.

Even before the birth of her twins Esau and Jacob, God tells Isaac's wife Rebecca:

Genesis 25:23 "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

Traditionally the birthright belonged to the eldest son (i.e. Esau). However the scheming Jacob convinces Esau to sell the birthright for some lentil stew, confirming it with an oath.

Genesis 25:31-34 Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."

"Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"

But Jacob said, "Swear to me first."

So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.

At the heart of the birthright were the covenant promises that Isaac had inherited from Abraham.⁵⁹

"Esau despised his birthright" and in so doing proved himself to be "godless", since he despised God's covenant with his father and grandfather.

Hebrews 12:16-17 See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this

⁵⁹ NIV Study Bible notes

blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.

Either Isaac was unaware of the “lentil soup” transaction between Esau and Jacob, or he hoped to disregard it because of his fondness for Esau. He thus prepares to impart the covenant blessings to Esau. Rebecca overhears Isaac’s instruction to Esau and in response prompts Jacob to deceive the blind Isaac into transmitting that heritage by way of a **legally binding bequest**.

Genesis 27:33 Isaac trembled violently and said, "Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him--and indeed he will be blessed!"

Although the ancient world believed that blessings and curses had a kind of magical power to accomplish what they pronounced, this is not what is being demonstrated here. Rather Isaac, as heir and steward of God's covenant blessing, acknowledged that he had **legally** transmitted the covenant promises to Jacob with his verbal bequest, somewhat equivalent to our modern legal status of a “verbal agreement”. Isaac regarded the blessing as irrevocable and offers Esau a lesser blessing.

Hebrews 11:20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

When Jacob prepares to leave for Paddan Aram, Isaac once again blesses him, knowingly this time, but now seems resigned to the fact that the covenant blessings will go to him.

Genesis 28:1-4 So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him and commanded him:"... May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples. May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien, the land God gave to Abraham."

God is not bound by men's traditions (e.g. the inheritance must go to the older son), but chooses those who value his covenants. Jacob, despite his other failings, valued God's covenant so much so that he was prepared to do anything in order to receive the covenant blessings. At Bethel God himself thus re-affirms the Abrahamic covenant with Jacob.

Genesis 28:10-15 Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. There above it stood The LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south, All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

Although Jacob should have left the matter to God by virtue of the earlier promise to his mother, he resorted to deceit to acquire the promises. God uses Laban in his deceitful treatment of Jacob regarding his daughters⁶⁰ to teach Jacob that the end does not justify the means, in other words deception should not be used to acquire God's promises.

Nevertheless God makes Jacob the recipient of the Abrahamic covenant, not because of his deceit but rather despite it, because he placed high value in God's covenant. God's foreknowledge had caused him to elect Jacob over Esau, as evidenced by his promise to Rebecca. In covenant contexts the terms "hate" and "love" were conventionally used to indicate rejection of or loyalty to the covenant Lord. This sheds light on what has always been viewed as a controversial passage.

⁶⁰ Laban deceived Jacob not only with regards to his marriage to Leah, but also regarding his stock and his wages at least 10 times (Genesis 31:5-8)

Malachi 1:2-3..."Was not Esau Jacob's brother" the LORD says.
"Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated..."

The terms hate and love are thus used as contrast as can be seen by comparing the 2 following parallel passages, which show that the love a man has for his relatives should not be greater when contrasted with his love for God:

Luke 14:26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters--yes, even his own life--he cannot be my disciple."

Matthew 10:37 "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me"

Jacob was a man determined to get God's blessing. When he wrestles with God⁶¹ and has his hip wrenched, he still refuses to let go and says:

Genesis 32:26 "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

Like his grandfather Abraham, Jacob now receives a new "covenant name".

Genesis 32:28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome."

⁶¹ Genesis 32:30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

14.6 Judahic Covenant

The portion of the Abrahamic covenant regarding the lineage of the seed is re-affirmed with Judah, as evidenced by Jacob's final blessing to Judah:

Genesis 49:10 The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.

This was a Messianic prophecy indicating that Judah would be the royal tribe, and that the Messiah would come through his descendants.

Isaiah 65:9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.

14.7 Abrahamic covenant applicable to church?

Are all the promises made to Israel now applicable to the church? No! Although by faith we are of the "seed of Abraham" and can partake in the blessings that result from walking in faith. We also saw in Galatians how, along with "all nations of the earth", we have received the blessing of the promise of Abraham's seed – which was Jesus our redeemer.

However the promises to Abraham also include very precise allocation of land that can only be applicable to his physical seed and not his spiritual seed. God has not abandoned these promises to Israel (land and restoration of faith).

Romans 11:1-27 I ask then: Did God reject His people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel: "Lord they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me" ? And what was God's answer to him? "I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not

bowed the knee to Baal." So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace... Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited. Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved; as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; He will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

The promises pertaining to Abraham and his seed were a royal grant and cannot be "set aside" or added to. They are fulfilled in "one person", namely Christ.

Galatians 3:15-16 Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ.

In Galatians Paul tells the Gentile church that "those who believe are children of Abraham" and "are blessed along with Abraham".

Galatians 3:6-9 Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Paul tells the Gentiles in Rome that Abraham is also their father and they too are heirs to the promise:

Romans 4:13-17 It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed--the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

However if we read the above passage in context, we find that the blessing we share with Abraham is not the material blessing, but rather **the justification that comes by faith**. If we have faith, like Abraham the man of faith, God credits our faith as righteousness and **we receive the blessing** of those "**whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered**" and "**whose sin the Lord will never count against him.**"

Romans 4:4-12 Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:" Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him." Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still

uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

Those hoping to claim the material promises of the Abrahamic covenant should bear in mind the material sign of the covenant i.e. physical circumcision. We do not need to hang on to older covenants as we shall see that we have a **better covenant with better promises** than any of the preceding covenants.

15. Phinehas' covenant

God gave Phinehas a royal grant of lasting priesthood for his descendants because of his zeal for God's honour.

Numbers 25:10-13 The LORD said to Moses, "Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites; for he was as zealous as I am for my honour among them, so that in my zeal I did not put an end to them. Therefore tell him I am making my covenant of peace with him. He and his descendants will have a covenant of a lasting priesthood, because he was zealous for the honour of his God and made atonement for the Israelites."

2 parties	God	Phinehas and his descendants
Type	Royal grant (unconditional)	
Royal Grant & reason	covenant of lasting priesthood for him and his descendants	zeal for God's honour

Table 10:Phinehas' covenant

16. Mosaic covenant

16.1 Tri-part covenant

This covenant was given to Moses on Mount Sinai shortly after leaving Egypt. It ushered in the Dispensation of Law and may be divided into 3 parts:

1. The Moral Law (Exodus 20:1-26) i.e. the 10 Commandments
2. The Civil Law (Exodus 21:1 - 24:18)
3. The Ceremonial Law (Exodus 25:1 40:38). i.e. the tabernacle, the priesthood and the order of service.

Exodus lays a foundational theology in which God reveals his name, his attributes, his redemption, his law and how he is to be worshipped. It also reports the appointment and work of the first covenant mediator (Moses) describes the beginnings of the priesthood, defines the role of the prophet and relates how the ancient covenant relationship between God and his people came under a new administration (the Sinai covenant).⁶²

The priest represented the people to God, while the prophet represented God to the people. The sign of this covenant is the Sabbath.

Exodus 31:12-13 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites `You must observe my Sabbaths, This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy.

2 reasons for this sign are given:

⁶² NIV Study Bible notes

- ✚ Having completed his work of creation God "rested on the seventh day" (v. 11), and the Israelites are to observe the same pattern in their service of God in the creation;
- ✚ the Israelites must cease all labour so that their servants can also participate in the Sabbath-rest--just as God had delivered his people from the burden of slavery in Egypt (see Dt 5:14-15).⁶³

16.2 The Decalogue

Exodus 34:27-28 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant--the Ten Commandments.

The 10 commandments or Decalogue are the moral law given to Israel. The first 4 commandments deal with man's relationship with God, and the last 6 with man's relationship with man. Before establishing the covenant God says:

Exodus 20:2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

The Decalogue was written on 2 tablets of stone by God.

Is there any significance to the fact that the Ten Words are inscribed on two tables rather than one? Traditionally the "two tables" were thought to refer to two sections: our duty to God and our duty to man. Recent knowledge of ancient covenant forms has

⁶³ NIV Study Bible notes

shown that the stipulations of the covenant--the laws imposed by the covenant-lord-- were written in duplicate. The covenant-lord retained one copy and deposited the other in the sanctuary of the god of the people on whom he was imposing his covenant. In the case of the Decalogue, Yahweh is both Covenant-Lord and also God of Israel. He, therefore, takes both copies into his care: the whole care, continuance, and maintenance of the covenant relationship rests with him.⁶⁴

The "ark of the covenant" (or testimony) was also a testimony to the covenant between God and Israel. It contained the tablets of stone with the covenant stipulations. It also had the mercy seat on top, pointing forward to the New Covenant of grace.

Exodus contains the Book of the covenant which is a legal document between God and his people. The outline of the covenant document is as follows:

- A. The Covenant Proposed (ch. 19)
- B. The Decalogue (20:1-17)
- C. The Reaction of the People to God's Fiery Presence (20:18-21)
- D. The Book of the Covenant (20:22-23:33)
 - 1. Prologue (20:22-26)
 - 2. Laws on slaves (21:1-11)
 - 3. Laws on homicide (21:12-17)
 - 4. Laws on bodily injuries (21:18-32)
 - 5. Laws on property damage (21:33-22:15)
 - 6. Laws on society (22:16-31)

⁶⁴ NIV Bible dictionary

7. Laws on justice and neighbourliness (23:1-9)

8. Laws on sacred seasons (23:10-19)

9. Epilogue (23:20-33)

E. Ratification of the Covenant (ch. 24)⁶⁵

The covenant was sealed by blood:

Exodus 24:8 Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

2 parties	God	Israel
Type	Suzerain-vassal (conditional)	
Reference to the "seed"	Institutional of sacrifices that would typify the sacrifice "the seed" would make	
Dispensation conditions (must not do)	Law	
conditions (must do)	Curses	All that forbidden by the Law
Blood covenant	Blessings	All that permitted by the Law
Mediator	People sprinkled with blood, perpetuated by continual animal sacrifices	
The sign	Moses	
	The Sabbath	

Table 11: The Mosaic Covenant

16.3 What was the purpose of the Law (Old covenant)?

Moses realised that there was another one coming who would supersede him:

⁶⁵ NIV Study Bible notes

Acts 3:22-25 For Moses said, The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people. "Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your Fathers, He said to Abraham, "Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed."

John 5:45-47 "But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"

The law is not bad in itself, but is weakened by our sinful nature:

Galatians 3:21-22 Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

The law makes us aware of our sinful nature:

Romans 7:7-12 What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. Once I was alive

apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

By making us aware of our sinful nature, the law would indirectly lead us to Christ:

Galatians 3:23-25 Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

The law was an interim measure, until the promised seed came.

Galatians 3:19 What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come.

17. Davidic covenant

2 Samuel 7:4-16 That night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying: "Go and tell my servant David; This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as My dwelling. Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built Me a house of cedar? Now

then, tell my servant David; This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over My people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies" ` The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you; When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."

This covenant was given to King David, through Nathan the prophet at Jerusalem. The covenant contains 3 promises:

1. A Davidic house - the prosperity of David shall never be destroyed. There is a beautiful play on words here where God says that David is not to build him a house (temple) as he had requested; but that rather, God will build David a house (royal dynasty) that will last forever.
2. A Davidic throne-the kingdom of David shall never be destroyed. Although at present the earthly throne is in cessation, this promise has been fulfilled in Jesus. When Israel's chastisement in the Tribulation is over, Jesus will receive the kingdom when the time comes to restore it to David's son. David's son is to have an earthly "sphere of rule." It will be over the Millennial kingdom.

3. It shall be an unending covenant - This covenant extends to the end of time.

Psalm 72:1-20 is a prophetic psalm of Solomon's that allures to the future king from David's dynasty and His millennial rule:

Psalm 72:2-19 He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice. ...He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth... For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help ... All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed. Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.

2 parties	God	David
Type	Royal grant (unconditional)	
Reference to the "seed"	lineage of the "seed"	
Royal grant & reason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make David's name great • give David rest from his enemies • allow his son to build his temple • not take the throne away from his descendants • give him an eternal kingdom (Messianic) 	David's was a faithful servant of God
The sign	a son	

Table 12: The Davidic Covenant

The Davidic covenant had but one condition, based on disobedience, which would lead to chastisement and postponement of the promise, but not its abrogation. Remember that a royal grant was normally perpetual and unconditional, but the servant's heirs benefited from it only as they continued their father's loyalty and service. Even though David's descendants did not all continue his loyalty to God, God still honoured the covenant promise to David.

1 Kings 11:9-13 The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. Although he had forbidden Solomon to

follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's commands. So the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hands of your son. Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

Despite the unfaithfulness of David's offspring God still honoured the covenant to David regarding the lineage of the seed.

John 7:42 Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?

Coniah (or Jeconiah) the last descendant of David to rule before the Babylonian exile displeased God so much that he vowed that the lineage of the seed will not be through him.

Jeremiah 22:28-30 [Is] this man Coniah a despised broken idol? [is he] a vessel wherein [is] no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man [that] shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ KJV

... Matthew follows the line of Joseph (Jesus' legal father), while Luke emphasises that of Mary (Jesus' blood relative). Although tracing a genealogy through the mother's side was unusual, so was the virgin birth. Luke's explanation here that Jesus was the son of Joseph, "so it was thought" (v. 23), brings to mind his explicit virgin birth statement (1:34-35) and suggests the importance of the role of Mary in Jesus' genealogy.⁶⁷

It is interesting that the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew which traces Joseph's line includes Jeconiah and Solomon). As Joseph was the legal father of Jesus, it is through Jeconiah and Solomon that Jesus had the royal lineage.

Matt 1:6-16 and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,...and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.....and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

However because of Jeconiah's wickedness, Jesus' natural ancestry did not come through either Jeconiah or Solomon, but rather through David's son Nathan. As Jesus was the seed of the woman by virtue of the virgin birth, the genealogy in Luke which traces Mary's lineage⁶⁸ indicates the true fulfilment of the Davidic Covenant.

Luke 3:23-31 Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli... the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David,

⁶⁷ NIV Study Bible notes

⁶⁸ In Biblical times a son-in-law was also referred to as a son. Thus although Joseph is called the "son of Heli" he was actually the son-in-law of Heli.

18. New and better Covenant (Testament) in Christ

The word "Testament" which indicates a specific type of covenant (e.g. will & testament) in which a single party stipulates all the conditions of an inheritance, is aptly applied to God's covenants.

Hebrews 7:20 And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, [21] but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.' " [22] Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

Hebrews 6:17 Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.

The prophet Jeremiah spoke of a New Covenant:

Jeremiah 3:31 "The time is 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 forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man 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 wickedness and will remember their sins no more,"

18.1 The sign

Colossians 2:10-12 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

In the Old (Mosaic Covenant), circumcision was a sign that the individual stood in covenant relation with God. While the above passage is the only reference where circumcision is associated with baptism, some see the passage as implying that, for the Christian, water baptism is the parallel sign of the covenant relationship.

<p>2 parties</p> <p>Type</p> <p>Reference to the “seed”</p> <p>Dispensation conditions (must do)</p> <p>Blood covenant</p> <p>Mediator</p> <p>The sign</p>	<p>God</p> <p>Suzerain-vassal (conditional)</p> <p>The promise fulfilment, the seed of the woman comes to crush the serpents head</p> <p>Grace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law written on our hearts • better dispensation • better relationship with God (heirs with Christ) • better access into God’s presence • better worship • better Sabbath (rest) • A better place awaits us after death <p>Jesus’ blood on the cross</p> <p>Jesus</p> <p>The table, Baptism</p>	<p>All men</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • admit our sinful state • repent (turn our backs on sin) • accept Christ’s sacrifice • confess our sins • Follow (disciples)
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Table 13: The New Covenant (Testament)

However Jesus introduced the table of remembrance as a sign of our Covenant “until he comes” again. The Passover looked back to the Fall and forward to the cross. The table of remembrance looks back to the cross and forward to the 2nd coming.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 For I received from the Lord what I also passed onto you; The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, he broke it and said; "This is my body, which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

18.2 Covenant head greater (better) than all previous covenant heads

Jesus is greater than all the previous covenant heads, because in him the fulfilment of all the previous promises regarding the seed were embodied. However we are also reminded time and again that our Covenant head is better than all previous ones.

18.2.1 Jesus greater than Adam

Adam broke his covenant through **disobedience**, Jesus brought into effect another covenant through **obedience**.

Romans 5:18-19 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

18.2.2 Jesus greater than Noah

Noah was instrumental in physically saving a few, while Jesus was instrumental in spiritually saving many.

1 Peter 3:20-22... In the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolises baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to Him.

18.2.3 Jesus greater than Abraham

To the religious leaders of Jesus' day who took pride in their heritage from Abraham, Jesus' claim to be greater than Abraham was tantamount to blasphemy. However Jesus states out that Abraham died, while he was eternal and pre-existent.

John 8:52-57 At this the Jews exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?" Jesus replied; "...Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."

"You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"

"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

Abraham understood at some stage (either on earth or afterwards) the full implications of the promises to him regarding the seed. That is why Jesus told the Jews: "Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."

18.2.4 Jesus greater than Jacob

Jesus is greater than Jacob because he gives us "living water".

John 4:11-14 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

18.2.5 Jesus greater than Moses

Moses was a faithful servant, but Christ is the Son over His own house.

Hebrews 3:3-6 Jesus has been found worthy of greater honour than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honour than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

18.2.6 Jesus greater than David

David prophetically calls him "Lord" even though he is his descendant.

Matthew 22:42-45 "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is He?"

"The son of David," they replied

He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls Him Lord? For he says, "The Lord said to my Lord:" Sit at My

right hand until I put your enemies under your feet. If then David calls him Lord, how can he be his son?"

18.3 New Covenant brought about fulfilment of previous covenants

18.3.1 Fulfilment of Adamic covenant

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

To be the "seed of the woman", Jesus had to be born of a virgin:

Luke 1:34-35 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered; "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

This covenant promised that the "seed of the woman" would crush Satan's head.

Colossians 2:15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

18.3.2 Fulfilment of Noachic covenant

Genesis 8:5 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man."

This covenant was for the preservation of the seed. Jesus to the religious leaders:

John 8:44 "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning."

This was because Satan had also tried to destroy the woman's seed, and was now inciting the religious leaders to kill Jesus for the same reason. He had previously incited Cain to kill Abel, and attempted to corrupt the seed in the days of Noah through fallen angels inter-marrying with woman (Genesis 5:1-3).

The prophetic nature of this covenant showed that the one who shed the blood of man (the seed: Jesus) would himself be destroyed by this man (the seed: Jesus).

1 Corinthians 2:6-8 We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began, None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

18.3.3 Fulfilment of Abrahamic covenant

Galatians 4:21-31 Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham

had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written: "Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labour pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband," Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

Genesis 22:18... and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed..."

The offspring of Abraham" through whom all nations would be blessed was Jesus.

Acts 3:24-26 "Indeed; all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

Galatians 3:14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Through the same faith that Abraham had, we can receive the blessing of Abraham's son, Jesus.

Galatians 3:6-9 Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," Understand, then, that these who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

18.3.4 Fulfilment of covenant to Isaac, Jacob & Judah

Matthew 1:1-2 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers...

Both Matthew and Luke trace Jesus' lineage through these 3 men, showing God's faithfulness to His covenant promises to them.

18.3.5 Fulfilment of Davidic covenant

The people of Jesus' day recognised that the Messiah would be the Son of David, as evidenced by just some of the following extracts:

Matthew 9:27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

Matthew 12:23 All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

Matthew 21:9 The crowds that went ahead of Him and those that followed shouted; "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

The Pharisees recognised that the Christ (Messiah) would be David's Son.

Matthew 22:41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, [42] "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?"

"The son of David." they replied.

Zechariah declared the fulfilment of the covenant promises to David and Abraham when he prophesied:

Luke 1:69-72 He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us--" to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant.

The never-ending kingdom promised to David would be fulfilled in Jesus:

Luke 1:29-33 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.

The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

Jesus was the recipient of the blessing of the Davidic covenant, including the resurrection.

Acts 13:32-37 "We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: " `You are my Son; today I have become your Father. The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words: "I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David." So it is stated elsewhere: " `You will not let your Holy One see decay.' "For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

The resurrected and glorified Jesus speaks of himself in the following way:

Revelation 22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

18.3.6 Fulfilment of Mosaic covenant

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 fulfil them.

The Mosaic covenant brought about the institution of forms and ceremonies that were typical of the actual way in which the promised "seed" would bring redemption. They were a shadow of what was to come:

Revelation 10:1 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves.

The royal grant to Abraham was not superseded by the Law, and these were not conditions appended to his covenant regarding the seed. (i.e. The "seed" promises were not "Suzerain-vassal" promises).

Galatians 3:15-18 Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

The Greek word for covenant used in the above passage normally indicates a last will or testament, which is probably the legal instrument Paul is referring to here. But in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT) it had been widely used of God's covenant with his people, so Paul's choice of analogy was apt for his purpose.

19. The New Covenant compared to the Old Covenant

Moses and Joshua were mediators of the Old Covenant, and Jesus is declared to be better than both. The priests represented the people to God. while the prophet represented God to the people. Jesus is shown to be better than the prophets and to have a better priesthood.

Galatians 3:15-20 Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. ` The promises were

spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ, What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise. [19] What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator, [20] A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one.

19.1 A better covenant

Hebrews 7:22 Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

It is more glorious:

2 Corinthians 3:7 Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, [8] will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? [9] If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! [10] For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. [11] And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

The types or shadows are now fulfilled in realities (no more veil).

Hebrews 10:1 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming-not the realities themselves...

2 Corinthians 3:14 But their hands were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. [15] Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. [16] But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

19.2 A better mediator

Our mediator is:

- ✚ greater than the prophets
- ✚ greater than the angels
- ✚ greater than Moses
- ✚ greater than Joshua
- ✚ greater than Aaron

The reason the writer of Hebrews uses these comparisons is because each of these held a place of great importance in the religion of the Jews. They were the framework of their worship, and it must be proved that someone better had taken their place, if their followers are to transfer allegiance.

The book of Hebrews progressively shows that Jesus is a better mediator.

19.2.1 The Lord Jesus is greater than any human leader (prophets)

Hebrews 1:1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, [2] but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. [3] The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of, his being,

sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Jesus is greater than the prophets because:

- ✚ He is God's Son
- ✚ He is the heir of all things
- ✚ He created the world
- ✚ He is Himself God
- ✚ He upholds all things
- ✚ He cleansed us from sin
- ✚ He is seated at the right hand of God

19.2.2 Jesus is greater than the angels

He has a more excellent name of Son

Hebrews 1:4-5 So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"?..

Angels worship Him

Hebrews 1:6 And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

The angels are servants of God, but Jesus is the eternal God

Hebrews 1:7-8 In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire." But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the sceptre of your kingdom."

The angels are created, while Jesus is the Creator

Hebrews 1:10 He also says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

He is the ruler of the coming age:

Hebrews 1:13 To which of the angels did God ever say, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet" ? [14] Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Hebrews 2:5 It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking, [6] But there is a place where someone has testified: "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? [7] You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honour [8] and put everything under his feet." In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to Him. [9] But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

19.2.3 Jesus is greater than Moses

See Hebrews 3:1-19.

As we have seen already, Moses was a faithful servant, but Christ is the Son over His own house (the Heir).

Faith not works:

Romans 10:5 Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them." [6] But the righteousness that is by faith... [9] That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Yoke of legalism gone:

Acts 15:5 Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said' "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses."[10] Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? [11] No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved just as they are."

Forgiveness not just condemnation: The law could only condemn; it could not empower men to keep it, because of our sinful nature.

Romans 3:3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, [4] in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Acts 13:38 "Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. [39] Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.

Note the following example of the Law versus grace

John 8:5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"... [10] Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

[11] "No one, sir," she said,

"Than neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Jesus gives Living bread:

John 6:32 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. [33] For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

19.2.4 Jesus is greater than Joshua

Joshua was a great leader. He led the Hebrews into the Promised Land, but he did not lead the people into rest. What he failed to do, the Son accomplished. Jesus is greater, for He alone gives real rest.

Hebrews 4:8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. [9] There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; [10] for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just at God did from his. [11] Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience."

19.2.5 Jesus is greater than Aaron

✚ Jesus has a better priesthood

- ✚ He is a better High Priest (sinless, and does not have to atone for His own sin)
- ✚ He serves in a better temple
- ✚ He had a better sacrifice

19.2.6 A better priesthood

Hebrews 7:11 If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come--one in the order of Melchizedek not in the order of Aaron?

Christ was a priest in the order of Melchizedek:

Hebrews 7:17 For it is declared: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

Royal priesthood: Both were kings of peace and righteousness:

Hebrews 7:1 This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High.

- ✚ Universal priesthood.
- ✚ Priesthood was based on merit, not on ancestry: Without father or mother.

Hebrews 7:16 ...one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.

✚ Eternal priesthood:

Hebrews 7:21 but he became a priest with an oath when God said to Him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.'"

Hebrews 7:23 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; [24] but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. [25] Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them..

19.2.7 A better high priest

Priesthood was based on an oath from God:

Hebrews 7:20 And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, [21] but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.' "[22] Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

He was sinless:

Hebrews 7:26 Such a high priest meets our need--one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. [27] Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he crucified himself. [28] For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

Hebrews 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. [15] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.

19.2.8 A better temple

The Old Covenant used a temple that was a copy, the new covenant used the real temple in heaven.

Hebrews 8:3 Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. [4] If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. [5] They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle; "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

The earthly temple was a copy of the real temple in heaven, even as far as the Holy of Holies and the Ark of the Covenant are concerned.

Revelation 11:19 The" God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant....

Hebrews 9:23 It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. [24] For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a

copy of the real one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.

Hebrews 8:1 The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, [2] and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.

Jesus would not let Mary touch him when he was first raised, as he had not yet entered the temple in heaven and presented himself to the Father:

John 20:17 Jesus said, "Do not hold onto to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

Hebrews 9:11 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.

19.2.9 A better sacrifice

Jesus was both the priest and the sacrifice! The Old Covenant used a sacrifice that could not take away sin, while the New Covenant had a sacrifice that could atone for sin. The sacrifice was an atonement for sins, but:

Hebrews 10:4... it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins

Jesus' blood could take away sin:

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

Hebrews 9:23 It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

Under the law the sacrifice had to be without blemish or defect

Deuteronomy 17:1 Do not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a sheep that has any defect or flaw in it, for that would be detestable to him.

This speaks of the sinlessness of Jesus

1 Peter 1:18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, [19] but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

The Old Covenant used a sacrifice that had to be repeatedly made, while the New has a sacrifice that was made once for all.

Hebrews 10:1 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. [2] If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have

been cleansed once for all and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. [3] But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins,

Hebrews 9:26 Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

19.3 Better blood of the covenant

We have a blood covenant that was sealed with the very blood of the Son of God.

Matthew 26:26 While they were eating Jesus took bread gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." [27] Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. [28] This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. [29] I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

1 Peter 1:18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, [19] but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Hebrews 9:15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance --now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. [16] In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, [17] because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. [18] This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. [19] When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. [20] He said, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you to keep. [21] In the same

way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. [22] In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Hebrews 9:12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. [13] The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. [14] How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Ephesians 2:11-13 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)-- remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

19.4 Better promises

Hebrews 8:6 But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises. [7] For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have

been sought for another. [8] But God found fault with the people and said: "The time is coming, declares the Lord when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. [9] It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. [10] This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. [11] No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. [12] For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." [13] By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and ageing will soon disappear.

19.4.1 Law written on our hearts

2 Corinthians 3:3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. [4] Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. [5] Not that we are competent in ourselves to change anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. [4] He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant--not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

19.4.2 A better dispensation (No curse)

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Truth exposes all, while grace covers all. The law, on the contrary, could only condemn.

Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, [2] because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. [3] For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, [4] in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

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."

19.4.3 A better relationship with God

Hebrews 12:18 You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm, [19] to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, [20] because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned." [21] The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with

fear." [22] But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, [23] to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, [24] to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Abel's blood cried out for justice and retribution (Genesis 4:10), whereas the blood of Jesus shed on the cross speaks of forgiveness and reconciliation (Col 1:20; John 1:7).

Hebrews 7:18 The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless [19] (for the law made nothing perfect) and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

God who seems unapproachable in the Old Testament, now allows us to call him "Father"

John 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are.

Jesus calls us friends:

John 15:15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends...

Romans 8:15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." [16] The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. [17] Now if we are children, then

we are heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

19.4.4 Better access into God's presence

Previously only the High priest could enter God's presence in the Holy of Holies, and that only once a year, and not without blood. We however can freely enter God's presence whenever we wish, by virtue of the better blood of Jesus which protects us from God's wrath.

Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, [20] by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, [21] and since we have a great priest over the house of God, [22] let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

The veil in the temple was torn when Jesus died, showing that the way into the Holy of Holies was opened.

Luke 23:44 It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, [45] for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

Being torn from top to bottom indicates that this was done by God not man.

19.4.5 Better worship

Hebrews 9:1 Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary.

The place and regulation are no longer important as we can worship in spirit and truth.

John 4:20 Our fathers worship- on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." [21] Jesus declared "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. [22] You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. [23] Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. [24] God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth."

19.4.6 Better Sabbath (rest)

Hebrews 3:11 So I declared on oath in My anger, ` They shall never enter my rest.' "[12] See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. [13] But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. [14] We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. [15] As has just been said: "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." [16] Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? [17] And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? [I 8] And to whom did God Swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? [19] So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

Hebrews 4:1 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. [2] For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. [3] Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, they shall never enter My rest." " And yet His work has been finished since the creation of the world. [4] For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work." [5] And again in the passage above He says, "They shall never enter my rest." [6] It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience. [7] Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." [8] For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. [9] There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; [10] for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. [11] Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

19.4.7 A better place awaits us after death

Jesus went to Paradise when He died:

Luke 23:4. Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise."

and paradise was then in the "heart of the earth":

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

However Paul was **caught up** into paradise:

2 Corinthians 12:3 And I know that this man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows- [4] was caught up to paradise...

Between the death of Jesus, and the time of Paul's ministry, Paradise was relocated. Jesus when relating the account (not a parable) of Lazarus and the rich man showed that Hades had 2 compartments, paradise and hell, between which there was a chasm.

Luke 16:22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. [23] In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. [24] So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' [25] "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. [26] And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

However Jesus emptied paradise because of His redemptive work; and it was re-located in heaven. This was because under the old Covenant the sins had merely been "covered" by the sacrifices, and not atoned for.

Ephesians 4:8 This is why it says: "When He ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." [9] (what does "he

ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? [10] He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

Without the New covenant we would not have gained entrance into heaven.

Matthew 16:18.. upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hell (Hades) shall not prevail against it.⁶⁹

This is not a reference to the Church fighting Satan, but Jesus saying that under the New Covenant the church would not have to go to Hades. Satan does not live in hell but in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Satan is:

".. the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient" (Ephesians 2:2)

In fact Jesus calls him:

"...the prince of this world..." (John 14:30)

The ancients believed that Hades had a series of gates. The church of Jesus would never pass through these gates by virtue of his better sacrifice, and thus the "gates of Hades will not prevail against us". Under the old covenant we see

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even Abraham going to Hades, because sin had not been atoned for. With our better covenant the price for sin has already been paid, and believers can go straight into God's presence, with no waiting period in between.

2 Corinthians 5:8 "We are confident, [I say], and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."⁷⁰

19.5 Greater responsibility

After showing that Jesus is greater than the angels, we are given a warning:

Hebrews 2:1 We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. [2] For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, [3] how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord; was confirmed to us by those who heard him. [4] God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

We are not to treat the sign of the covenant lightly:

1 Corinthians 11:27 Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. [28] A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup- [29] For anyone who eats and drinks without recognising the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgement on himself. [30] That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. [31] But if we judged ourselves, we would not come

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under judgement. [32] When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

Consequences for disobedience under the Old covenant:

Deuteronomy 17:2 If a man or woman living among you in one of the towns the LORD gives you is found doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God in violation of His covenant, [3] and contrary to my command has worshipped other gods, bowing down to them or to the sun or the moon or the stars of the sky, [4] and this has been brought to your attention, then you must investigate it thoroughly. If it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done in Israel, [5] take the man or woman who has done this evil deed to your city gate and stone that person to death. [6] On the testimony of two or three witnesses a man shall be put to death, but no one shall be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. [7] The hands of the witnesses must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people. You must purge the evil from among you.

After showing that Jesus is greater than the angels, we are given a warning about the consequences of despising the New Covenant, by habitual sin (thus despising God's grace):

Hebrews 10:26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, [27] but only a fearful expectation of judgement and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. [28] Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. [29] How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? [30] For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and

again. "The Lord will judge his people." [31] It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

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