

COVENANTS OF THE BIBLE

by Various

A systematic study of the major covenants in Scripture, beginning with the Edenic covenant between God and mankind. Each covenant is examined for its participants, promises, conditions, and scriptural references.

9 Chapters

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Covenant-01 Edenic

01 Edenic

Participants

Promises

Conditions

Scripture Reference

God and all of mankind (at that time only Adam and Eve)

Man would be allowed to rule over the garden of Eden and enjoy a personal relationship with God, physically.

Do not eat from the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Sealed by man's acceptance.

Promises: Genesis 2:15, Genesis 2:19, Conditions: Genesis 2:16-17

Status: Broken (Genesis 3:6)

Since the Bible makes it clear no one can look on God directly and live (Exodus 33:20), it seems likely that it was Christ who walked with them in the Garden.

Covenant-02 Patriarchal

02 Patriarchal

Participants

Promises

Conditions

Scripture Reference

God and all of mankind (at that time only Adam and Eve)

Woman would experience great pain in childbirth. The entire Earth would be cursed. Man would die. God would still provide for man. God expected man to abide by his new knowledge of good and evil (see Genesis 4)

None. Sealed by casting man out of the Garden and the act of cursing creation.

Promises: Genesis 3:15-19, Genesis 3:21 Conditions: None

Status: Unconditional

The serpent (the fallen angel, the devil) has his destiny already laid out here. Genesis 3:15 says that Eve's son (not Adam's - Christ was born of a virgin) will crush the head of the serpent (lethal), while the serpent will bruise His heel (painful).

Covenant-03 Noahic

03 Noahic

Participants

Promises

Conditions

Scripture Reference

All the Earth (Genesis 9:13)

God would never destroy all life by flood again.

None. Sealed by a rainbow.

Promises: Genesis 9:15 Conditions: None

Status: Unconditional (In the verses preceding the covenant, God gives a few prohibitions, including assigning the death penalty for murder and reaffirming man's dominion over the Earth - these do not seem to be a part of the covenant, but rather a restatement of parts of the Patriarchal covenant.)

As Noah and his family were delivered through Noah's obedience, Christ saves all who come to Him through perfect obedience.

Covenant-04 Abrahamic

04 Abrahamic

Participants

Promises

Conditions

Scripture Reference

God and Israel

Israel would be a large nation. Israel would enjoy a certain region as its inheritance. Through Israel all nations of the world would be blessed .

None. Sealed by God's solemn promise that He would sooner die than break it, by passing through sacrificed animals.

Promises: Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 13:6, Genesis 17:4-5, Genesis 22:18 Conditions: None.

Status: Unconditional

Through Abraham's descendant, Christ, salvation was brought to the Gentiles. Through Him, all nations have been blessed.

Covenant-05 Millennial

05Millennial

Participants

Promises

Conditions

Scripture Reference

God and Israel

Israel will be restored to their land and God will write His law on their hearts. All of Israel who survives to that point will be saved. Christ will rule from Jerusalem and Israel will be the political and spiritual heart of the entire world for a thousand years.

Israel returns to true faith in God after their long time astray. Sealed by the fruit of the Mosaic Covenant (see Deuteronomy 30:1)

Promises: Deuteronomy 30:1-10, Romans 11:26, Revelation 20:2-7 Conditions: Deuteronomy 30:1-10

Status: Not started. Will begin with the return of Christ to reign (Zechariah 12:10-14). Israel will at this time be saved and so join into the promises of the New Covenant.

Covenant-06 Mosaic

06 Mosaic

Participants

Promises

Conditions

Scripture Reference

God and Israel

God would bless when the conditions were kept and curse when the conditions were broken.

The entire law of Moses.

Promises: Deuteronomy 27:26 Conditions: Leviticus, Deuteronomy

Status: Broken (Romans 3:23)

Christ alone has perfectly upheld the Law of Moses. He has satisfied its demands completely and alone has power over it.

Covenant-07 Davidic

07 Davidic

Participants

Promises

Conditions

Scripture Reference

God and David (extended to David's descendants)

David's line would rule forever.

None. Sealed by the construction of the temple by David's first heir, Solomon.

Promises: 2 Samuel 7:16 Conditions: None.

Status: Unconditional.

To be completely fulfilled in Christ (Luke 1:32-33), a King who cannot die.

Covenant-08 New

08 New

Participants

Promises

Conditions

Scripture Reference

God and Israel, first. Then God and all of mankind.

God would fellowship with man and write His law on their hearts. Those who enter it die to the Mosaic Covenant (see all of Romans 7).

Repentance and belief. Sealed by Jesus Christ's death (Isaiah 53:5).

Promises: Romans 6:23 Conditions: Mark 1:15, Joel 2:32

Status: Unconditional. Promised in Jeremiah 31:31-34/Joel 2:32 and fulfilled in Christ.

Covenant-09 Dispensation Perspective

09 Dispensation Perspective

Inter-working with this covenant framework are the dispensations themselves. There are 8 dispensations:

Eternity - The infinite existence before the creation of man.

Edenic - Time begins. Man in the garden. There is no religion, only a relationship with God. We see God as our friend.

Patriarchal - Religion is family based. The strong emphasis on fathers seems to teach God's role as our heavenly father. Animal sacrifices are made as pictures of Christ's perfect sacrifice to come.

Law - Religion centers on the law of Moses. Animal sacrifices are made as pictures of Christ's perfect sacrifice to come. The Kings of Israel seem to teach God's role as our ultimate King.

Church - Religion is replaced with a relationship with God through Christ. God here becomes the sacrificial Lamb. Christ says that the religion of the Jews of his day were like white-washed tombs. Outside they were beautiful but they were filled with dead man's bones (Matthew 23:27). Jesus commands an inner power which inevitably results in outer fruit. Under the church age, God Himself indwells us to give us strength. His Word is written on our hearts.

Tribulation - The world is released to the Devil's full control for the first half. In the second half, God pours out his judgment on the world. The Anti-Christ forms a treaty with Israel, breaks it and desolates the destroyed temple. God's justice is portrayed, as well as man's wickedness.

Millennium - The world is ruled by Christ and His (resurrected) people from Jerusalem. Any Israelites who survive the tribulation are saved. More people are being born. Some are saved, some are not, but they will not be revealed until the end of the Millennial reign of Christ. Here Jesus lives personally as the righteous King, stamps out wickedness, yet is the friend of His people. All of the attributes of God are seen. Animal sacrifices will be made to commemorate the sacrifice of Christ. All of the unconditional promises to Israel are fulfilled. Time ends.

Eternity - Those who were saved through personal faith in Christ are with Him forever. Those who were not go to eternal punishment.

It is important to remember that under all covenants and all dispensations, there is only one means of salvation. Faith. Abraham was saved through simple faith in God (see Romans 4), as were all of the righteous people of old (see Hebrews 11 for a detailed list). They looked forward to Christ (with greater or lesser clarity), the apostles looked directly at Christ and we look back on Christ. But they are all the same. It is only through Christ that people may be saved. There are numerous examples of Bible verses declaring this, but a simple logical proof will suffice. If Christianity is true, Jesus Christ suffered infinitely so that a way could be made for man to reach God. Were there

another, simpler way, would God have sent Christ at all? Of course not. It would have been needless suffering. If Christianity is true, it is true alone. Is Christianity true? Jesus had 12 apostles. 1 of them betrayed him and committed suicide. One was exiled to an island for the end of his life. 10 were killed for refusing to deny that had seen Christ alive after his death. Ten well documented eye witnesses is rather persuasive. Even moreso is the lengthy list of Old Testament prophecies fulfilled by Christ: <<http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/prophchr.html>> . So there is one way to God, faith in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Through all ages, this remains constant.

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