

Covenants

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I. INTRODUCTION TO COVENANTS

While the Bible is a Near Eastern Book, written first of all to, or for Semetic Peoples, and must be understood through understanding the Near Eastern modes and customs. It is also, a record for God's revelation to the whole human race.

The Bible is a unique history book. It records the factual story of not only the origin of the entire universe, but also of many of the people groups that inhabit the earth, specifically the people of Israel. But the Bible is concerned with more than just the history of people and human events. It is also the history of redemption. It tells the story of why people need redemption and how redemption is accomplished. Moreover, the history of redemption in the Old Testament is marked by the ratification of the Covenants in which God affirmed His Will for His people. A covenantal structure underlies the program of redemption.

Thus, beginning with Genesis and scattered throughout the entire Old Testament are records of those legally binding agreements between God and His people that we call "covenants." These agreements are the basis upon which all relationships with the Holy One are built and maintained. The very existence of the nation of Israel is connected to a series of Covenants with God. All of the other Scriptures that we will study find their fullest meaning within the context of the Covenants that God made with Israel. As we examine these covenants, we will pay particular attention to how others besides Israel are involved with them. We have placed our discussion on the Covenants in this part of the study because they are first revealed in the Old Testament.

One, of the primitive rites, which deserves more attention than it has received, and throws light on many important phrases of Bible teaching, is the rite of blood covenanting. This form of covenanting is the closest, the most enduring, and the most sacred of compacts that two (2) people can enter into. This rite is still observed in the East; and there are historic traces of it in every country. Yet, Biblical critics have over looked it in general. No doubt, there is not primitive person in the world, which has not practiced the Blood Covenant in some form. It shows that it has a God given origin and so man has practiced covenanting through all the ages. Probably hundreds (100's) of tribes in Africa have cut a Covenant. Missionaries have seen it enacted, but may not have understood the significance, thinking it to be some heathen rite.

The enemy of God certainly does not want us to know and understand the Blood Covenant. The New Covenant that Jesus has brought us into is the strongest, most Sacred Covenant known to the human heart. When Jesus and His disciples gathered together, the night before the crucifixion and Jesus said "This is My Blood of the New Covenant" (Mt.26:28), "...poured out for many unto the remission of sins," the disciples knew what it meant. They understood what "Covenants" meant.

A Biblical scholar said in his book, "The Blood Covenant," "This rite was consummated at the base of mountains of Lebanon. It was two (2) young men, who were to enter into this Covenant. They had known each other for years, but now they were to become brother-friend, in the Covenant of Blood. Their relatives and friends were called in to witness, the sealing compact. The young men publicly announced their purpose and their reasons for it. The declarations were written down, in duplicate, one paper for each friend. It was signed by themselves and by several witnesses.

One of the friends took a sharp lancet, and opened a vein in the other's arm. Into the opening made, he inserted a quill, through which he sucked the living blood. The lancet was carefully wiped on one (1) of the duplicate Covenant-Papers. Then the other friend who followed in the same manner took it. Then, the two (2) friends declared together, "We are brothers in a Covenant made before God." Then, they spoke the words, "Who deceives the other, him will God deceive." Each blood-marked Covenant-Record was then folded carefully. They were to be saved in a small leather case, about an inch square. It was to be worn from that time forward by the Covenant-Brothers suspended about the neck, or bound upon the arm, in token of the Covenant. This is a very typical Hebrew practice.

This rite is recognized, in Syria, as one (1) of the oldest customs of the land. There are many forms of covenanting in Syria, but this is the extreme and most sacred of them all. This Covenant-Rite forms a tie, or a union. The cutting of the arms, and rubbing them together, makes a sign in the scar that cannot be dissolved. In the institution of marriage divorce is a possibility. This is not so in the Covenant of Blood.

A Biblical scholar in his research proved that this Blood-Covenant was the basis of all primitive religions. He gave data from all parts of the world, showing that even to this day, in Africa, India, China, Borneo, and even the Islands of the Seas, men are practicing the Blood-Covenant.

The following contains some reasons for men cutting a Covenant.

1. The stronger tribe protected the weaker.

If a strong Tribe lived beside a weaker Tribe, there is danger of the weaker Tribe being destroyed. The weaker Tribe will cut a covenant with the stronger tribe that they made be preserved.

2. Business partners will cut covenant with each other.

Businessmen entering into a partnership might cut Covenant to insure that neither would take advantage of the other.

3. Two (2) men devoted to each other would cut covenant.

If two (2) men loved each other as devotedly as David and Jonathan, they would cut Covenant for friendships sake.

Dr. Livingstone, missionary to Africa, cut Covenant many times. Mr. Stanley, who was an explorer in Africa, tells that he cut Covenant more than fifty (50) times with different tribes. These men bore witness that a Covenant was not to be broken in Africa, no matter what the provocation.

In Africa, if one (1) were to break the Covenant, his own mother, wife, or his nearest relatives, would seek his death. They would turn him over to the hands of the avenger for destruction. No man can live in Africa who breaks a Covenant, for he brings a curse everywhere he goes. The worst enemies became trusted friends as soon as a Covenant is cut. No man takes advantage of the Covenant or breaks it. It is so sacred, that the children to the third (3rd) and fourth (4th) generations revere and keep it. In other words, it is viewed as a Perpetual Covenant, indissoluble, and it cannot be annulled.

II. WHAT IS A COVENANT

A. Common Features

By studying documents written in cuneiform on Ancient Near Eastern tablets, scholars have discovered that these ancient Covenants have a great deal in common with those found in the Bible.

One such feature is a common language. For example, the Covenants of ancient Man, dating from the eighteenth (18th) century B.C., contain the phrase "to kill an ass in peace." This is reminiscent of the statement in Ezekiel 34:25-26, "to make a covenant of peace." We also learn that the Hebrew word for covenant, "*brit*," had its equivalent in Akkadian, the language of many of the Mari documents. Furthermore, the ancient Suzerainty Treaties, International Covenants, employed such phrases as "stipulations," "oath," "blessing," "curse," and "witnesses." These same terms are essential to many of the important Covenants in the Old Testament.

Another feature of many Ancient Near Eastern Covenants was the religious element. Fundamentally, most if not all of them had religious sanctions of some kind. One identifying characteristic of religious or Biblical Covenants was that of being concluded, or ratified by some special religious sanction.

Because of this religious element in the Ancient Covenants, they also carried an important sacrificial motif. Animals were sacrificed both to the gods and for the mutual consumption of the Covenanting-Parties. The meal, therefore, was a religious act. One

common practice was for an animal to be sacrificed and all its parts cut in half. The symbolism illustrated a grave consequence for the party who failed to uphold the Terms of the Covenant: Just as this beast is cut up, so may "X," the party who failed, be cut up. The recitation of such a formula was probably in the nature of a self-imprecation, invoking a curse. The man who recited it thus declared his expectation of the fate that would befall him if he broke his treaty obligations.

With this in mind, those who are familiar with the making of the Abrahamic Covenant, Genesis chapter fifteen (15), will immediately see the implications of the vision God gave to Abraham. After commanding him to sacrifice some animals and dividing their parts, the Lord dramatically walked between the halved animal parts. Normally, both consenting parties in a Covenant or Treaty were required to walk through the parts, but in this case, it was God alone. The message was loud and clear: God had made an unconditional Covenant with Abraham. Abraham was totally passive. He had no obligation other than to receive this Covenant by faith.

Moreover, since only the Lord went through the parts, He also consented by oath to keep His promises to Abraham. If He should fail to keep even one, the same thing that had happened to the sacrificed animals would happen to Him. Since it would be impossible for God to suffer the same fate as those slain, dismembered animals, we know that this was simply the strongest way possible for the Holy One to assure Abraham that He would keep those promises. The practice of cutting up an animal was also the basis of the common Hebrew expression "to cut a Covenant". Without the knowledge of the Ancient Near Eastern Covenant-Making procedure, this passage would be very difficult to interpret.

The Bible plainly reveals God as a Covenant-Making, Covenant-Keeping and Covenant-Revealing God. The Bible is a Covenant Book, being divided into two (2) sections, the Old and New Testaments, or Covenants. They contain a progressive revelation of eight (8) major Covenants. The story of Biblical Redemption is recorded in the Covenants of the Bible.

The word "Covenant" is a word that has lost its meaning and significance in present society. In Bible times, the word "Covenant" involved promise, commitment, faithfulness, and loyalty, even unto death. A covenant was sacred and was not lightly entered into by the parties involved. In Bible times, a person was only as good as their Covenant Word. We live in a society, where national agreements, business contracts, and marriage covenants are under stress and attack. Some people are "Covenant-Breakers" (Ro.1:31). It brings great joy and comfort to know that God is a Covenant-Making and Covenant-Keeping God.

True Believers are in Covenant-Relationship with God through Christ. They are also in Covenant-Relationship with each other. This is symbolized each time Believers meet

together around the Lord's Table. There, they partake of the broken body and shed blood of the Covenant Christ of God. What a spiritual transformation would come to the Church, if Believers would understand, appreciate, and experience a Covenant-Relationship with a faithful and committed attitude.

B. Definition of Covenant

The Hebrew word for Covenant is "*brit*". While the original meaning of this word is somewhat debated, we do know that the term "*brit*" came to mean that which bound two parties together. In Biblical times, there were several types of Covenants. Some functioned between people, such as personal loans or Wedding-Covenants; others, commonly known as Treaties, bound together two (2) or more nations. The Covenants in the Bible itself represent agreements between man and God.

God has given His people eight (8) Covenants, throughout the Bible. We should also think of them as binding agreements.. All eight (8) of these covenants reveal or speak of Jesus Christ.

Our Covenant-Relationship with God, gives us a surety of faith and hope. The first seven (7) covenants give assurance through anticipation and the eighth (8) by realization.

All the Covenants made in Old Testament times were preparatory and extended in the New Covenant. The typology and promises of these Covenants would have ultimate fulfillment in the time of the coming of Messiah, Jesus. All of redemption is in Christ. There is only one (1) Body and one (1) Hope. The presentation of the Covenants follows the teachings of Christ and His Apostles. What we teach must agree with the teachings of Christ and His Apostles. We must not add to or take away from their teachings.

1. In the English Language, a covenant requires two (2) parties.

In our English language, the word "covenant" signifies a mutual understanding between two (2) or more parties. Each party binds himself to fulfill certain obligations, such as a legal contract, a binding agreement, or a written agreement. It also refers to a solemn agreement to do, or not to do a certain thing.

2. Strong's defines "Covenant" in Old Testament Hebrew for us.

Strong's concordance defines the Hebrew word for "covenant" ("*b'rit*" - {ber-eet}) as, "a compact, often made by passing between pieces of flesh, or eating a covenant meal, implies the thought of cutting the covenant."

- a. Covenant, Alliance, Pledge
 - 1) Between Men
 - a) Treaty, Alliance, League (man to man)
 - b) Constitution, Ordinance (monarch to subjects)
 - c) Agreement, Pledge (man to man)
 - d) Alliance (of friendship)
 - e) Alliance (of marriage)
 - 2) Between God and Man
 - a) Alliance (of friendship)
 - b) Covenant (divine ordinance with signs or pledges)
- b. Phrases
 - 1) Covenant Making
 - 2) Covenant Keeping
 - 3) Covenant Violation
- c. Genesis 15:17

Genesis applied definitions under the categories of between men and between God and man.

- d. Jeremiah 34:18

Hebrew “b’rit” is a noun from the root “baraya” which contains the idea of being fettered or bound. In its extension “b’rit” includes the idea of food (Ps.69:21) or eating, such as the covenant meal (Ge.31:54; 2Sa.12:17; 13:6). It also contains the thought of sharing a meal of alliance or mutual obligation. The Hebrew people were accustomed to eating meals when entering into Covenant. Simply stated, “b’rit” is a mutually binding agreement. However, the meaning of the “b’rit” must be sought not strictly from its etymology or significance as found in the pagan cultures that

surrounded Israel. Only in the transformed usage of the term, as it appears in God's own historical revelation, is its ultimate importance made known.

3. Strong's Dictionary gives us a definition of "Covenant" in New Testament Greek.

Strong's uses two Greek words to translate as "covenant":

- a. "*Diatheke*" which means "a disposition, arrangement, testament or will"
 - 1) This is a disposition, arrangement, of any sort, which one (1) wish to be valid, the last disposition which one (1) makes of His earthly possessions after His death, a testament or will.
 - 2) Compact, Covenant, Testament
 - a) This is as in God's Covenant with Noah, etc.
- b. "*Suntithemai*" which means, "to put together, place together, to make arrangement"
 - 1) It means to "put together with, to place together, to join together, to place in one's mind."
 - a) It also means to "resolve or determine."
 - b) It means "to make an arrangement, or to engage."
 - c) It means to "assent to, to agree to."

4. The word "covenant" in Scripture is an agreement.

This word refers to an agreement or a contract between men, or between God and man.

- a. When a covenant was instituted between God and man, God is seen always as the initiator.
- b. Man can either accept it or reject it, but he cannot change it.

There are two (2) Covenant Scripture references that show the act of passing between the pieces of flesh. "...smoking furnace and a burning lamp..." was an emblem of the Divine Presence of God (Ge.15:17-18). In the East, it was the custom to light a torch when making a Covenant or in celebration of a marriage. This was to symbolize the fire of destruction if the agreement should be broken. We see here that God has come to Abraham and spoken to him concerning a Covenant. "Then God passed between the pieces of flesh" (Ge.15:18).

In Jeremiah, we see Israel breaking Covenant with God. God is angry with Israel because of disobedience in refusing to free the slaves at the end of the seven (7) year period, according to God's Law (Je.34:15-18). The people of Israel were using God's form of Covenant cutting to accomplish their own agenda. Though covenant cutting was a common practice among all the people of the region, Israel was corrupting God's Law.

C. Types of Covenants

There are many types of covenants in Scripture, such as those cut between men. In Joshua chapter nine (9), the Gibeonites came to Joshua and asked to make a Covenant with Israel. Joshua, without consulting God, cut a binding agreement with them.

There is a "league" between a monarch and his subjects listed in II Samuel (2Sa.5:3). All of Israel came to Hebron and King David makes a covenant with them.

There is an agreement or pledge such as is written about in Hosea 10:4. Hosea is saying that Israel has sworn false covenants or made false pledges to God, which they did not keep. God will judge them for it. Another example is a pact or covenant between men in the alliance of friendship. The most explicit and beautiful example of this Covenant of Friendship is between David and Jonathan (1Sa.18:3; 20:2; 23:17, 18).

From the Book, "Life and Power of the Blood Covenant," we quote:

"Unlike the Covenants that God made with man through Abraham and Moses, the Covenant between David and Jonathan was made between man and man. Their covenant, like the Covenant God made with man, sought to establish between two (2) parties, a binding relationship."

The last example or illustration of a covenant between men, would be the alliance of marriage (Pr.2:16,17; Mal.2:14). So we see that marriage is a covenant.

D. Old Testament Covenants

Now let us look at some references in the Old Testament concerning the Covenant between God and Man. The first Scripture points to the alliance of friendship (Ps.25:14).

Another reference to the Covenant as a Divine Ordinance, with signs or pledges, is found in Genesis 9:12-16, and in Exodus 2:23-24.

In the Old Testament, the "*b'rit*" is a legally binding obligation. In Genesis and Exodus, ritual meals or sacrifices were replaced by verbal oaths (Ge.15:9; 26:30; 31:54; Ex.24:8-11). As a result, the Old Testament later uses the word Covenant, "*b'rit*," and oath interchangeably (Ge.26:28; 2Ch.15:15, v.12). However, at other points "oath" is used as a part of the Covenant.

There are three (3) usages of Covenant, "*b'rit*" in the Old Testament.

1. Party Covenants

When the parties concerned either have conceded, or are willing to concede to each other as a generally equal standing, the *b'rit* is a true two-sided covenant (1Sa.23:18), made by the two (2) of them. Confessedly one party often takes the initiative and comes to terms with the other. The result is still a "partnership," an agreement voluntarily accepted by both parties. Such covenants could involve individuals (Ps 55:20), as David and Jonathan (1 Sam 18:3, 4); households, as Jacob and the brethren of Laban (Gen 31:54); groups, as Abraham and the Amorites of Hebron (14:13); or whole nations, as Edoni and its confederates (Ob.chp.7, Hos.12:1).

A Covenant was binding for as long a period as had been agreed upon, up to "a Covenant of Perpetuity" (Ge.9:16; 17:7). The phrase, "a Covenant of Salt," (Nu.18:19), indicates a permanent or Eternal Covenant.

A man gave his hand as a specific pledge of fidelity (Ezk.17:18); or he might surrender certain intimate objects (1Sa.18:4), to indicate a share, as it were, in his own person.

The erection of a stone heap (Ge.31:45-48), or the acceptance of a token gift (Ge.21:27-30), could bear witness to a Covenantal Arrangement.

The phrase "to cut a Covenant," seems to arise from symbolical actions by which the parties concerned passed through "cut up" corpses of animals (1Sa.22:8), where the verb "cut," has come to mean, by itself, "to make a Covenant." It implied, not an "extension of blood brotherhood," but rather a threat of similar dismemberment for the one (1) who violated the agreement (Je.34:18-20). and parallel cases from ancient Mesopotamia. Thus, for example, in the Covenant of *Ashur-nirari V* and *Mati-ilu*, after a ram has been divided, the Assyrian King states:

“This head is not the head of the ram, but the head of *Mati-ilu*, his sons, his nobles, and the people of his land. If *Mati-ilu* violates this oath, as the head of this ram is struck off, so will the head of *Mati-ilu* be struck off”.

The Hebrew word that describes one’s loyalty to his Covenant obligations is “grace”, translated in the King James Version and American Standard Version, as “loving kindness”, and in the Revised Standard Version as “steadfast love.” First Samuel says, “Thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: ...”therefore perform “fidelity”

(1Sa.20:8). The intended result then of grace was “peace” and “prosperity” (Jos.9:15; Jg.4:17; 6:23, 24; also contrast with Ps.55:20).

2. Suzerainty Covenants (International)

When the parties concerned are not equal, the “*b’rith*” may become a disposition, imposed (1Sa.11:1; Ezk.17:13, 14), or guaranteed (Jos.9:6, 15; Hos.12:1), by the superior party.

There is often a lack of “two-sidedness” in the Covenantal establishment. A given Covenant is often “established” or “commanded”, and the secondary party is “to obey” or “to transgress” it (Jos.23:16; Je.34:10). Therefore, the initiator normally makes the Covenant “to” or “for” the recipient, rather than “with” him. Covenant used in such a connotation becomes a synonym for “statute.” Scripture often uses the concept of covenant in this sense to describe the legal relationships that exist between God, as the Lord, and man, the servant. Although there may appear, at times, certain mutually binding conditions so that one calls the arrangement a “covenant,” these conditions do not represent the full essence of the Covenant. It is still a sovereignly imposed, injunction. God, therefore, has chosen the word “covenant” as the most available term for a legally binding instrument, to describe what His sovereign pleasure is.

Most such Divine Suzerainty Covenants also involve redemptive, promissory elements.

Scholars have discovered that the format for many of the ancient suzerainty treaties, such as those from the thirteenth (13th) and fourteenth (14th) century B.C., with the Hittites, very closely parallels the format in which the Old Testament was written, especially the Book of Deuteronomy. By comparing the two (2) formats, we can see clearly that the Covenant given to Moses was, indeed, a Treaty between the “Great King,” God, and His people Israel. Understanding this Treaty/Covenantal format will help us to grasp more fully the nature of the covenants in the Bible, especially the Covenant with Moses and the New

Covenant, in their stipulations as well as the blessings and curses.

3. Promissory Covenants or Suzerainty Testaments

The legally binding nature of a promise could be enforced by a covenant. The recipient of the promise might be God Himself. In Ezra, we see the words, "...make a covenant with our God to put away all these [foreign] wives" (Ezr.10:3). This is the case in Second Kings 23:3a, where Josiah made a Covenant to confirm the words of God's Covenant, which were written in the rediscovered Book, Second Chronicles 29:10. Here it says, "It is in my heart to make a [not the] covenant with the LORD that His fierce anger may turn away from us."

However, it is more frequent that God makes this covenant with men, and thereby assures them of His promises (Ge.15:18). When men swear to a binding obligation there arises a Covenant of Law, but when God does this, there arises a "Covenant of Grace."

When the parties concerned are God, in His grace, and man in his sin, on whose behalf God acts, the Covenant becomes God's self-imposed obligation for the deliverance of sinners. The Covenant becomes an instrument of inheritance for effectuating God's elective love (De.7:6-8; Ps.89:3, 4). The inheritance was not automatic. Though essentially a single work, effectuated by "one worker," God, not man and God, the Covenant required that men qualify for it. Concretely, God's holiness demanded a removal of sin. This removal, in turn, came about by atonement, the covering of sin's guilt. Atonement demanded blood sacrifice, a substitutionary surrender of life (Le.17:11). Furthermore, only God or His representative could make such atonement (Ex.15:13). As Genesis dramatically puts it, God committed Himself to the Covenantal threat of self-dismemberment; and thus God saves "because of the blood of My Covenant" (Ge.15:17-18; Zec.9:11). The fact that God's only Son would some day constitute the sufficient sacrificial ransom was not yet clearly revealed. It remained incomprehensible to Old Testament Believer that, to satisfy God, God's Son must die, that men might inherit His Divine life, and so be with God. In the light, however, of New Testament explanations, the testamentary significance of Covenant in the Old Testament comes into a clear focus. When referring to God's promissory instrument, for the reconciliation of men with Himself, this becomes apparent both by analogy and by the nature of the Covenant itself. Though men's faith in His death had to be anticipatory and veiled, yet from the first, it was known that for the serpent's head to be crushed, the heel of the Seed of woman would have to be bruised (Ge.3:15).

E. New Testament Word "Covenant"

In the New Testament there are two (2) Greek words for covenant. The first one (1) is "*diatheke*" (*dea-ath-ay-kay*), which means "a disposition, arrangement, a Testament or will." One lexicon says..."*diatheke*" is properly "disposition, or the getting rid of, or making over, of anything. It is also the ordering or arranging of anything, by a party with total power, which the other party may accept or reject, but cannot alter." In the King James Version "*diatheke*" is translated as Testament and Covenant.

1. In classical usage, "*diatheke*" comes to mean a complete single sided type of legal arrangement, a "disposition of property by will, testament."

The Septuagint uses the Greek word "*diatheke*" to represent the Hebrew word "*b'rit*," which identifies God's redemptive arrangement for His people. The only exceptions are Deuteronomy 9:15 and First Kings 11:11, apparently due to textual variation. Their thinking was apparently determined by the suzerainty and testamentary nature of the Covenant in the Old Testament. It is worth mentioning that in this regard are certain Old Testament characteristics.

- a. It is divinely single sided, redemption being initiated and executed by God alone (Ex.14:13; 2Ch.20:17).
- b. Its symbolism is in the shed blood (Ex.24:8; Le.17:11), redemption being effectuated through the laying down, of a God-given life.
- c. Its purpose is that of bestowing a gift, redemption being defined as a gracious inheritance of life in God's presence (Ex.15:17; Je.3 1:33).

As we stated, with regards to the etymology of "*b'rit*" in the Old Testament, the New Testament words for "covenant" cannot be totally understood from simple etymology. To have the clearest understanding of New Testament words for covenant we must examine each usage.

"*Diathēkē*" is used thirty-three (33) times in the New Testament. Those occurrences break down into three (3) general groupings, determined by the subject or initiator of the "covenant" concerned. So, whether the subject is man, as he is variously involved: three (3) times Christ is acting on the behalf of His Church. Sixteen (16) other times, including Galatians 4:24, which makes reference to the Church as well. Fourteen (14) times God is accomplishing redemption for Israel. The last mentioned group consists primarily of quotations from the Old Testament.

2. The other Greek word “*suntithemai*” means to “put together, to place together, or to make an arrangement.”

It is used to refer to an arrangement between men and it is never referred to as the covenants made by God and presented to man. In the King James Version it is translated strictly as “covenant, agree or assent.”

In contrast to the Old Testament’s frequent descriptions of human agreements and treaties, the New Testament does not deal with man-made covenants as specific historical phenomena. Three (3) times, however, it does allude to a covenant between men, for the purpose of illustrating Christ’s redemptive activity for His own (Ga.3:15; He.9:16-17). The first speaks of “a man’s will,” for the sake of emphasizing its feature that “no one (1) annuls ... or adds to it, once it has been ratified.” The other two (2) verses speak to the necessary dependence of a covenant upon the death of the party who has set it up: “Where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established”; and, a will takes effect only at death” (He.9:16-17, RSV).

F. God Initiates Covenant

The most common type of covenant in the Bible is the Covenant between God and man. In every case, in Scripture, when a Covenant was instituted between God and man, God is seen as the initiator. Every time Salvation is experienced, it is God coming to man, bringing salvation. People may say, "I found God," but that is not true. God found us. He was never lost, but we were. So in the Covenant, man did not come to God with a proposal seeking God's approval, rather God came to man declaring His will and seeking man to accept His offer. Therefore, a Covenant is a contract between God and man, drawn up by God and presented to man. Man can either accept it or reject it, but he cannot change it.

The usage of "covenant" in Scripture does not always contain the idea of joint obligation. It may or may not involve two (2) people, but it may involve the obligation undertaken by only one (1) person, God. When God makes the Covenant, He always brings "the promise" with it.

We really must believe that God is the originator of the Covenants, because when we get into the study of the different Covenants God made, we will find the first one (1) to be in the Book of Genesis. In the beginning, God alone has the mind, authority and ability to make a covenant effective. It was always His heart and nature that motivated Him to initiate the Covenants with man. The Covenants are the greatest manifestation of God's love, grace and mercy.

The Covenants that God made with man progressed into the New Covenant. God is a Covenant-Keeping God, and in this fact, He proves His faithfulness and trustworthiness. Once God makes a Covenant, He does not forget it or ever neglect it. He always follows through with the commitments He has made (Ps.111:5, 9).

G. God Reveals Covenant

In order for man to be in Covenant-Relationship with God, God must reveal the Covenant to man, openly declaring the promises and terms. If God did not take the initiative and reveal His covenant to man, we would be in the dark. For the most part, the Church is ignorant of Covenant practices and purposes. The enemy of God is glad about the Churches ignorance. If he can keep the Church ignorant of the fact that God has made Covenant with us, then we will have a weak, sick, non-victorious Church, that Satan can steal from, kill, and destroy (Jn.10:10; Ps.25:14).

This same God, who makes, keeps and reveals His Covenants to man, also enables man to fulfill his part of the Covenant. Apart from the grace of God to help us carry out our part of the Covenant, which is to trust totally in God, we would be in deep trouble. Paul shows the difference under the New Covenant (Ep.2:4-13). This is a great picture of grace.

H. Purpose of God's Covenant

The general purpose for a covenant is to provide a binding sense of commitment to an inter-personal relationship. This would be like people being committed to each other, or God and man committed to each other. Those who enter into Covenant obligate themselves to that relationship. This is vividly illustrated in the Marriage Covenant, which was instituted by God to be a model of His Covenants. God hates divorce because it disannuls a covenant that was made between two (2) people. Divorce destroys the very purpose of God in that covenant. Divorce does not reflect the irrevocable purpose of the Covenants by which man is redeemed.

Revoke means "to bring back; to recall, to annul by recalling or taking back, to repeal." The irrevocable Covenants of God, by which man is redeemed, cannot be recalled or annulled, nor can it be altered. It is settled and sure! So the Covenants are vehicles used to express the will and purpose of God for man. They are also to be the effective means by which His will and purpose is fulfilled.

All Biblical Covenants are an expression of God's Kingdom rule. The ethics and sanctions of God-initiated Covenants are a demonstration of His sovereign rule and authority over all creation. The Covenants of God are the constitutions of His Kingdom. All of these Covenants have redemptive qualities and themes. God restores to humanity all that was lost through Adam's sin through covenantal means and promises. These

Covenants form the legal basis for God's redemptive activities towards humanity. God's love is the foundation for all of His established Covenants and His Kingdom. We are the subjects of His Kingdom. As our King He has sworn to protect and provide for us.

God has a purpose for every thing He does. He always moves with definite purpose. All of God's purposes proceed from His person. What He does is always consistent with Who He is. The kind of person He is determines the kind of things He does. There are many Scriptures that show God's purpose in what He does (Is.14:24-27; 2Ti.1:9; Ro.8:28). God's plans and purposes for us are good, and never evil.

The purpose of God for man is seen in both creation and redemption. Before Adam fell in the Garden, God's purpose for creating man was expressed through the Edenic Covenant, and we will look at this Covenant in more detail later. Because Adam broke the conditions of that Covenant and moved in disobedience, this ushered in the expression of God's redemptive purpose for man in the form of Redemptive Covenants.

I. God's Covenant Names

Relative to any covenant, pertaining to the person(s) entering into covenant is the names(s) of the covenanters. Most human covenants have five (5) distinct elements to them, such as the date of the agreement, the parties between whom the covenant is made, subject or scope of the covenant, the time and operation of the agreement and whether it is limited or otherwise, and lastly, the signature or the person's name.

Other covenantal documents reveal five (5) essential elements for covenants between parties of superior and inferior abilities. The Bible is recorded in this fashion since God is our superior, who wishes to establish Covenant with the Crown of Creation, Man. Those components are as follows.

1. Transcendence

This is seen in the fact that God is Lord of all, the true King of all creation.

2. Hierarchy, Covenantal Authorities

God is the final authority. However, He has established a hierarchy that confirms and enforces His rule in the earth. These are the authorities and representatives of the Kingdom of God.

3. Ethics

There are ethical stipulations and expectancies within the rule and government of God. These moral principles can be seen in both Old and New Testament

passages.

4. Sanctions, the Oath or Confession

Man is required to agree with the covenant, by his agreement or oath.

5. Continuity

The Covenant was often passed from generation to generation. This is especially true of the Bible and our Covenant with God through Christ. Evangelism was never the perfect plan of God. God's perfect plan was the continuity of household salvation. We were to teach our sons and daughters the statutes and principles of God and they were to continue in those teachings.

God has identified Himself by His Covenant Names. These names show God's disposition toward man, as to what man needs, and how God has set Himself to meet those needs.

J. Elohist Names of God

1. The "El" compound names of God describe the God of the Covenant of creation, the God of justice.
 - a. El - "The Strong One; the Mighty One; the Creator"
 - b. Elohim - "God or Gods; The Strong One; The Mighty One" It speaks of unity yet plurality in the Divine Persons.
 - c. Eloah - "The One and Only True God." It speaks of the unity of God's being.
 - d. El-Elyon - "God, the Most High." It signifies the Omnipresence of God.
 - e. El-Shaddai - "God Almighty; The Stone One; The Breasted One; The All-Sufficient One" It involves the Omnipotence of His being.
 - f. El-Roi - "God, the All-Seeing; The God who sees me" It speaks of the Omniscience of His being.
 - g. El-Olam - "God, the Everlasting God" It signifies the Eternity of being.

- h. El-Bethel - "God of the House of God" It signifies the Revelation of His being in His dwelling place.
 - i. El-Elohe-Israel - "God" It signifies the God of the Prince having power with God and man.
 - j. El-Gibbor - "The Mighty or Great God"
 - k. Elohim-Elyon - "God, the Most High"
 - l. Elohim-Ts'va'ot - "God of Hosts"
 - m. Adon or Adonai - "Master, Owner(s); Ruler of All"
 - n. Immanu-El - "God with Us"
2. The "Yah" compound names of God describe the God of the Covenant of Redemption, the God of mercy.
- a. The Being of God
 - 1) It is God or Elohim Who speaks out of the bush to Moses.
 - 2) When God declared His title to be "I AM THAT I AM," He also expressed by this, His essential attributes of:
 - a) Eternity of Being
 - b) Self-Existence
 - c) Essential Attributes
 - b. The Activity of God

It shows that God will be all that is necessary to His Covenant people as their needs arise.
 - c. The Redeeming and Creative Power of God
3. The following are God's compound redemptive names. Please note that the word normally in the Bible as "Jehovah" is to the Hebraic actually "Yehovah" because there is no "J" in the Hebrew alphabet. This is the reason for the "Y" as seen below.

- a. Yehovah-Elohim - "The Lord God, The Redeemer-Creator" (Ge.2:4)
- b. Yah - Abbreviated Form of Yehovah, Jehovah (Ex.15:2; 17:16)
- c. Yehovah-Elohim-Ts'va'ot - "Lord God of Hosts" (Ps.84:8)
- d. Adonai-Jehovah-Ts'va'ot - "Master, Lord of Hosts" (Ps.69:6)
- e. Yah-Jehovah - "Lord Jehovah" (Is.12:2; 26:4)
- f. Yah-Elohim - "Lord God" (Ps.68:18)
- g. *Yehovah-Jireh - "The Lord Who Sees" (Ge.22:14)
- h. Yehovah-Rapha - "The Lord That Heals" (Ex.15:26)
- i. Yehovah-Nissi - "The Lord My Banner" (Ex.17:15)
- j. Yehovah-Kanna - "The Lord Who Is Jealous" (Ex.20:5; 34:14)
- k. Yehovah-M'kadeshcehm - "The Lord Who Sanctifies" (Ex.31:13)
- l. Yehovah-Shalom - "The Lord Our Peace" (Jg.6:24)
- m. **Yehovah-Shaphat - "The Lord Is Judge" (Jg.11:17)
- n. Yehovah-Tsaboath - "The Lord Of Hosts" (1Sa.1:3; Ps.24:10)
- o. Yehovah-Elyon - "The Lord Most High" (Ps.7:17)
- p. Yehovah-Raah - "The Lord My Shepherd" (Ps.23:1)
- q. Yehovah-Osaynu - "The Lord Our Maker" (Ps.95:6)
- r. Yehovah-Gibbor - "The Lord is Mighty" (Is.42:13)
- s. Yehovah-Tsidkenu - "The Lord our Righteousness" (Je.23:6)
- t. Yehovah-Shammah - "The Lord is There" or "The Ever Present One" (Ez.48:35)

* The name that is given here is the true name. Abraham said indeed, "The Lord will provide." However, the name is actually in Hebrew, "Yireh," which means, "The Lord will see." It is true that in His seeing, He will provide, even as He did for Isaac.

** The name used here is the merciful name of God, not the name of a stern Judge.

III. PARTS OF A COVENANT

The parts of the Covenant are:

1. The Words or Promises of the Covenant
2. The Blood of the Covenant
3. The Seal of the Covenant
4. The Mediator of the Covenant

No covenant is complete or valid without the testimony of these things. Each person in the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, had a part in the making, ratifying, sealing, and mediating the Covenants. The Father God is the Originator, the Initiator, Covenant-Maker and Keeper. He is the Source, the First, the Beginning of all things, and so the Covenants. He brings to us the Words or the Promises of the Covenant. It is the Father's Word to us contained in the Covenant.

Then, we must consider the Son, Who was the Sacrifice of body and blood. He is the Second (2nd) Person, the Mediator and Ratifier of the Covenant. The word "ratify" means "to make valid, especially by formal approval, to confirm, to approve and sanction." So, we see the Son of God as the sacrifice, the blood offering for the Covenant. This is the Son's work for us. He was the offering God approved of. God placed His formal approval on the sacrifice of Jesus.

The Executor appointed to carry out the Will and Testament of the action of the Father and the Son, is the third (3rd) Person of the Godhead. He is the Holy Spirit, Who is the Fulfiller of the Covenant. He is the Seal of the Covenant. His part of the Covenant is His work with us. The Holy Spirit works with us before salvation, during salvation, and afterward.

A. Words of a Covenant

Because a covenant is an expressed agreement, words are involved either spoken or written. In the words of the Covenant are promises and terms, as well as the possibility

of an oath and a book. We may have doubts about fairness and honesty of the judicial system, but how did it originate? It came from the teachings of the Bible. God's Covenants and the example they brought forth have provided our judicial system. Involved in the judicial system are words, testimonies, contracts, and the oath of the book. In God's Covenants, between man and man or between God and man, commitment to each other takes the form of a promise. These promises include blessing or cursing, based upon obedience or disobedience. These would be promises of natural, national and temporal promises, as well as spiritual and eternal promises.

There are terms to the Covenant, or we could say, the conditions of the Covenant, by which the promises would be fulfilled. Certain of the Divine Covenants have their promises confirmed with an oath. When this is the case, the Covenant becomes irrevocable. This means it cannot be recalled, annulled or repealed. When God made promises and confirmed them with an oath, He bound Himself to the fulfillment of His promises, making the Covenant irrevocable. So, we see that God's oath to His promises is a confirmation and an end of all excuses for unbelief on the part of man (He.6:16-18; He.7:19-21, 28).

B. Blood of the Covenant

The Blood of the Covenant is important, because a covenant is viewed as being a life or death commitment to the ratification of it, and it involved bloodshed. The word "ratify," means "to make valid, especially by formal approval, to confirm, to sanction."

The sacrificial blood, used to make the Covenant official, represented the life commitment of those entering unto the Covenant. Covenantal sacrifice involved both the shedding of blood and the death of the body. We can see this solemn act vividly illustrated the sacredness of the covenant vows. The sacrifice involved both the body and the blood.

Where cannibalism has been studied in modern times, it has commonly been found to have originally a religious basis. Man has longed for a oneness of life with God. Oneness of life comes only through oneness of the Blood. To secure such oneness of life, man would give of his own blood, or a substitute blood, which could best represent him. Man has also sought for spiritual nourishment and growth through partaking of food that would be sacrificially offered to God or the gods. In a misdirected persistence of this thought, men have given the blood of a consecrated human victim, to bring themselves into union with God. They have eaten the flesh of that victim, which had supplied that blood, which they believed had made them one (1) with God.

In the primitive rite of Blood-Covenanting, man drank each other's blood, so they might have a common life. In the out-reaching of men toward God, they poured out the substitute blood of a chosen victim in sacrifice. They partook of the flesh of that

sacrificial victim, in symbolism of sharing the life and nourishment of Deity. This symbolism was made a reality in Jesus Christ. The blood, which He yielded, was life itself. The body He laid on the altar, the cross, was the pledge offering of completion.

God did not desire sacrifices or offerings, but a "...body hast Thou prepared for Me" (He.10:5-10). The Scriptures are saying that Jesus, in the body of His blood and flesh, yielded His blood and shared His flesh, in order to make us partakers of His Nature. We see then that God would seek a Divine-Human centered union, and Divine-Human inter-communion, through the sacrifice made by Christ, "...once and for all." Jesus spoke of the people partaking of His flesh and blood in the Synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum, toward the close of the second (2nd) year of His ministry. The fact that Jesus said these things so long before He instituted the Memorial or the Lord's Supper has been a puzzle to many Bible Scholars. They were apparently unfamiliar with the primitive Rite of Blood-Covenanting (Jn.6:53-58). All the substitute sacrifices and substitute forms of communion in Eastern and African nations has grown out of the perversion of this rite.

In the understanding of all of these customs, the words of Jesus have a clearer meaning to us. It was as though He had said, "Men everywhere are longing for life, and they seek to share in the life of God by the giving of their own blood and eating of the flesh of their sacrifices. All that they are seeking, I supply, for in Me is life." If men will be partakers of Jesus' Life and His nature, they shall be sharers of the Life of God. The Jews said, "How can this man give us flesh to eat?" (Jn.6:52). It was not because they had never heard of eating the flesh of a sacrifice and of drinking blood in a sacred covenant, but it was because they did not realize that Jesus was to be the Crowning-Sacrifice for the human race.

There are many illustrations of the mission of Jesus giving His blood for bringing man into right relationship with God. Some of these were His circumcision, His agony in Gethsemane, and the blood of the cross.

1. Circumcision is a picture of the believer's cutting off of the flesh.

In His circumcision, Jesus brought His humanity into the Blood-Covenant, which was between God and the Seed of God's friend, Abraham. So we see Jesus pledged His own blood in that Covenant, so that all who would come after Him, through faith in Him, would be heirs of faithful Abraham.

2. Gethsemane was the realization of separation coming between Himself and the Father.

In Gethsemane, the sins and iniquities, the needs of humanity pressed upon the burdened soul of Jesus. We do not fully understand the agony of Jesus at this

occasion. One writer, a medical doctor, has said

"In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ endured mental agony so intense that, if it had not been limited by Divine Intervention, it would probably have destroyed His life. The effects were confined to violent palpitation of the heart accompanied with bloody sweat." The doctor goes on to say, "It is probable that this strange disorder arises from a violent commotion of the nervous system, turning the streams of blood out of their natural course, and forcing the red corpuscles into excretion through the skin. His sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground."

This sweat of blood was because Jesus had never been separated from the Father, and the thought of that brought great agony of soul, to the point of the physical manifestation.

Concerning His statement, "...let this cup pass from Me..." He did not want the separation from the Father, and He did not want to be shamed by the exposure of His private parts (Mt.26:39). In that Eastern society, it is a horrendous shame for His nudity to be exposed. Even today, it is a great shame for the Jew to be exposed in ways that the Western world would not understand.

3. The blood of the cross is the blood of the Covenant.

There are seven (7) lettings of the blood of Christ. These include:

- a) The Head by the Crown of Thorns
- b) The Stripes on His Back
- c) The Nails in His Hands
- d) The Spike in His Feet
- e) The Plucking of His Beard
- f) The Spear in His Side

There are several symbols in the letting of the blood. The "serpent vine" is what the crown of thorns was called. It represents the piercing of the mind by the enemy with demonic thoughts. Christ paid the price for our minds being clean. Jesus, in the Gospels, often said, "Take no thought." Paul gave us instruction also in Corinthians and Colossians (2Co.10:4-5; Php.4:8; Co.3:1). This is the provision for man in his mind, will, and emotions.

The plucking of the beard is also a symbol. The beard is a symbol of authority, maturity, and stability. In Psalms 133, we see that Aaron's beard was saturated by oil. It is something to grab hold of, as in stability and maturity. Authority comes from the head.

The piercing of the hands is a symbol of salvation and service. Often we see the words, "the right hand of God" or the "hand of God." This is a provision for man's prosperity.

The piercing of the feet is a symbol of the believer's walk with God. In Genesis, we see that God said that everywhere "the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours" (De.11:24). In Romans, Paul spoke of "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel" (Ro.10:15). See also other Scriptures on the feet (Ps.11:105; Pr.16:9; Ps.37:23; De.11:24-25; Jos.10:24).

The piercing of Jesus side is the birthing of the Bride. As we see in Genesis, Eve came out of Adam's side. The Bride also comes out of the Saviour's side (Ge.2:21). This is a provision for man's spiritual and social aspects.

The stripes on Jesus' back are symbolic of the healing of our physical bodies (Is.53:5; 2Pe.2:24). This is God's provision for man's physical side.

"Oh the blood of Jesus, it washes white as snow!"

C. Seal of the Covenant

There was also a token of the Covenant, a seal, or a sign. A seal was a constant reminder of the authentic quality or the genuineness of the Covenant-Promises and plan. Each one (1) of the Divine Covenants had its own particular seal.

As we study the Book of Hebrews, we find that the writer fills most of the content of that book in presenting Jesus Christ.

1. Hebrews shows Jesus as God, and better than all men and angels.
2. Hebrews shows Jesus as the fulfillment of the Law.
3. Hebrews shows Jesus as the Messiah, to confirm Jewish Christians in the faith.
4. In Hebrews, the comparison can be seen, the New Covenant to the Old Covenant, as given in Leviticus, especially the Priesthood and the

sacrifices.

5. The Book of Hebrews states that it is a New and Better Covenant.

There has to be a seal to the Covenant, for it serves as the constant reminder of the authentic quality or the genuineness of the Covenant-Promises and terms. Each one (1) of the Divine Covenants had its own particular seal, which was called the seal or the sign, and the token of the Covenant.

D. Mediator of the Covenant

Let us look at the Mediator of the Covenant. Every sacrifice requires a sacrificial mediator, that is, an official who officiates over the Covenant-Ratification Ceremony. In the Old Testament, we see God instituting the Priesthood for this specific purpose. There was also one (1) over the Sanctuary of the Covenant. A holy act must occur in a Holy Place. There must be a place for man in the functioning of the Priesthood in the ministry. This involved the Altar and the Tabernacle and/or the Temple.

To ratify the Covenant, the shedding of blood and death of the body had to take place. Down through the ages of time, man has longed for oneness with God, which prompted him to give his own blood. There must a mediator, to officiate in ratifying the Covenant, which is what the Priesthood was instituted for. A Mediator is one (1), who goes between the two (2) parties who are going to participate in the Covenant. In the Old Testament, God appointed as mediator the Priesthood.

The Sanctuary of the Covenant was the place where the Priesthood would minister to the people, and for the people to partake of the rites of Covenant.

IV. EIGHT (8) MAJOR COVENANTS

There are eight (8) major Divine Covenants in God's Word, all of which God made with man. These Covenants are known as the Edenic Covenant, the Adamic Covenant, the Noahic Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, the Palestinian Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant.

We need to know and understand that all the Covenants are inter-related. Each Covenant is a part of the whole, and each flow together from beginning to end. As we continue our study of the Covenants in Scripture, we will find the Edenic Covenant, in one (1) sense, stands alone and is unique, because it is the only Covenant involving man before the entrance of sin. We know that God foresaw the fall of man and was prepared for it. He immediately set into motion a series of Covenants revealing the plan of redemption.

A. Edenic Covenant

Let us start in the beginning where God started. The Bible does not call the Covenant between God and Adam before he fell a "covenant." None-the-less, all the criteria for Covenantal-Relationship between two (2) parties exist. Scholars readily accept the cultural mandate given to Adam as the "Edenic Covenant." Adam stands as humanities representative and this covenant expresses God's desire to enter into a covenantal lifestyle with the Crown of His Creation. The Edenic Covenant is the Covenant God made with Adam and Eve in the Garden, before the entrance of sin, expressing His purpose in creation. God has always had a purpose for man.

Genesis chapters one (1) and two (2) give us a record of the creation of the heavens and earth, and also some of the reasons why God made them. Isaiah said that God created the heaven and the earth to be inhabited (Is.45:18). As the wise Master Builder, God prepares "the House" of the heavens and the earth, and then He created creatures to live in "the House." He created the masterpiece of it all when He made man to rule over it all. The writer indicates that man was the focal point of God's creation (Ge.1:26-31). We see all of God's purposes were to center in man. The very first Covenant was given to the first man and woman to reveal God's purpose in creating them. The fact that man was the recipient, but not the originator, of the first Covenant, shows us God's desire and purpose for man to be in Covenant-Relationship with Him. While God was creating man, He was also declaring His Covenant-Purposes over man. Man, made in the image of God as a free-will creation, was placed on a period of probation to test his voluntary commitment to the Covenant. The Covenant language and elements in Genesis chapters one (1) and two (2), as well as other Scriptures, do confirm the integrity of the Edenic Covenant.

1. The words of the Covenant in Eden are the expressions of God's purpose for creating man.

While the word "Covenant" does not appear in the Biblical text, we can clearly see that the terms of a "Covenant" are implied. By the words spoken to Adam and the consequences suffered as a result of disobeying, we can see the terms given by God form a Covenant.

God blessed the man and the woman then commanded them saying some specific things to them.

- a. God told Adam to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth.

The basis for the blessing Adam would receive was obedience to the above commands and conditions. Adam was equipped for service and given the ability to perform the required tasks by being created in the

image and likeness of God.

Adam was to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth. This is often seen as a cultural mandate. Adam was to create a culture based on worship and servitude of God.

- b. Adam was to subdue, dominate or tread down any disobedience in the Garden.

Adam was also to “subdue” the earth and its creatures. We could ask the question, subdue what? The thought of subduing the earth clearly lets Adam know that he would have to subjugate an enemy. This word “subdue” indicates warfare, in that it means “to tread down, to conquer” and “to bring under the yoke of power”.

Adam was to conquer Satan, the only enemy then in existence, as well as to make the whole earth as the Garden of Eden. Adam was to exercise dominion or ruler-ship over the earthly creation. To accomplish this task Adam was give spiritual authority. Adam would be king under God.

- c. There were certain permissible foods, herbs, for Adam.

Another blessing from God involved the eating of herbs and fruits for man’s physical existence (Ge. 1:29). Eating meat was not allowed until the Noahic covenant. Before the fall of man and the curse upon the earth, the herbs and fruits would sustain man’s physical body. But after sin entered and man was required to labor physically for his existence in a cursed earth, God permitted eating meat for strength.

- d. Adam was to dress and keep the Garden.

God blessed man with an occupation, for he was created to work in the Garden, that is, to dress it and keep it. The use of the word “keep” continues the thought mentioned above with regards to subduing. The Garden must be guarded or kept against the enemy of God. These were the promises of blessing in the Covenant in Eden, but God also promised Adam that if he disobeyed God’s command and partook of the forbidden fruit, he would suffer the curse of death. This involved both spiritual and physical death (Ge.2:16-17).

- e. Adam was told to not eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Adam was forbidden to partake of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

- 2. In the terms of the Covenant, the blessings or benefits to man were made available on a conditional basis.

These blessings or benefits were made available on the basis of the terms of trust, and obedience. Adam was forbidden to partake of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam's choice led to spiritual death for all men. It was a test, and Adam failed. Mankind is responsible under God to trust and obey Him. The benefits of keeping this Covenant are true blessings.

- a. Adam would have eternal life through trust and obedience.

The life to given to Adam, was eternal, yet conditional. He would walk in eternal life as a condition of the Covenant. If he disobeyed, God's curse was death, first spiritual, and ultimately physical.

- b. Adam would live in the environment of God.

Adam was created on the eve of the sixth (6th) day, just before the Sabbath. The first thing he experienced was the Sabbatical day or the presence, environment, and the rest of God. Adam was so permeated with the presence of God, the life of God that he lived over nine hundred (900) years after he sinned. We live today because of the life that God breathed into Adam.

- 3. There is no record of an oath in the Edenic Covenant.
- 4. The blood of the Covenant was the opening of Adam's side.

In preparation for the fulfilling of the Covenant, let us look at the blood or the sacrifice of the Covenant. It involved Adam's giving of his own life. In this sacrificial giving, Adam lay down in a deep sleep and God opened his side and removed a rib from which, God built a bride (Ge.2:18-25). This, in all likelihood, involved the shedding of innocent blood. Adam recognized this sacrifice as stated in Gen 2:23. When he said, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh", he was speaking in Covenant language. Adam and Eve were one in the Marriage Covenant.

5. God is the Mediator of the Edenic Covenant.

God Himself acted as the Mediator of this Covenant. He put Adam to sleep, opened his side, and prepared his bride.

6. The Sanctuary of the Covenant was the Garden of Eden.

This is the place where God's Presence appeared on earth to fellowship with man in the cool of the day. This was God's earthly Sanctuary containing the Tree of Life. Later, we will see that God said, "Let them make me a sanctuary: that I may dwell among them" (Ex.25:8) Israel prepared God a sanctuary in the Tabernacle, where He might dwell in the midst of His people.

7. The token of the Covenant was the Tree of Life.

Of all of the trees in the Garden, only two (2) were named and placed in the midst of it. Of these two (2), Adam was allowed to partake of only one, the Tree of Life. Adam chose the wrong "Tree" to eat of. Later, in Scripture, we see Moses rehearsing the Law of God to God's Covenant-People, and he tells them, "I have set before you life and death, the blessings and the cursings. Therefore choose life that you and your descendants may live" (De.30:19). Adam broke the terms of the Covenant by making a wrong choice! God's judgment focused on withholding the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil from Adam. These facts indicate the Tree of Life to be the tangible sign of the Edenic Covenant.

This Covenant is unique, in the fact, that it is the only Covenant made with man before the entrance of sin. This Covenant shows God's creative purpose for man including:

- a. Relationship with God
- b. Adam's Dominion Given to Him by God
- c. Fruitfulness
- d. Eternal Life

This creative purpose for Adam and Eve was based on faith and obedience. The fall of man brought about the revelation of the Redemptive-Covenants, which brings the Edenic Covenant to fulfillment. This was made possible by the New Covenant, which restores to man all that was lost in the Garden. The benefits of this Covenant were revoked, as Adam failed to comply.

B. Adamic Covenant

The Covenant God made with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, after the entrance of sin, was to express God's purpose in Redemption. This is found in Genesis chapter three (3). We will see that under the Covenants that God made with man, down through Scripture, which God was always working to bring man back into fellowship with Himself.

God continued through His love, grace, and mercy for man, to constantly draw man into fellowship with Him, in order to redeem Him.

God permitted the serpent's entrance into the Garden to test the obedience of man. Man came to the knowledge of good and evil through disobedience. The temptation came to break the Covenant. Satan began to attack the terms of God's Covenant with man by deceiving man into violating the Covenant. Satan wanted to rob man of God's blessings and put him under the curses of the Covenant.

Satan's attack was upon God and His creation. Satan's approach into the Garden was to attack the Covenant language. We see the record of the serpent's tempting of the woman and his progressive undermining of the Words of the Covenant (Ge.3:1-6).

1. The serpent questions the Word of God (v.1), by saying, "Hath God said..."
2. The serpent lies against God's Word, when he said, "You will not surely die..." (v.4)
3. Finally, the serpent misinterprets purposely the Word, when he said, "...you shall be as gods' (v.5).

From this weakening, lying about, and misinterpreting of the Word by Satan, Eve was deceived into partaking of the forbidden fruit. Then, she gave to Adam also. This unbelief and disobedience to God and His Word broke their Covenant-Relationship and brought them under the curses of the Covenant.

The results of the fall of man were that man's Covenant-Relationship was broken. The entrance of sin corrupted his character. He lost his dominion, and his offspring came under the dominion of the law of sin and death.

This sets the stage for the revelation of the Adamic Covenant. We see that God came in grace to fallen man. God sought to restore man back into Covenant-Relationship. This Covenant with Adam was the beginning of the Covenant of Redemption. We must remember that each Covenant was a progressive part of the whole Plan of Redemption. The foundation of the Edenic Covenant is the most extensive prophecy that God ever gave to mankind. It surrounds all the Covenants of Redemption that follow. It is the

“Seed Covenant” that sets the standard for the others, which follow.

1. The promise of blessing and cursing is in the Words of this Covenant.
 - a. The promises of blessing included the “Seed” of the woman bruising the serpent’s head.

The Seed would crush, conquer, and completely overwhelm Satan and all the realm of his authority (Ge.3:15). Adam failed to take the authority God had delegated to him in the earth. God begins speaking the prophetic Word, which would begin preparation to bring the Redeemer into the earth. This promise involved the chosen nation of Israel, the virgin birth of Jesus, His ministry, the Church, and finally the eternal judgment of Satan.

Psalms 60:12, Luke 10:19, Romans 16:20, and many other Scriptures substantiate this prophetic Word that God spoke to Adam. These are Scriptures that refer to trampling or treading down Satan, and It came to pass. While the curse of God came on the serpent and the earth, God did not curse the man or the woman. Adam and Eve were affected by the curse, but they were given reprieve, by God’s mercy, from Divine Judgment.

- b. The serpent's curse was humiliation and crushing.

The natural serpent, which was used as a tool of Satan, has been humiliated in the dust of the earth. The serpent has from that time since, had the stigma of being associated with Satan. Also, the curse went beyond the snake to the Devil himself. He is called, "that old serpent." An irrevocable curse was put upon him, leading up to his ultimate crushing (Ro.16:20). God’s judgment was prophetically pronounced upon Satan at this point.

- c. The woman's pain was to be in childbirth and subservience.

Judgment on the woman involved multiplied sorrow in childbirth and being subservient to her husband. The Seed of the woman would crush Satan, but it would come about only through multiplied discomfort in childbirth. There would likely be discomfort in childbirth before the fall, but with the curse, discomfort and sorrow would be multiplied.

- d. The man's sweat was because of the curse.

Judgment on Adam involved sweat, toil, and sorrow in laboring with a cursed earth until his death. For nine hundred thirty (930) years, Adam labored with an earth that wanted to bear thorns and thistles. The ground received cursing because of the rebellion of Adam. We do not have to cultivate weeds; they come up in the ground without any help. So instead of the earth readily bringing forth good for man, it would, under the curse, hinder man's efforts in every endeavor.

- e. The creatures rebelled as Adam did.

It would seem that the creatures became wild and carnivorous after the fall of Adam. They did not seem to be so as they came to Adam to be named. As the authority over God's Creation, the creature was subservient to Adam in God's environment. After the fall it seems the whole of creation is in rebellion and turmoil (Ro.8:19-22). There will be a time when peace and God's environment is restored (Is.11:6-9; Is.65:17-25).

- f. The fall of Adam and Eve brought about their banishment from the Garden.

God confirmed, under the Adamic Covenant, that the result of sin is death. This involved spiritual, physical, and eternal death. Spiritual death is eternal separation from God.

2. We can see God's mercy in these two (2) Covenants.

Man fell into sin because of the lack of maintaining the obedience required by the Edenic Covenant, the Covenant of Creation. God sought to restore man back to a relationship with Himself through the Adamic Covenant, which was a Covenant of Redemption.

3. The terms of the Covenant are dictated by God to protect His creation.

The benefits that man received from this covenant depended upon man's response to God's terms. All men have a common origin in Adam. All men are blood relatives of Adam, regardless of their ethnic origins. Adam acted as man's representative. Outside of Messiah, the blood of man carries the sentence of death, with no exceptions because of the fall of Adam. Remember that life is in the blood, and so if man must die, it is because there is death in the blood. Although we do not know the nature of the fruit, of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, we know that eating from it caused a poisoning of Adam's blood and

resulted in death. The poison was so potent that six thousands (6000) years later, all who are related to Adam, by human birth, still succumb to the poison of sin, which is carried in some way, in the blood.

The evidence of Adam and Eve's faith after the Adamic Covenant seems evident in that:

- a. Adam named Eve as the mother of all living (Ge.3:20).
- b. Adam and Eve received the coats of skins in exchange for their self-made covering of fig leaves. They received what God offered to them.
- c. Eve made a faith-response at the birth of Cain (Ge.4:1).

Eve's statement demonstrated her desire and faith for the coming redemption. We also see in Scriptures that Adam passed the knowledge of Faith-Sacrifices to his children (Ge.4:1-4; He.1 1:4). It seems evident from these Scriptures that Adam taught his children about blood sacrifices.

4. There is no oath recorded for this Covenant.

We do not find a Biblical record of an oath being attached to the Adamic Covenant. This makes the Adamic Covenant revocable. God had begun the redemption plan through the covenant He made, and there would be more to come. No book of this Covenant was written at the same time it was given, but was later recorded in the Book of Genesis, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

5. The sacrifice of this Covenant was the innocent animal.

After Adam and Eve fell from Covenantal-Relationship with God, they lost their God-consciousness to self-consciousness. At that time self-consciousness dominated their thinking and they were smitten with guilt. They sought to cover their own sin to make themselves acceptable to God. They were trying to establish their own righteousness through the sewing of the fig leaves.

Because all men derive their being from Adam, sin is universal in its effect. The whole race was in his loins when he sinned. He was man's spiritual, moral and physical fountainhead, and his sole representative. He did not act as a single person but on behalf of the whole race. When he fell, he sinned for all humanity. When God covenanted with Adam, it was a covenant for the whole race. In Romans 5:14, we see that death did not come by personal sin, but death passed upon all men because of Adam's sin. Adam was a type of Christ, Who was to

come. His obedience would bring many into righteousness. So man, covering himself with a fig leaf was an attempt to make himself acceptable to God. This same effort is still going on today.

Through the Bible, from cover to cover runs unbroken, scarlet red streams of blood from an atoning sacrifice. It begins in the sacrifice spoken of in Genesis (Ge.3:21), where we read that God made coats of skin through the sacrifice of an innocent animal, that Adam and Eve might be covered. It runs in a continuous stream through the sacrifices of Noah and Abraham, through the Books of Exodus and Leviticus and the whole Old Testament system until it burst forth in the supreme sacrifice of Calvary. From there it runs on in an ever increasing and widening course through the years and will flow on through the countless ages of eternity.

In this one (1) brief record we have the foundation of all subsequent Scriptural sacrifice. We have a law, which is called the Law of First Mention. When this principle is applied to this particular verse, it gives us the key to the meaning of sacrifice throughout the whole Bible. This principle can be defined like this: The first use of a word, a phrase, or incident in the Bible, sets the precedent for the interpretation of the same words or phrases found elsewhere in Scripture. This precedent then teaches us three (3) things.

1. Salvation must be of the Lord.
2. Salvation must be by the death of an innocent substitute.
3. Salvation must be by blood.

Every sacrifice that would be acceptable to God must meet these conditions. It must not be man's work, but God's work. It cannot be man's provision. It must be God's provision. It must not be the "fig leaves" of man's own righteousness, but bloody skins of God's provision. We find that God's sacrifice meets the conditions of Genesis 3:21. We also see that Cain's sacrifice did not meet those conditions. Cain brought a sacrifice obtained by his own effort. It was not the substitute of another, innocent creature.

It was up to God to move in grace, deal with man's sin, and provide an acceptable atonement. Man had broken the life commitment in the Edenic Covenant, and deserved death. Death had to take place in order for his sin to be covered. God now introduced a substitutionary sacrificial death, in order to cover man's sinfulness. The precedent for this substitution is seen in the sacrifice of Genesis 3:21, when God clothed Adam and Eve with coats of skin, which had come from an innocent animal. The innocent died for the guilty, the sinless

animal was sacrificed for sinful man. This Covenant-Sacrifice was the first animal sacrifice. Here we see the precedent set, pointing to the New Covenant sacrifice, the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn.1:29, 36).

6. God was the Mediator of this Covenant.

It is evident that God was the Mediator of this Covenant, as He was the One who slew the animals and made the coats of skin in which Adam and Eve were clothed (Ge.3:21).

Although the Creator-ship name "Elohim" (God) was used in relation to the Edenic Covenant of Creation before the entrance of sin, it is the redemptive name of Yehovah (Lord) that is used in relation to the Adamic Covenant of Redemption, after the entrance of sin. The name attached to this Covenant is "the Lord God," which contained within itself both creation and redemption (Ge.3:14, 21, 22, 23).

Further, Scripture reveals that the "Mediatory Person", in the Godhead, is the Lord Jesus Christ. As the Lord God demonstrated His own Priesthood on Adam's behalf, He set the example for Adam to follow as the Priest of his own household. This was later brought forth in the Levitical Priesthood, under the Mosaic Covenant, where they were given the coats of skin of certain animal sacrifices (Le.7:8). This was also illustrated in Job's Priesthood for his family (Job.1:1-5).

The place where the Covenant was given, the sacrifice made, and the work of the Mediator fulfilled was in the Garden of Eden. However, the focus in Genesis 3:24 seems to be, on a place to the east of Eden. There are many comparisons in the language of the Adamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant. For instance, in Genesis 3:24, God placed His presence in Eden, and in Exodus 25:8, God said "...let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them..." Another example is the Cherubim placed as guardians at the entrance of the Garden (Ge.3:24). In Exodus, they were guardians over the Mercy Seat of God in the Tabernacle (Ex.25:17-22).

Also, this would have been the most suitable place for Cain and Abel to bring their offerings to the Lord. Having forfeited the seal of the Edenic Covenant, which was the Tree of Life, Adam and Eve received the coats of skin as tokens, strengthening their faith in the Atoning Sacrifice of the Adamic Covenant. This can be paralleled to the righteousness that the Holy Spirit brings to the New Covenant Believer, who accepts the sacrificial work of Christ.

In the summary of the Adamic Covenant, we can say, it was a Seed-Covenant," introducing the Covenant of Redemption. Jesus Christ, as the Seed of the woman, who fulfills this Covenant, in bringing man back into a perfect and eternal

Covenant-Relationship with God.

C. The Noahic Covenant

This is the Covenant God made with Noah, after the flood that involves all creatures and future generations of mankind. This Covenant confirms, and adds to, God's purpose as stated in the Edenic Covenant. Man was put on probation to test his faith and obedience to the Adamic Covenant. These were the statements emphasized by God, to Adam, in that Covenant. The Covenant required obedience to God, the necessity of conquering Satan, the place of work in man's life, and the requirement of trust in the substitutionary death of an animal as an example of faith.

The Covenant required man to live up to these stated realities. It was, once again, a period of probation extending from Adam to Noah. The human race became divided into two (2) groups, those who believed and obeyed God and those who refused to believe and obey God. Beginning with Cain and Abel, two (2) seed lines developed until the days of Noah, the Godly and the ungodly. In Genesis chapter four (4), we see the account of Cain and his ungodly line. However, in Genesis chapter five (5), we see the account of the Godly line proceeding from the displacement of Abel, to the man, Seth. We see the place of Abel could not remain unfilled. There must be a righteous line if God's purpose of mercy and redemption were to be carried out. God gave Adam and Eve another son. Eve significantly gave him the name Seth, meaning "appointed," or "compensation." For God, she said, "...hath appointed me..." (Compensated me) "...another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew" (Ge.4:25). We must never doubt that God's plan will not be accomplished in the earth.

The name Noah means: "quiet, to rest," or "a resting place to settle down."

Noah had found a resting place in God. Noah's name indicated rest in a violent, corrupt world, filled with unrest. In Hebrew, his name, "Noach," means "comforter." We know that at this time man was under the Law of Conscience. Sin continued to drive him away from a Covenant-Relationship with God.

Cain had rejected the Covenant-Sacrifice, which prescribed the approach to God. Also, he murdered his Covenant brother, Abel. Cain's sin led to the corruption of the entire human race with one exception, Noah, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord. We need to understand the character of Noah and why God chose him to be the progenitor of life after the flood. We also need to see the world's condition as God saw it (Ge.6:5-8).

Man's actions had weakened the Covenant, but it did not diminish God's desire to keep the Covenant. The judgment of breaking the Edenic Covenant was death and removal from the Garden. The judgment for breaking the Adamic Covenant was to be death by a universal flood. Before judgment was executed, God began to move in Covenant-Grace

to preserve His next Covenant-Man. Out of the Godly line, God choose Noah, a man who was keeping the Adamic Covenant (Ge.6:8-9; 7:1).

One hundred twenty (120) years before the flood, God called Noah for a special mission.

Scripture calls Noah a "just man and perfect." These characteristics were what was needed to be the next in line to carry the Covenantal responsibility. As the Hebrew word implies, he was spiritually upright, genuine, entire, and complete. He was a man whose heart had a single aim, "in his generation." Noah walked with God. Noah was four hundred eighty (480) years of age at the time God called him for duty, and he had no children.

Noah was told by God to build an Ark of Safety to preserve his household, which as time went on, grew to three (3) sons, their wives and Noah's wife, making eight (8) people in all. The Ark would house Noah and his family, along with at least two (2) of every creature God had made (Ge.6:5-8; He.11:7; 2Pe.2:4-5). God's judgment was coming to destroy the wicked from the earth, because human depravity had reached the extreme limit. Nothing but violence proceeded from the people God had created.

It pained God's heart and grieved Him that man was so very wicked. A sorrow of Divine Love rose up in God's heart, even so, "the long suffering of God waited" for one hundred twenty (120) years, while the ark was being prepared. During this time, Noah was God's preacher of righteousness. We see the great faith of Noah, in not only building the Ark in the midst of a scoffing and unbelieving generation, but also in providing room for "his sons" and "his son's wives," while as yet he was childless.

When the flood was over, Noah came out of the ark. God made a Covenant with him, his family and all creatures. This Covenant brought a new beginning for man upon the earth that was cleansed from sinful flesh by the flood. The Covenant with Noah and his family reinstates God's purpose for man as stated in the Edenic Covenant. However, there were added restrictions and responsibilities on man's part.

1. God pronounces blessing on Noah and his family in the Covenant (Ge.8:15-19, 21, 22; Ge.9:1-7, 11, 15).
 - a. God promised Noah that His favor and His benevolence would remain on him and his family.
 - b. They should be fruitful and multiply. This involves both natural and spiritual reproduction. They would fill the earth with people that would be in Covenant-Relationship with God.
 - c. The animal kingdom would be ruled by fear and dread of man. Why? It was because now, man would hunt them for food. In the

Garden, before sin, they lived in harmony with each other.

- d. Under the Covenant, for the first time, man was allowed to eat meat as well as herbs.
- e. The ground was preserved from further curses. The ground was cursed under the Adamic Covenant, but now God promised that for man's sake, He would restrain any further curse.
- f. The creatures of the earth would be ruled by fear and dread and be affected by the results of sin.
- g. Under the Covenant in Eden, the earth had a constant climate and was watered by a mist rather than rain (Ge.2:5-6; 7:4). Although the seasons were spoken into existence on the fourth (4th) day, the institution of the seasonal cycles seemed to be put into motion only after the flood. The seasons were to be a blessing to man, upon his obedience to the Covenant, but, could be turned into judgment upon his disobedience (De.11:10-17).
- h. God, in His promises of blessing to free man from the fear of another universal flood, promises never to destroy the earth again with water (Is.54:9, 10; 2Pe.3:5-7).

2. The promises of cursing unfold in Scripture.

The curses given in relation to the Noahic Covenant is a part of the progressive unfolding of curses in Scripture. The curses are very few, when compared to the blessings God pronounced upon man. We see under the Adamic Covenant, the curse was upon the serpent and the earth. The first man to be cursed was Cain, who was a liar and a murderer. Cain also rejected the blood of the Lamb Sacrifice. Millions still are rejecting the blood sacrifice of the Lamb of God for Salvation.

Man has twisted and turned and substituted every work of his own hand for the sinless, spotless, Sacrificial Lamb of God. As the son of Adam came under a curse, so Ham, a son of Noah, likewise came under a curse (Ge.9:20-27; Le.18:6-7). Jewish legend says that a slip of the grapevine was brought from out of the Garden of Paradise, to the new world that Noah and his family arrived in.

Whether Noah was unacquainted with the intoxicating power of the vine, or if he neglected proper moderation is not known. But Scripture reveals that Noah, the aged patriarch, fell victim to drunkenness. His son, Ham, violated Noah's privacy,

in his drunken state. The other sons defended their father from the vile act, which Ham had committed. A curse descended on Ham, while a blessing was issued to Shem and Japheth for their actions. From the three (3) sons of Noah, the earth was repopulated and divided in families, lands, and nations. Because of Shem's righteous actions on his father's behalf, God chose him to be the "father of the Righteous line" through which salvation would ultimately come.

In accordance with the general plan of the Scripture, after the prophecy of Noah, which fixed the future of his sons, we read nothing else of the Patriarch, other than that he lived after the flood for three hundred and fifty (350) years, dying at the age of nine hundred fifty (950) (Ge.9:28-29).

3. The division of the earth was to Noah's descendants.

In regard to the division of earth among Noah's three (3) sons, Asia was given to Shem, who was called "the father of all the children of Eber." The English word, "Hebrew", comes from the Hebrew word "Eber." Thus, Shem was called the "father of all the children of the Hebrews." In Eber, the main line divided into that of Peleg, from whom the race of Abraham sprang. Shem is the father of the Jewish race. The term "semitic" is derived from the name of Shem.

Europe was given to Japheth, the youngest son, while Africa was given to Ham. His sons were Cush (Ethiopia), Mizraim, Phut and Canaan. We see that national blessings came forth from this Covenant. Shem was blessed by God for honoring his father and was chosen to be the progenitor of the Godly line. From him came Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Israel, David and the Messiah, who were all given Covenants of Redemption.

4. There were several terms to the Covenant.

a. Faith and obedience were required in the Noahic Covenant.

Noah was a man who believed and obeyed the Commandments of the Lord.

b. Man was permitted to eat meat under this Covenant.

However, he was not to eat blood. God established the shedding of animal blood as the Substitutionary Sacrifice for man's sin. Therefore, He has reserved the blood for Himself. Blood is precious to God. The life is in the blood.

c. Murder was forbidden in the Noahic Covenant.

The violence that had begun with Cain had increased to the days of Noah. This forbidden act was to remind man that life is precious and that man is made in the image of God.

d. With the prohibition of murder, the punishment for it was defined.

Under the Adamic Covenant, God Himself judged murderers, as with Cain. In the Noahic Covenant, God delegated authority to man to deal with murderers. Under the New Covenant, the institution of human government is fully endorsed, even to the extent of Capital Punishment. God's says to honor and be submissive to the ruling authority (He.13:17).

5. God attached an oath of this Covenant.

The word "oath" is not specifically used in Genesis 8:9, but Isaiah reveals that God did attach His oath to the Noahic Covenant (Is.54:9).

6. The blood of this Covenant came from "clean" animals.

Noah took both clean and unclean animals into the Ark, but only clean animals were sacrificed to God (Ge.8:20-21). This was a sweet savor unto God. We will see later, in the Mosaic Covenant, that the voluntary offerings were called "sweet savor offerings."

We see Noah functioning as the Patriarchal King-Priest of his house. The fact of his offering sacrifices to God demonstrated his Priestly office. He was the Mediator or the go-between officiating in this Covenant (Ge.8:2).

The place of the Sanctuary for this Covenant was Noah's altar. This is the first mention of an altar in Scripture. This was the place where the Priest offered his sacrifice to God. The altar constituted the Sanctuary of the patriarchs. Wherever God's Covenant-People built an altar, God promised to record His name, come to them, meet with them, and bless them.

7. The Seal of the Covenant was the bow.

The rainbow was given by God as a token of the Covenant with Noah (Ge.9:12-17). God placed it in the sky between heaven and earth, between God and man. God committed Himself to look upon it as He looked toward Earth and remember His Covenant Mercy. Likewise, man was to look at the rainbow as he looked toward heaven, and remember God's Covenant-Promise.

Jewish legends declare that when we see the rainbow, it is the time that the world is exceedingly wicked and should be destroyed, but God, remembering His promise, gets off "His Throne of Judgment" and goes and sits on "His Throne of Mercy," thereby sparing the earth.

The Noahic Covenant certainly reaffirms the creative purposes of God, as stated in the Edenic Covenant. It is also an extension of the "seed" Promise of Redemption, as in the Adamic Covenant. Although it arises out of a great time of judgment, it establishes a great hope that God's purposes in creation will be fulfilled through redemption. The hope of the Noahic Covenant finds its fulfillment in the "New Covenant."

D. The Abrahamic (Abramic) Covenant

The Abrahamic Covenant is the Covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When looking at the time element, it was made after the Tower of Babel and the scattering of the descendants of Noah. It involves national Israel, the "Seed Believer," and all Believers of all nations. It is the most comprehensive of all Old Testament Covenants.

By study of the Covenants, we see a definite cycle emerging. These cycles are shown in man's probation in relation to the terms of the Covenant given, his failure to keep the terms, God's judgment on sin, and then God's redemptive Covenant given.

The Noahic Covenant and the new beginning of a cleansed earth brought a further period of probation. There were additional terms added to those of the previous Covenants, for God was continuing to unfold His plan to man.

We saw Noah officiating as the Patriarchal King-Priest of his house, and offering the prescribed Sacrifice to God. Noah built an altar and that was the place or Sanctuary where God promised to record His Name. All of these elements enter into the establishment of a Covenant. We see that God did it again.

Not long after the giving of the Noahic Covenant, man's failure began to evidence itself. Noah's drunkenness and nakedness, and Ham's disrespect of his father were failures in relation to God's reproductive purposes for man as stated in the Noahic Covenant. This conduct was not in line with God's high and holy purpose for the power of reproduction. Two (2) men or two (2) women living together and cohabiting will never bring forth life. These deviate lifestyles will only bring death, disease, and destruction. The failure, in the family of Noah, led to the failure of the entire human race at the Tower of Babel. The power of God had to be demonstrated there. Nimrod, from the line of Ham, led a rebellion against God's command to replenish the earth by drawing the people together

at Babel.

They resolved to build themselves a city, and a tower whose top would reach into heaven. They wanted to make themselves a name, lest they be scattered upon the face of the earth.

They took the delegated authority of human government, given in the Covenant of Noah, and turned it against God. We see human government trying to usurp the place of Divine Government. God foresaw that man's unified rebellion would soon deserve universal judgment. His mercy moved Him to step in and confuse the language, scattering them across the earth. God divided them into nations, thereby setting the stage for the Redemptive-Purpose among the nations (Ge.11:4-9; Ac.17:26-27).

While the families were developing into nations in the places, which God had chosen for them, His eye is on the next Covenant-Man. It would be through Abram that God would bless all the Nations of the earth. With Abram, an entirely new period of history may be said to begin. He was to be the ancestor of a new race, in whom the Divine Promises were to be preserved. It would be through him that the promises would finally be realized (Ge.12:1-3, Ga.3:8-14).

The Abrahamic Covenant enlarges upon the Covenants we have studied thus far. It also includes the details, which relate to the chosen nation of Israel. God not only made this Covenant with Abraham, but God extended the oath to Isaac. Later, it was confirmed to Jacob and then Israel after him (1Ch.16:13-17). Notice that it is to a thousand (1,000) generations. When God makes an Everlasting Covenant, He means Everlasting.

The Covenant was given to the three (3) Patriarchal Fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as well as to the nation of Israel. First, it was given to Abraham (Ge.13:14-18). Secondly, it was given to Isaac (Ge.26:1-5, 24). Next, it was given to Jacob (Ge.28:1-4, 13-16), and finally, passed to the entire nation of Israel (De.7:6-16).

1. God gave Abraham promise of a personal blessing.

God really cares about us. He deals with us for a personal basis and then corporately. God said to Abraham, "I will bless thee" (Ge.12:2). God had decided to bestow His favor on Abraham. This promise was confirmed later on to Isaac, Jacob, and Israel. God not only wants to bless us, He wants to bless our children and our grandchildren.

We begin to see the blessing fulfilled to Abraham, when after a battle to retrieve his nephew Lot from captivity; Melchizedek, King of Salem, gave the blessing of bread to him.

Abraham had the blessing of material prosperity (Ge.13:2; 24:1, 35). Prosperity is one of the benefits of the Abrahamic Covenant. God demonstrates His generosity to those who believe and trust Him.

God pronounced this personal blessing. He said, "I will bless thee," indicating God's desire to bestow His favor on Abraham. God also blessed Isaac and Jacob. Another blessing in this Covenant with Abraham was the blessing of physical well-being (Ro.4:17-21). We see a fulfillment of the Covenant blessings in the lives of Isaac, Jacob, and in Israel.

2. There is a promise of blessing coming to others.

We see God saying to Abraham, "...thou shall be a blessing." We have been saved and brought into the Covenant to bless others. We are to take on our Father's Nature and begin to bless others. God is a giver and He wants us to be givers also. God made it clear to Abraham that the purpose of being blessed was that he might be a blessing to others. This promise was also confirmed to Isaac, Jacob, and Israel.

This Covenantal blessing was fulfilled in Abraham's own household. Abraham blessed Lot in allowing him to choose the land he desired, and in rescuing him from Sodom's destruction. We see his nephew, Lot, in all his wanderings, had accompanied Abram. The time came, that a separation had to take place. Abram and his seed were to be kept quite distinct from all other races. God intended for the eye of faith, in future ages, to be fixed upon the Father of the faithful, from whom the promised Messiah was to come. Lot's chosen place of residence was waxing worse and worse. It was rapidly filling up a cup of iniquity. Yehovah appears to Abram at a certain point in time for specific purposes. His first purpose was to bring the message of the faith of a son directly to Sarai. Secondly, it was to tell Abram of the impending doom of the cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah. Abram is a Covenant-Partner with the Lord, and called "a friend of God." The Lord says " Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?" (Ge.18:17).

God allows Abraham to reason with Him. God has given all the land to Abraham and now He tells His Covenant-Partner what He intends to do to it.

Abraham does not challenge the necessity of dealing with evil. But he asks, "Will You slay the righteous with the wicked? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Ge.18:23-25). Abram's hope lay in the possibility that there were at least ten (10) righteous in the city of Sodom. He had started at fifty (50) in his intercession for Lot and his family. We see God being so gracious to spare Abraham's nephew, Lot, his wife, and two (2) daughters.

Under the Abrahamic Covenant, God healed Abimelech's household (Ge.20:17). This took place after the judgment of Sodom. Abraham left the district of Mamre, and traveled in a Southeasterly direction. He settled in the territory of Abimelech, King of Gerar, in the land of the Philistines. Again, as in Egypt, he passed his wife off as his sister. This deception brought about disaster in the household of Abimelech. However, God healed them because of the Covenant of blessing and the uprightness of Abimelech's heart. God even brought about the blessing of Convent-Relationship with the Gentile, King Abimelech (Ge.20:14-15). This is a shadow and type of the Gentiles, who would be invited into the Covenant.

3. Abraham and his heirs were to be blessed by others.

God said, "I will bless them that bless thee." As a confirmation of that blessing, God promised to show favor to Abraham. God confirmed this same promise to Isaac, Jacob and the nation of Israel. God is keeping this promise alive today.

4. The promise of the blessing was to accrue to all families of the earth.

The greatest blessing of all that God promised Abraham was "...in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Ge.12:3). Through Abraham, God would bestow His favor upon all the peoples of the earth. This promise involved the birth of the Seed, Messiah Jesus. This promise was fulfilled in the New Covenant, and was once again confirmed to Isaac (Ge.26:4), to Jacob (Ge.28:14), to Judah (Ge.49:8-12), to Israel (Nu.24:17), and finally to David (2Sa.chp.7; Ps.89:132).

We know that this blessing was/is being fulfilled through the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, Who is the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as well as of Judah, through David (Ga.3:8, 16, 29). What terrific promises God has made to the Patriarchs. God kept His Word, and now, "...the lines have fallen to us in such pleasant places." We, along with the Jewish people, are the recipients of the precious promises of the Covenant.

5. Abraham's name was to be made great.

He was to be given an honorable and well-known name. With the Covenant Blessings bestowed upon Abraham, by God, we can see even today how his name has been made so well known. As a confirmation of the Covenant blessing, we, as Gentiles, acknowledge the faith Abraham had in God as a precedent for our faith in the substitutionary work of Jesus.

God fulfilled this promise by blessing Abraham with a new name at the time of circumcision (Ge.17:5; Ac.7:8). God did the same for us in the New Covenant,

which is the fulfillment of what He promised to Abraham. At the time of Salvation, we became known as "Christians" or "the Christ like ones." Scripture tells us that one day we will be given a new name, which only God knows. What honor God has bestowed upon the Church. God also blessed Abraham with a good reputation (Ge.24:34-35).

God blessed Abraham by His association with him. The phrase God used again and again was "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" (Ge.24:12; Ge.26:24; Ge.28:13; Ex.3:15). There is blessing in being associated with God.

The blessing of many Nations that would revere Abraham's name is in the Promise of God. Three (3) major religious groups honor the name of Abraham. They are Islam, Judaism and Christianity. God has blessed all of these groups.

The Muslim people believe in Abraham and honor his name. They are blessed with a great nation of people. God hates sin, but loves people.

God has made the Hebrew people some of the best business people on earth. No body can sell and stay in business longer than the Jewish people. They are third (3rd) and fourth (4th) generation business people. They have been blessed, and will continue to be blessed.

In the Abrahamic Covenant we see Abraham as the ancestor of a new race, in whom the Divine promises are to be preserved and through whom they would be realized. This Covenant enlarges to the chosen nation of Israel. Each of the previous Covenants is culminated with the Abrahamic Covenant, as it progressed forward.

The blessing, under a great name given to Abraham, would be the name of faith as "the Father of all who believe." God gave Abraham a great honor in bestowing this title upon him. Think of the magnitude of this title. In Paul's writings, it is as if God said, "I give you Jesus, the Messiah, the Savior of the whole world" (Ro.4:8-16). We are to simply receive Him, follow His Commandments, and we are then automatically in the Covenant.

6. There is blessing to all of the multiplied seed.

Through the years, this promise was given to Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Joseph. God promised these things originally to Abraham.

a. You will be a great nation, with seed as the dust of earth. Your seed will be as the stars of the heavens, a father of many nations

and your seed as innumerable as the stars and sand (Ge.22:17-18).

- b. God said Sarah would be a mother of nations (Ge.17:15-16).
- c. God spoke the Word over her, telling her that she would be the mother of thousands of millions.
- d. God confirmed His Word of multiplicity to Isaac. He repeated the same Words that were spoken to Abraham. Isaac's seed was to be as the stars of the heavens.
- e. Jacob's seed was to be as the dust of the earth, innumerable as the sand of the sea, and a nation and company of nations was to come from him (Ge.35:11-12).
- f. To Joseph, God spoke fruitfulness and a multitude of people (Ge.chp.48)
- g. To Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, it was said that they would grow together as "...a multitude in the earth," and Ephraim would become A...a multitude of nations."
- h. The word was spoken to Israel by God concerning the nation and multiplied seed.
 - 1) Israel was to be a holy nation (Ex.19:5-6).
 - 2) Israel was to be multiplied because of the Covenant (Le.2-6:9).
 - 3) Israel was to multiply and be blessed above all people in relation to the fruit of the womb (De.7:12-15).
 - 4) Israel was to be as numberless as the sands of the sea-shore (Hos.1:10).

7. There are several terms applied to the Covenant.

These terms include oath, book, blood, mediator, sanctuary, seal, and rite of the Covenant.

8. There are differences of opinion concerning fulfillment of the national Covenant.

Many Bible Scholars have various theories concerning the fulfillment of the national promises of the Abrahamic Covenant.

- a. Some say that it is fulfilled through Hagar and Ishmael.

There thought is that all these promises of multiplied seed, a nation, nations, and a multitude of nations find fulfillment by the nations which come from Abraham through Hagar and Ishmael, which is predominantly the Arab nations (Ge.21:13-18). However, God did not swear or use an oath when He promised Hagar to make Ishmael a great nation.

- b. Some say it is fulfilled through the line of Abraham and Isaac.

These are the nations, which come from Abraham through Sarah and Isaac. We understand during Bible times and history about the United Kingdom and Nation of Israel. After the division of the Great Nation, there were two (2) nations, namely, the House of Israel and the House of Judah (Ezk.37:15-28).

- c. Some believe it is also referring to Abraham's sons through Keturah and the concubines.

In the promise of multiplied seed, we find the nations, which come from Abraham's sons through Keturah and his concubines after Sarah's death. These are the other nations, including some Arab nations, which trace themselves back to Abraham (Ge.25:1, 5, 6).

- d. Some see it fulfilled in the Holy Nation.

We can find also in the Promise, the Holy nation, the Church, made up of Believers of every kindred, tongue, tribe, and nation. (1Pe.2:5-10, Ep.2:12-21).

- e. Lastly, there is the Church in this promise.

In the promise of multiplied seed, some see the Church as the true and spiritual Israel of God (Ga.6:15-16; Ro.9:4-8). The believing Gentiles and the believing Israelites are grafted into the True Vine, the Olive Tree. All become one in the Commonwealth of Israel (Ro.11:17-21). The Olive Tree is Israel and the Wild Olive tree is the Gentiles. In Christ, there is neither

Jew nor Gentile, but all Believers are the seed of Abraham. Together they make up the one (1) new man and the Body of Christ (Ga.3:28-29).

In the Covenant that God made with Abraham, the land was also blessed. Since Abraham was to be the father of many nations, there would have to be lands for the "seed" to dwell in. God set the bounds of the other nations according to the number of children of Israel (De.32:8-9; Ac.17:26).

God told Abraham He would show him a land and He would give him and his seed the land forever. God said the land would extend "from the Euphrates River to Egypt." Also, all the land of Canaan would be an everlasting possession (Ge.17:7-8). God confirmed the promise to Isaac, and to Jacob. God promised that his seed would spread abroad to the north, south, east and west. Also, land was promised for the nation and company of nations. Then, Canaan land was given to Jacob and his seed for an everlasting possession (Ge.48:3-4). Today, the land struggles; it desires to come into perfect harmony with God's Covenants, and the fulfillment of God's Word.

9. There has been fulfillment of the land promises.

These land promises find their fulfillment in Israel conquering Canaan and other lands for the seed of Abraham. God gave Israel the land and the ability to possess it. Because of disobedience this Covenantal Promise has not been totally fulfilled as yet.

Ishmael, whose name means, "the Lord heareth," later dwelt in that wide district between Palestine and Mt. Horeb called, "the wilderness of Paran." This area today is under the undisputed dominion of his descendants, the Bedouin Arabs.

God promised Abraham that he would possess the gate of his enemies" (Ge.22:17). This was fulfilled in Joshua's conquest of Canaan's thirty-three (33) kings. Judah's leadership brought about further victory in the land. After the death of Joshua, the Israelites asked the Lord, "who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?: And the Lord said, "Judah shall go up: Behold I have delivered the land to his hand" (Jos.1:1).

Peter received a revelation of who Christ is. On this revelation knowledge, Christ said that He would build His Church. It is those know Christ, the anointed one that will "possess the gates of his enemy." The Church has the authority to use the Keys of the Kingdom. Jesus gave these keys to us and it is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. Binding and loosing is the right of the Believer, as well as the responsibility. God promised that Abraham would have descendants that would reign as Kings (Ge.17:6). God confirmed this to Sarah, to Jacob, and to

Judah (Ge.49:8-12). Kings would come out of Israel. The fulfillment of this blessing of Kings was found in the natural seed of Abraham and in the chosen seed of Abraham, and in Jesus Christ, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Then to us, the spiritual seed of Abraham, the Church is the promise fulfilled (Re.5:9-10).

10. There was a fulfillment of the Divine Relationship with Abraham.

The last blessing of this tremendous Covenant was the blessing of the Divine Relationship. God promised Abraham that He would be a God to him and to his seed after him (Ge.17:7-8). This blessing was confirmed to Moses, and the Prophets.

These are the promises of blessing under the Abrahamic Covenant. These promises were not only made to Abraham and his natural seed, but they are confirmed and given to us in the New Covenant. We too are heirs of the promise.

Because the Abrahamic Covenant is clearly a Covenant of Blessing, the only curse attached it is actually a blessing for Abraham and his seed, stated as, "I will curse him that curseth thee." We bring a curse on ourselves when we talk ugly about the people of God. Even Balaam in Scripture recognized that he could not curse the people God had blessed (Nu.chps.22-23). This was the only promise of cursing.

It is believed, by many Bible Scholars that because Abraham was willing to surrender his only son, in obedience to God, and that God would in turn and in time surrender His only Son. This test would be proof of His fidelity to His Blood Covenant of Friendship, with Abraham and Abraham's seed, forever. Because of Abraham's obedience, God could now continue to move forward with His plan to bring the Messiah into the earth. He chooses to move within the confines of His own laws that govern the universe.

11. There were terms to this Covenant.

Both Old and New Testaments clearly show that Abraham's response to the promises of the Covenant was one of faith. For this reason he has been called the "father of all who believe" (Ge.15:6; Ga.3:6; He.11:8-13, 17-19). Abraham's faith was tested and perfected as he progressed from faith to faith. Abraham's faith was proven by his unquestioning obedience. His obedience was sustained by his attitude of faith.

12. There was an oath given with this Covenant.

This Abrahamic Covenant was one of the few Covenants having an oath attached to it. The first statement of the oath is given in connection with the typical death and resurrection of Isaac, the only begotten son of the Old Testament (Ge.22:16). All over the world, men who are in the Covenant of Blood-Friendship are ready to give their lives for each other. God put Abraham to the test. Abraham passed the test, proving himself a worthy Covenantal-Friend.

When God made His promise to Abraham, He confirmed it by an oath, that by two unchangeable and immutable things, His promise and His oath; God bound Himself irrevocably to its fulfillment. So this Covenant can never be annulled (He.6:13-18; Ga.3:15-17).

There is no specific mention of the writing of a book in connection with this Covenant; however God inspired Moses to write it down in first five (5) books of the Bible.

13. The Blood of the Covenant foreshadowed Jesus.

The Blood of the Covenant was a type and shadow of the Sacrifice of Jesus in the New Testament. This was revealed when Melchidezek, King of Salem, appeared to Abraham, blessed him, and ministered to him, with the communion of bread and wine, which was a symbol of the body and blood of Jesus.

It was also shown in the animal sacrifices (Ge.15:7-17).

When God was gave the Covenant-Promise to Abraham, He commanded him to sacrifice five (5) specific offerings. These were a heifer, a she-goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon. These animals were the same kind of animals that were instituted under the Mosaic Covenant. These sacrifices were to be divided into pieces laid one against the other. This was the customary way when making a covenant. The two (2) parties always passed between the parts of the sacrifice to show that there was no longer a division. The pieces, which were divided, were to be considered as one between them. All day, Abram sat watching alone, driving the birds of prey away from the Sacrifice. When God makes a promise to us, He always shows up right on time to fulfill His promise. When the Covenant was to be initiated, God put Abraham to sleep so that he could not be a participant in the Covenant. He would only be a recipient of the covenant, to which he brought nothing in the way of obligations.

In the East, it was the custom to light a torch when making a Covenant. They were used in celebration of a marriage, to symbolize the fire of destruction that

would appear if the agreement should be broken. God used symbols that Abram could understand, for God was revealing His Covenant.

God used the slaughtering of an animal when concluding the Covenant, that was the also the custom of the Chaldeans. God, in the most solemn manner, confirmed His oath to Abraham, the Chaldean. God uses means that are familiar to us to get our attention. God reveals Himself and also His Covenant.

Fowls in Scripture symbolically speak of the devil coming to take away the Word, to void Abraham's belief in the promise. Abraham resisted and beat off the scavengers. A deep sleep and a horror of great darkness fell upon Abraham. It was then the Covenant was made. It was not as usual, by both parties passing between the divided sacrifices, but by Jehovah, alone, doing so. The Covenant was that of grace, in which one party alone, God, undertook all the obligations, while Abraham received all the benefits. God Himself, as a burning lamp and smoking furnace, passed between the pieces of the sacrificial body and blood and thus ratified the Promise of the Covenant.

The sacrifice of Isaac, in Genesis chapter twenty-two (22), was God asking Abraham to offer a human sacrifice. He was told to offer his son, Isaac, as a burnt offering after three days journey to Mt. Moriah. Abraham rose up instantly to respond of the call of his Divine Friend. The surrender of an only son, in the mind of a Middle Easterner, was not seen as it is often deemed in the Western mind. It is not a father's selfish yielding of a lesser substitute for himself. It was the giving of the one thing, which he had power to surrender, which was more precious to him than himself. We need to understand that a Middle Easterner father prizes an only son's life far more than he prizes his own. For a Middle Easterner to die without a son was a terrible event. His life is a failure. His future is blank. Once there is a son to take his place, a Middle Easterner is, in a sense, ready to die. We must remember that Abraham's life had been one of a pilgrimage nature. His life had an earthly hope, centered in Isaac, the son of his old age. For Abraham to surrender his own life, now that the Son of Promise had been born, would have been a minor matter. To give up Isaac and become childless again, a hopeless old man, was a very different matter. Only faith, which would neither question nor reason could meet an issue like that (Ge.22:3-14).

In the above Scripture we see that God led Abraham to do typically with his begotten son, Isaac, on Mt. Moriah, what God Himself, as the Father, would do actually with His only Son, Jesus, on Mt. Calvary (He.11:17-19; Ja.2:20-23).

14. There were two (2) mediators in this Covenant.

We can see two (2) acting Mediators of the Covenant in the Priesthood of Melchizedek, and in the Priesthood of Abraham.

a. Abraham was met by Melchizedek

When Abraham was returning from slaughter of the Kings, Melchizedek, Priest of the "most High God", met him. He was not only a Priest, but also a King. He blessed Abraham, ministered to him bread and wine, and received tithes from him. We also know that Christ's Priesthood is after the order of Melchizedek.

b. Abram participated in the Patriarchal Priesthood.

We can see the Patriarchal Priesthood, which began with Adam, continued to the Levitical Priesthood. Abram built an altar to God and offered sacrifices in obedience to God, following the order that God had set forth in Eden. The New Testament calls us, in reference to the Priesthood of Abram, Kings and Priests (Re.1:5-6; 15:10).

15. The Sanctuary of the Covenant was the altar.

The altar was the place where the Priest offered his sacrifice. We can see this constituted in the sanctuary of the patriarchs. In Scripture, we find God meeting with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at the altar and blessing them as they offered their sacrifices. We know that later on, the altar was incorporated into the Mosaic Covenant. It was the place where many sacrifices were offered up in the Tabernacle of Moses (Ex.27:1-9). The sacrifices of today's King-Priests are plainly shown also (1Pe.2:5; He.13:15).

16. The Seal of the Covenant was in circumcision.

This Abrahamic Covenant we are studying is called the "Covenant of Circumcision," because its seal was the Rite of Circumcision (Ac.7:8). The seal, token or sign, of the Covenants we have studied thus far were the Tree of Life in Eden, the coats of skin in the Adamic, and the rainbow in the Noahic.

The administering of the Rite of Circumcision dealt with three (3) things.

a. The first area dealt with was the cutting off of the flesh.

Abraham would consummate this Blood-Covenant of Friendship with God,

by shedding His own blood, through circumcision. God was saying that by receiving Abraham's personal blood at the very source of paternity, Abraham was pledging himself to God. He was also pledging all those who would come after him in the line of natural descent.

b. The Covenant was consummated with blood.

And God said, "...and My Covenant shall be in your flesh for an Everlasting Covenant" (Ge.17:13b). Abraham was ninety-nine (99) years old when he was circumcised along with all the males in his household, whether kindred or slave. On the very day God spoke it, Abraham was circumcised and from that day forward, he bore in his flesh the evidence that he had entered into the Blood Covenant of Friendship with the Lord. Abraham is designated as "the friend of God. Whether he be Jewish or Moslem, when the child is circumcised, it commonly said of him that he has "entered into the Covenant of Abraham."

We should not take lightly the Covenant of Circumcision. It was so important to God, for He was again making a new beginning for the people in his choice of Abraham. As the Father of a chosen and peculiar people in the world, He used the Rite of the Cutting away of the Flesh as the sign of the Covenant. It was symbolic of the Seed that would come from Abraham. God is circumcising the heart of His people today, and He is replacing it with a fleshly, pliable heart that He can work with, by the Holy Spirit.

c. There is a specific day for the circumcision to take place.

The last thing to be acknowledged in the Rite of Circumcision is the timing of the circumcision of the child. In Genesis and Luke we see that Isaac and Jesus were both circumcised on the eighth (8th) day, according to the Law (Ge.21:3-4; Lk.2:21).

17. Circumcision was required of all of Abraham's seed.

Only by obedience to the Command of Circumcision could any of Abraham's seed be in Covenantal-Relationship with God and be entitled to the Promises, Privileges, and Blessings of the Covenant. There was a time when only the Jews practiced circumcision. This is how Hitler and the Nazi army could determine if the person was of the Jewish origin. If an Israelite rejected or neglected this Rite, he would be breaking the Covenant and cutting himself off from its benefits. Circumcision was the outward evidence of their inward commitment to the Terms of the Covenant.

We know today that the New Testament Covenant focuses on an internal application. New Covenant circumcision is not of the flesh, but of the heart, not of letter of the law, but of the Spirit, not made by hands externally, but made by the Spirit inwardly (Ro.2:23-29).

Abraham believed God, both when he was uncircumcised and circumcised. Thus, he became the father of all who believe. This confirms that God's desire for the new creature or new creation is that he be circumcised in heart (Ep.2:11-13).

In summarizing, the general promise of the Adamic Covenant concerning the Messiah, the seed of the woman (Ge.3:15), which was narrowed down to the line of Shem under the Covenant with Noah was narrowed further to Abraham, who would become the father of the chosen nation Israel, through whom, the Messiah would come. This Covenant is most explicit. It includes, in itself, all previous and subsequent covenants. It's ultimate fulfillment is in the New Covenant through Christ and His Church (Ga.3:6-29).

E. The Mosaic Covenant

1. The Suzerainty Treaty was of Hittite origin.

Ever since George Mendenhall conducted his studies in 1954, serious Bible Scholars have been interpreting the Covenant with Moses by comparing it to Hittite Suzerainty Treaties from the thirteenth (13th) and fourteenth (14th) centuries B.C.

The ancient Hittite Suzerainty Treaties were a form of Covenant. However, Treaties such as these were not party treaties, treaties made between equals. They were called Suzerainty Treaties, treaties between a Great King and a vassal nation. In these, the vassal nation entered into an oath of loyalty and trust to the King out of gratitude for benefits already received.

The Covenant of Moses expresses the same theme. God, Himself, is the Great King. His "vassal" nation is Israel. He entered into a Covenant/Treaty with them, not as an equal, but as one to whom Israel owed their entire existence. God expected loyalty and obedience because He deserved it. He graciously delivered them from bondage and made them into a free nation. The expected loyalty was based on all He had done for them.

The outline below shows how the Book of Deuteronomy follows the well-defined format of a Suzerainty Treaty, making evident the special Covenantal-Pattern of the Five Books of Moses.

a. Preamble

This contains introductory remarks concerning the nature of the Great King. In the case of Deuteronomy, the preamble identifies Israel's God (De.1:1-5).

b. Historical Prologue

This is a recounting of what the Great King, God, has done for His vassal people, Israel (De.1:6-4:49).

c. Stipulations

The Covenant expectations and the Covenant-Lifestyle, based on the graciousness of the Great King are listed here. In Deuteronomy, this is the bulk of the Book, commonly known to laymen as "Law" but, more accurately, the stipulations given by God, the Great King, to Israel for the maintenance of this Covenant (De.5:1-26:19).

d. Blessings and Curses

Here are the consequences of unfaithfulness to the Covenant and the Great King. Biblically, these are the results of Israel's unfaithfulness to God and to the Covenant He made with them (De.chps.2-30).

e. Witnesses

Usually the Great King would call upon an appropriate witness to sign the Treaty. In the case of God and Israel, God calls upon heaven and earth to witness this Covenant (De.30:19).

f. Succession

This section provides for the continuation of the Covenant in the event of the King's death. God designates Joshua to succeed Moses when he dies (De.31:1-8).

g. Deposit/Reading

There were usually two (2) copies of the Treaty, one (1) for each of the parties. The copies were usually kept in the temple of their gods. Likewise, God made two (2) copies of the Covenant in summary form, the Ten

Commandments. This was accordingly stored in the Holy of Holies (De.31:9-13).

h. Unique Features

Several unique features of the Suzerainty Treaty may shed more light on the Mosaic Covenant. First, the treaty made a distinction between those who were parties to the treaty and those who were not. The Covenant alone distinguished between people dealt with by force and those according to normal peaceful procedures. Those under the Covenant enjoyed peaceful interaction with the Sovereign. This thought takes us back to a point about the relationship between the Covenants with Abraham and Moses. Specifically, it reminds us that the Covenant with Moses was designed to help the recipients enjoy the blessings promised under the Abrahamic Covenant.

The historical pattern of the Middle Eastern Treaty shows that it was not obedience to the Law, which resulted in the Covenant and a relationship with God. The Covenant was made and a relationship was formalized, again at God's initiative. They, the stipulations, provided guidelines in maintaining the relationship and indicated what was expected of one (1) in Covenant-Relationship with God.

To some, this may smack of "legalism" - man's attempts by his own efforts to earn or merit his righteousness. Be assured that this is not the case. Legalism has absolutely no place in a Covenantal-Relationship with God. Remember that all must enter into such a relationship in the same way that Abraham did. He was chosen by the grace of God, apart from any merit on his part. In fact, God did not even choose him because of any foreseen faith that Abraham might exercise in the future; He made a Sovereign choice based on His own criteria, not on anything within man. After God chose Abraham, He enabled him simply to trust or believe in Him. When Abraham did so, the promises were his.

When an individual enters the Kingdom of God by faith, he also enters the Abrahamic Covenant. The Scriptures are clear in their teachings on this truth. This is the only relationship necessary for Salvation. However, in order to live out that Salvation, that new life imparted, in a manner consistent with the nature of that life, the individual lives according to God's Covenant with His redeemed. This, then, is where the Mosaic Covenant comes in. "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient (Ex.24:7). The Covenant with Moses was not one through which a person could begin a relationship with God. It was, rather, a Cove-

nant wherein the believer enjoyed his relationship with God through his obedience.

Another characteristic of the Suzerainty Treaties is that the Treaty/Covenant implies the existence of a community. God did not make the Mosaic Covenant with a single individual, but with a nation. This nation was bound together with a common purpose and will. Moreover, the purpose and will of this nation was to be in complete harmony with God's purpose and will. The Covenant was meant to help facilitate that end. In order for it to function properly, the entire community of God's people had to be united in living that Covenant.

The Mosaic Covenant, then, was designed as a Covenant both between the individual members of that community, and between those members and God, the other party in the Covenant. Remember that God's plan for this Holy Community was that it would be a light to the nations around them. This is abundantly clear in Deuteronomy (De.4:5-8). Why else would this passage appear in the Mosaic Covenant if it were not God's intention for Israel to become that light? According to God's plan, once the nations recognized the light that they would see in Israel and chose to embrace Israel's God, they would want to become part of that Covenant Community. They were not supposed to start their own Covenant Community. They were merely added to the divinely appointed one, Israel.

The third (3rd) characteristic of the Suzerainty Treaty is love. In the secular treaties, the graciousness of the Great King initiated the Covenant. He agreed to enter into such a Covenant with a people who were in many ways subservient to him. Likewise, in the Mosaic Covenant, it was the graciousness of God that caused Him to institute all of His Covenants.

This is a crucial aspect of a Covenant-Relationship, which, few have grasped in regard to the Mosaic Covenant. As Deuteronomy 7:7C11 and 10:15 make abundantly clear; love is what motivated God to make the Covenant at Sinai. In turn, He desired love in return from His people, whom He, by virtue of regeneration, made capable of both receiving and returning such love. The stipulations, laws, and decrees that He taught them were not only descriptions of their identity as the people of God, but also the genuine expressions of the love of their new creation hearts for their Redeemer.

In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, God said, "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." Who? It is you, the redeemed people, the regenerated ones, who in reality love the

Lord your God, with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.

Jesus spoke about such love in John "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (Jn.14:15). He was directing His teaching to the portion of the remnant of Israel whom He was training to reach their fellow Israelites, and the nations, for Him. This was a key and an insight, which Paul would later expound upon. The keeping of the Commandments was a demonstration of the new creation person's love for Jesus.

God is not setting up a standard, per se, to which we must attain in order to prove our love for Him. Rather, the words Jesus speaks to us are a mirror in which He shows us our new creation selves. Remembering this will help set us free from our old pattern of reading the Word of God as a "performance-based acceptance" document. The natural expression of that love is to live out our new life in Him through the stipulations, laws, and decrees of the Mosaic Covenant.

Therefore, looking at Jesus' words through our understanding of who we are as new creations, He was saying, in effect, "If you are one who loves Me, then you are one who is regenerated. And in that regeneration, you are a new creature who keeps My commandments." An unregenerate human being cannot love God. One who is regenerate is, by virtue of his or her new nature, one who does love God. We are to know ourselves as ones who do love God.

Remember that Jesus did not make this statement in a vacuum. When His followers heard the word "commandment," they were naturally thinking of the Mosaic Covenant, as well as Jesus' comments on it. Thus, Jesus' statement was also calling forth Covenant faithfulness from them based on the Covenantal principle of love. To love God means to be covenantally faithful to Him. This fidelity is always expressed by living God's teaching in the Mosaic Covenant.

The same principle, therefore, also applies to non-Jewish believers, in that they are also new creations in Messiah. Jesus was not attempting to call forth some kind of nebulous, gushy feeling from His people; He was calling forth Covenant faithfulness. Because He always relates to His people through a Covenant, this applies to everyone whom He calls His own.

So far, there are at least two (2) deductions that we can make. First, we may say that the Mosaic Covenant is not a law code, but rather a Covenant. When we compare it to the ancient law codes, such as that of Hammurabi, and that found at Ur Nammu, we can easily see that although

some of the stipulations may be similar, the explicit Covenant formulation of Exodus, chapters nineteen (19) through twenty four (24), and Deuteronomy, stands as strong direct evidence that this is a treaty or Covenant and not a code of law. Second, the concept of Covenant shows that all of the Mosaic Covenant material must be understood as the grace of God.

Let us examine one (1) last characteristic of the Ancient Middle Eastern Suzerainty Treaties: the provision for renewal. When the Covenant makers died and new generations took over, Covenants were often renewed. When Covenants were renewed, new documents were prepared which brought up to date the stipulations of the earlier documents. We see evidence of this in the Mosaic Covenant. For example, when Moses and his generation died, there was a Covenant renewal, such as the one recorded in Joshua (Jos.24:24ff). When a Covenant was renewed, the stipulations were sometimes altered to fit the needs of the generation that was renewing the Covenant. However, one Covenant does not set aside another; one does not invalidate another, so as to nullify its stipulations. Rather, it renews, expands, adapts, and updates. This is the point that Paul makes in Galatians (Ga.3:17ff).

2. In Scripture, the central paradigm of the saving relationship with God is the Covenant motif.

In both its cultic and interpersonal elements, the Covenant metaphor serves as the basic hermeneutical reference point for the Doctrine of Salvation in the Biblical narrative.

It is clear that the Biblical canon presents God consistently as a personal Being Who interacts personally with those beings created in His image. In the Old Testament, He is seen initiating a series of events leading to the Salvation of His chosen people. Likewise, in the New Testament, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself (2Co.5:19), and thus in Christ, God reveals His personhood in historical and experiential ways. While Salvation history presents a rich and diverse description of God's saving activity, the primary and continual theme of the Covenant-Relationship underlies the Biblical treatment of atonement.

At Sinai, the Covenant metaphor is used to describe a divinely initiated agreement, which is ratified by Israel's response (Ex.24:4-8), and conditioned upon Israel's obedience. The Old Testament sacrificial system, which was used in part to accomplish atonement between God and Israel, found its expression in the context of the Covenant. Indeed, as a result of the Covenant, the sacrificial system was established by Divine initiative, in order that a humanity, which was

estranged from God, might have a way of removing the barrier caused by sin. Although Israel tended to understand the sacrificial system as an action performed for its own sake, the basic character of Old Testament religion was interpersonal. Israel was united with God only in the context of interpersonal, Covenantal faith, not by blind trust in the Promises of the Covenant or by faithful performance of the prescribed legal or sacrificial ritual.

With the Mosaic Covenant, God was to continue His assistance and faithfulness, while Israel's behavior was subjected to specific standards. God thus forbade that which abolished the relationship created in the Covenant with His elect nation. Every breach of this Law was a personal offense against this God whose concern and love had been so explicitly expressed. These breaches in the Covenant were solved through the daily sacrificial system as a daily Covenantal renewal. Communion with God was mediated through the Rite of Sacrifice. In this context of sacral communion, the rite of Blood-Covenanting brought God and Israel back together in a mutual union. This did not reflect the pagan concept of magical power residing in the sacrificial victim. Instead, the Covenant sacrifice resulted in a personal and moral commitment to God and a personal union with Him, which gave Israel life and strength. While pagan rituals had to be continually repeated in order to maintain the cycle of nature or appease their gods, in the Israelite Covenant, the Sacrifice was not repeated in order to maintain a magical nature cycle, but to commemorate the establishment and renewal of the Covenantal-Relationship.

The need for atonement is directly tied to the nature of the Covenant. Because of disobedience to the Covenant stipulations both Israel and the Church, indeed all humanity (Ro. 1:18-3:20), finds itself in desperate need for a means of restoration to God's fellowship. As the basis of reconciliation, the atonement provides the means for this to occur. Furthermore, since all sin is essentially relational, the overcoming of the curse of sin must involve personal and relational means. The sacrifice is an endeavor to remove the barrier, created by sin, between God and man.

Thus, the relationship between God and Israel took the shape of an interpersonal Covenant-Relationship, which became the basis of Israel's history.

These are many questions that arose in the early Church and today concerning the purpose of this Covenant and its relationship to the other Covenants. This is illustrated in Acts chapter fifteen (15) and in the Epistles to the Galatians and Hebrew Believers. Read the fifteenth (15th) chapter of Acts to see how the sect of the Edomites rose up and suggested circumcision for the Gentile converts. They also implied that they should obey the Law of Moses. Peter asks them why they wanted to put a yoke on the new Believers, when they, the Jews, were not able to

endure it.

As we begin to look at this Covenant, we will answer some questions that linger in the minds of some Theologians.

a. With who was the Covenant made?

The Mosaic Covenant was made with the chosen nation of Israel (Ex.24:4-8; Ro.9:4-5). However, we need to clearly and fully understand this Covenant and its teachings, shadows and types, for in them we will more fully and clearly see Messiah (Co.2:16-17; Ro.10:4).

1) The Mosaic Covenant

This Covenant was created to establish a Theocratic Society. It was a model for the world to come and for those who would rule in Messiah.

The Mosaic Covenant was made strictly and only with the chosen nation of Israel (Ex.24:4-8; Ro.9:4-5).

b. When was the Covenant given?

This Covenant was made four hundred thirty (430) years after the Abrahamic Covenant. It was given to Israel in the wilderness, after God delivered them from Egypt. Before this time this Covenant was not in effect, but it was preceded by other Covenants of grace and faith. Under this Covenant, God would still show His mercy and grace. The Law of God was coming on the scene. It is also important to understand each Covenant that God made with man. We need to know that we are not living under the Covenant made with Moses and Israel. Those who are living under the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant, which culminated or was fulfilled in the New Covenant, are happy people (Ga.3:13, 14-17, 18).

c. Why was the Covenant made?

There are two (2) main reasons why God gave the Mosaic Covenant.

1) The presentation of a righteous seed is one reason.

If God had not established the Mosaic Covenant, He would most likely have destroyed the earth once and for all. By the establishment of this Covenant, God defined sin and what is displeasing to

Him. No upstanding Christian could willingly defy any command given by God in the Mosaic Covenant and feel justified before God.

These were the chosen ones, the peculiar treasure to the Lord, His Holy nation, brought into the Abrahamic Covenant. They were God's model people that He would be King over. But God always has a man in the wings, a deliverer, and Moses was the man, God would use Moses to turn Israel back to their Covenant-Partner-Relationship. The deliverance from Egypt was based on the Covenant of Grace and Faith made with their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Our deliverance came to us through the Promise of the same Covenant. Through the Seed, the Heir of Abraham, would all nations be blessed.

The Seed has come. The Heir came and brought the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant to us, who are living in this age. God remembered His Covenant and showed Himself to be a Covenant-Keeping God, by revealing His Covenant Name to Moses (Ex.3:13-14).

Concerning the life of Moses, God sought to kill Moses for failing to maintain the Abrahamic Covenant seal of circumcision in his own family (Ex.4:24-26). We can conclude that God was very serious about His man keeping the Covenant through Circumcision.

Think about the strength of the Blood Covenant. Remember how the Covenant extended to the following generations and failure to keep the Covenant resulted in death and curses. Moses could not deliver on the basis of the Covenant, when his own family was not keeping it.

The renewal of the Abrahamic Covenant placed the nation of Israel on probation as they left Egypt. God took them from Egypt, to the wilderness, to prove them and to know what was in their hearts. Between Egypt and Sinai God gave them four (4) tests of faith and obedience. In each case, they failed. Those tests were at the Red Sea, the waters of Marah that were bitter, at the Wilderness of Tzin (sin), and at Rephidim.

The generation that came out of Egypt proved to be a perverse, crooked, and deceitful generation. They provoked God; even though they promised God to obey all His Commandments. God said of them, "they had no heart to obey." They needed a new

heart.

Even after receiving the Mosaic Covenant the generation rejected the covenant and wandered in the wilderness for forty (40) years until they all died. All of this is evidence of the failure of the nation on probation. This generation fell because of disbelief, and murmuring and complaining. Though they agreed to obey the Law of God, they walked in rebellion to their Covenantal-Agreement.

2) The criteria for establishing a Right-Relationship with God is the second (2nd) reason.

All were/are guilty before God (Ro.3:19-20). Through the Mosaic Covenant, God brought the whole world into the "courtroom" of His judgment. He revealed His Divine Attributes of Righteousness, Truth, Peace and Mercy (Ro.3:21-23). God's Just Judgment of sin was actually preparing the way for the New Covenant.

3. There are additional purposes of God in giving the Mosaic Covenant.
 - a. He wanted to set forth His Divine standard of righteousness (Ro.7:12).
 - b. He wanted to give a clear external definition of sin because of the inadequacy of man's conscience.

God wrote the Commandments in an extraordinary way and presented them for all of Israel to see. Remember, if there is no standard for man to pattern his life after, his conscience cannot be his guide. This is why our world is in the shape that it is in, not applying the pattern set or no pattern set in the schools, businesses, factories, and God forbid, that it fails to be set in the Church (Ro.3:20).

c. He wanted to show the exceeding deceitfulness of sin.

This was in addition to the preservation of the nation of Israel and the chosen Messianic Seed, keeping out total corruption by other nations. This is why God commanded all the enemies of Israel to be totally destroyed.

d. He wanted to shut up the nation to the coming of the Messiah.

We also see in giving this Covenant, God shut Israel up as a nation. Israel was under a "Schoolmaster," and thus, it prepared them for the coming of

Christ (Ga.3:22-24).

e. God wanted to provide an interim atonement for sin.

The Covenant established a more elaborate atonement for sin. It gave a clear definition of sin. The Sacrificial System was instituted as a means of resolving specific sin issues.

God is super-abundant in His grace and mercy. He provided in the Ceremonial Law a temporary atonement, a covering for sin, by which Israel could approach God in worship and the basis upon which He could tabernacle in their midst. Hebrews tells us all about the Tabernacle and the Ceremonies involved therein (He.9-10).

f. God wanted to foreshadow and typify the truths of grace and redemption.

God used this Covenant with the Law to foreshadow and typify all the truths of grace and redemption in the Ceremonial Law, and to typify or to show forth Christ and His coming into the earth. Everything in the Tabernacle, the Offerings, the Feasts, the Priesthood, the Sacrifices, and all the work done by human hands under the law, shouted loud and clear that there was One Who was coming.

g. He wanted to show that the Law could not give life.

There are perhaps many more reasons for the Divine Purpose in the giving of the Mosaic Covenant, but the last reason we will make mention of is that God desired to show that the Mosaic Covenant could not give eternal life to sinful man. He wanted to make it clear that only the New Covenant "in Christ" could bring that life. Man can only be justified or made righteous through faith.

The good news for us is that the Mosaic Covenant was not given to us, but to Israel. It is a schoolmaster for us, but was never intended to instruct us to live under legalism.

5. There is relationship between the Mosaic and Abrahamic Covenants.

God's Covenant with Moses can be studied in two (2) complementary ways: as compared to God's Covenant with Abraham, and on its own as an independent Suzerainty Treaty. The Mosaic Covenant, while technically containing more than the five (5) Books of Moses, is nevertheless generally referred to as "the Torah."

If the Covenant with Abraham is considered the Covenant of Promise, the Covenant with Moses may be considered the Covenant of Dwelling in the Promise. Participation in the Covenant of Moses did not secure the promises given as a grace gift by God to Abraham and his descendants. Rather, the Mosaic Covenant was given to protect the people of the promise, to aid them in the pursuit of their destiny, and to provide the legal standards so necessary, to a Theocratic society. Not only did the "Torah" define and amplify the promise, but also it served to protect and secure the promise as well. The Torah was not the promise. It is a Covenant distinct from the Promise Covenant given to Abraham. It establishes the conditions under which the terms of the promise could be maintained.

Paul uses a similar comparison between the Mosaic Covenant and the Abrahamic Covenant in Galatians (Ga.3:10-23). In verse eleven (11), he says that clearly, "...no one is justified by the Torah before God." The text goes on to tell us why: "...the righteous man shall live by faith." In other words, the righteous will come into life by faith and this was the precedent set by the Abrahamic Covenant.

In the midst of this passage, verse twelve (12), we find the rather enigmatic statement that, to translate literally from the Greek, "The Law is not of faith." Often misunderstood, this phrase is critical to understanding the relationship between the two (2) Covenants. If we translate the Greek word "*nomos*" as "Torah," meaning "instruction, direction" or "teaching," instead of "law," we realize that Paul is simply comparing the two (2) Covenants, to make the point that the Torah could never impart life to sinful man. The Mosaic Covenant is life for those already alive in God. One can only become alive in God through faith. Therefore, obedience would be the expected response in the Covenant of Moses.

Paul concludes in verse twenty-one (21): "Is the Torah then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be!" Here Paul places the final touches on his masterful argument by restating one of his main points: both Covenants are entirely complementary to one (1) another and the Covenant of Faith must always precede the Covenant of the Moses. In other words, we must always trust in God for our righteousness, and then allow that imputed righteousness to live itself out as we follow God's Word.

6. There are specific words of the Mosaic Covenant.

Chapters and chapters are given to record the words contained in this Covenant. Why would God be so specific and lengthy in the instructions or words of this Covenant? We must see that the Law of Moses or what we call the Mosaic Covenant was designed to govern a people under a Theocratic Society. It was the most perfect Code of Law that was possible for governing a people under a

Godly Commonwealth.

God was preparing a people, a nation, to be a precious possession for Him, from among all nations. God called them to be a Holy Nation. Not that they were holy, but the relationship to God and the Covenant, which provided forgiveness and sanctification, would lead them onward and upward to that Divine Calling. The Hebrew word translated as "holy" "*kodesh*," is generally understood to mean, separated or set apart. But this is only a secondary meaning, derived from the purpose of that which is holy. Its primary meaning is to be a "Covenant-Keeper." The word "Holy" comes from the German word "heilig," meaning "complete or whole." The word "sanctify" comes from the Latin word "sanctum" meaning, to be "walled off." The word "sacred," also Latin in origin comes from the word "sacrum" meaning "dedicated to the gods." An examination of the Biblical Hebrew word "*kodesh*," (Holy) reveals "things that are set aside." These things are set apart for formal service to God with legal and Covenantal restrictions and limitations. The first time Israel is called a Holy People is at the giving of the Mosaic Covenant at Mt. Sinai.

"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep My Covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a Kingdom of Priests, and an Holy Nation. These are the words, which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel (Ex.19:5-6).

The implication of these passages is that Israel's holiness stems from the fact that it has entered into a National Covenant with God. Therefore, we can conclude from this set of passages and many other uses of the word "*kodesh*" that those who are holy are Covenant-Keepers.

7. There were divisions of the Law.

It must first be stated that the term "law" or "*nomos*," in the Greek, is not a correct rendering of the word "Torah." The legalistic element, which might rightly be called the Law, represents only one (1) side of the Torah. To the Jew, the word "Torah" means a teaching or an instruction of any kind. It may be either a general principle or a specific injunction, whether found in the Pentateuch or in other parts of Scripture. The Pentateuch is no mere legal code without edifying elements in it. The Book of Genesis, the greater part of Exodus, and even a part of Numbers are simple history, recording the past of humanity on its way to the Kingdom, culminating in Israel's entering it on Mt. Sinai, and their subsequent relapses. The Book of Deuteronomy contains words of exhortation and forms Israel's pattern for pleasing God. As the "Book of Exhortation", it consists chiefly in goodness and supplies Israel with its confession of faith. That confession of faith is found in Deuteronomy (De.6:4-5). The Book of Leviticus first proclaims the origin of the

Christian Principle, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

There are over one thousand and fifty (1,050) New Testament Commands. A vast majority of these Commands are based on the teachings or instructions of the Pentateuch. Over ninety (90) times in the Book of Matthew, Jesus quotes the Moral, Civil or Ceremonial Codes found in the Pentateuch. Neither the continually valid Commands from the Pentateuch, nor the New Testament can be approached for merit as if we seek to fulfill them in our own power. Only dependence on God's grace, atonement, and resurrection power, enable us to obey from the heart. By gaining a clear understanding of Biblical Commands, we can more accurately see the depth of God's mercy and power.

The general consensus is that, there are only Ten (10) Commandments. However, in truth, there are six hundred and thirteen (613). These six hundred thirteen (613) Commandments are broken down into two (2) main categories. There are two hundred forty-eight (248) Positive Commands, the "DO'S," and three hundred sixty-five (365) Negative Commands, the "DO NOT DO THIS." The Ten (10) Commandments, as we know them, are a simplistic overview of all that is contained in the six hundred thirteen (613). An in depth investigation of the Mosaic Covenant reveals that there are three (3) major divisions. These divisions are: Moral, Civil, and Ceremonial.

a. Let us look at the Moral Law.

The Moral Law established a code of ethical human conduct in relation to both God and man (Ex.20:1-17; Ex.34:27-28). The Mosaic Covenant established, once and for all, the standard of morality that God expected from His people. The Bible is filled with good and bad examples of men. The good men give us examples to imitate and the bad men give us warnings of what is displeasing to God. The divisions of the Ten (10) Commandments are broken down into two (2) Tables. One Table deals with ethics regarding our relationship to God, and the other Table deals with ethics regarding man's relationship with man. The purpose for the Moral Law is holiness, and the focus of that holiness, is God. We direct our love and reverence to God. However, if our relationship with our brother is not right, neither is our relationship with God (Mt.5:22-24). Since the dawn of man, God has sought to establish a "Holy Society." The Mosaic Covenant establishes an eternal standard of holiness, "...follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord..." (He.12:14).

- b. The Civil Law deals with man's relationship with man.

While the Moral Law deals mainly with God and man, the Civil Law deal with man's inter-action with man. The category of the Civil Law was simply a multiplied variety of regulations, which amplified the basic principals stated in the Moral Law. In other words, it was very specific wording about how to treat your fellow man or apply the moral code.

God desired a holy nation and was working with a down trodden people, fresh from Egypt, just released from bondage, living among a people who did not know the one true God. The wicked rulers of Egypt have done great injustices to God's people. Egypt was a morally depraved society. In delivering Israel from Egypt, God established a righteous system of Civil Law, which did not permit the types of injustices as were perpetrated in Egypt. God expects all nations to develop just systems of law and jurisprudence. Just as the Mosaic Covenant had established a standard of moral ethics, it also, establishes a standard for judicial systems and municipal laws.

- c. The Ceremonial Law dealt with worship.

The last major division of the Law is the Ceremonial Law. This very explicit set of laws governed the worship of Israel. God provided atonement for sin and uncleanness, individually and nationally, through the Sacrifice, the Priesthood, the Tabernacle and the Festival Occasions. God gave Moses explicit instructions concerning the Ceremonial aspects of the Mosaic Covenant. This regimented system was not without purpose or reason. These practices demonstrated the Holiness of God. Each offering given was for a specific purpose. For instance, the Trespass Offering was for those who willfully sinned, while the Sin offering was for those who had inadvertently sinned. Each Commandment in the Ceremonial Law was for Covenantal reasons and continuity. Through observance of the Ceremonial Law, the Covenantal-Relationship between God and Israel was maintained. All of this foreshadowed the person and the work of Christ, the Messiah.

8. The promises of the Covenant contained additional conditions for blessings.

Looking at the promises of this Covenant, we find primarily an addition of conditions to receive the blessings that Israel was to receive as in all the promises of blessings in the great Abrahamic Covenant.

When people spoke the promises in Moses' day, in this Covenant, they simply confirmed what He had spoken to Abraham. These promises involved personal, national, geographical and spiritual blessings (Ex.23:25-33).

There was no provision under the Abrahamic Covenant for healing. God made the provision for healing under the Mosaic Covenant for the people. God made provision for healing until Jesus would come and completely settle the sin and sickness issue (De.7:15). Moses rehearsed the Covenant to the new generation going into Canaan.

There were no promises of curse under this Covenant, but the consequences and punishments for disobedience were very plainly spelled out to the first generation out of Egypt. Israel could bring the curse and punishment upon themselves by continually violating the conditions of the Covenant (Ga.3:10).

We can see that the Mosaic Covenant was founded upon the Abrahamic Covenant. This new Covenant modified and expanded the blessings given in the Abrahamic Covenant. The Mosaic Covenants, like all previous Covenants was built on faith.

We said in the beginning of this course of study that God enlarges each Covenant as He deals with man. So we can now see that the Mosaic Covenant was primarily condition added to the irrevocable promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. This Covenant is filled with "if," which became the terms of the Covenant. Now we see a drastic change in the terms of the Mosaic Covenant. Up to this time and under previous Covenants, the terms by which the people kept the covenants were obedience that came by faith. We see that the terms of obedience were replaced by legal obedience. The terms, to be kept, depended on a works system in connection to the Law (Le.18:5; Ga.3:10-12).

Under the Covenant, Israel could obtain the promise of life only by fear of the Lord and faithful obedience. This would give them right standing with God. The goal at which the Mosaic Covenant aimed was Messiah. By faith in Him, we receive righteousness or true right standing with God. Righteousness by faith was the standard established by Abraham. However, there were those who made it mechanical and legal, but this was not the mentality on the whole. (De.6:24-25; Ro.10:1-5).

God wanted to dwell with Israel as He did with Adam, in a loving, vital relationship. He arranged a meeting with them at the base of the mountain and made the confrontation as easy as possible. The instructions came through Moses to the people, "sanctify" to meet with God. God came down on the top of Mt. Sinai in a fire, because He is a consuming fire. With the loud blast of the "*shofar*" or ram's

horn, the people fell back with fear and trembling. Israel replied, "All that the Lord has said we will do" (Ex.19:7-9, 24:3-7).

9. Terms of the Covenant.

The terms of the Covenant are commonly called the Commandments. The Ten (10) Commandments form a compendium, a summary, of the six hundred thirteen (613) Commandments of the Mosaic Covenant. The Ten (10) Commandments were written on two (2) tables of stone, one (1) stone listed the laws governing man's relationship to God, and the other concerning man's relationship to man. These are found in Exodus 20:1-17, and are briefly stated as:

- a. Man was to have "no other god before Him."
- b. Man was to have "no graven image to be made or worshiped."
- c. Man was to not "take the name of God in vain."
- d. Man was to "keep the Sabbath Day holy to the Lord."
- e. Man was to "honor Father and Mother."
- f. Man was to do "no murder."
- g. Man was not to "commit adultery."
- h. Man was to "not steal."
- i. Man was not to "bear false witness."
- j. Man was "not to covet."

Remember, in the previous Covenants, man's part of keeping the Covenant was faith and obedience. The Old Testament word for "faith" was "trust." Now the walk of faith is replaced by strict obedience.

The law is an explanation of what was pleasing or displeasing to God. Therefore, the giving of these Commandments required Israel to obey them. Obedience would be rewarded with blessings and disobedience was punishable with curses.

The blessings and curses were spelled out to the new generation in Deuteronomy (De.11:26-28, 13:4). God asked the people to listen to His voice and to obey, so that He could perform the oath, which He swore to their Fathers, to bring them to the land of milk and honey.

The heart condition required to be able to perfectly fulfill the terms of keeping God's Commandments out of loving obedience was within Israel's reach. The law of sin was at work in humanity's hearts. Hear the impassioned words of God to the second generation (De.5:27-29). Moses is going over the Command of God with the people before, he leaves them and they enter the New Land. God did not make this Covenant of Law with the Patriarchal Fathers. He made it with the nation of Israel.

Israel's history, under the Mosaic Covenant, proved that unless God changed man's heart, he would never be able, by self-effort, to develop a heart of loving obedience toward the Lord. God's plan continues on, as we see Israel's failure to keep the Law was intended to prepare them for the New Covenant. This would bring them a "new heart and a new spirit," and would then enable them to obey God. The Mosaic Covenant gave Commandments to keep, but the power to please God does not rest within man's natural power or abilities. However, the New Covenant gives the standard of God's righteousness and also, the enabling power to please God by the Holy Spirit.

10. There are major truths revealed in the blood of Covenants.

God was so particular about how the Sacrificial Blood was handled. At times, the blood was sprinkled up upon the Furnishings of the Tabernacle, though most often it was upon the Brazen Altar. On the Day of Atonement, the blood was brought inside the Holy of Holies and sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat. These rituals find their fulfillment in the Blood of Jesus. The ninth (9th) chapter of Hebrews explains the Old Testament rituals of the Tabernacle, which are fulfilled by Christ, in the New Covenant (He.13:11-14).

There are five (5) major truths, which God revealed in the blood of Covenants:

- a. The blood has a voice (Ge.4:10).
- b. The blood is the life (Ge.9:4-6)
- c. The blood is given as atonement for the soul (Le.17:10-14).
- d. The blood is the evidence of an out-poured life (De.12:16, 23-24).
- e. The blood is the evidence of judgment on sin by death (Ex.12:1).

An illustration, which will set forth the truth that atonement was by the blood, is found in Exodus thirty-two (32), where Israel had made the golden calf. Moses

said in essence, "You have sinned a great sin, you should die, yet I am going to bring atonement unto God." He melted the golden calf, ground it to powder, put it on the water and then made the children of Israel drink of it (Ex.32:20,30). Many Jewish sources show that God's forgiveness for this sin of the golden calf, took place on the Day of Atonement.

11. The "mediator of the Covenant" is one who "goes between."

We know that the Patriarchal Priesthood of these men characterized the Covenants of Adam, Noah, and Abraham, but the Mosaic Covenant gives the greatest and fullest demonstration of Priestly Service. We see the Mediators of this Covenant are found in two (2) particular persons, and then, the entire Tribe to which they belonged.

a. Moses was the mediator of the words of the Covenant.

Moses acted as the leader of the people of Israel and thus became the Mediator of the Words of the Covenant. Moses became the Law-Giving Mediator between God and Israel (Ga.3:19-20). When God threatened to annihilate all of Israel for the sin of the golden calf, Moses' intercession was so great that God hearkened to the words of Moses and spared them. Moses, in refusing to allow God to begin again with him, spared the Children of Israel. This is one of the greatest examples of the Mediator/intercessory life of Moses.

b. Aaron was mediator of the blood of the Covenant.

Aaron, also of the Tribe of Levi, acted as the Priest of the people of Israel and thus, became the Mediator of the Blood of the Covenant. We could look at these two (2) representatives God used with the Covenant like this: Moses represented, or was a type of God the Father on earth, caring, watching over the people, and acting as the King that God wanted to be over His people; Aaron was a type of Jesus, who was the Mediator of the New Covenant. Aaron was the Atoning Mediator between God and Israel (He.5:1-5).

Israel, to this day is a Kingdom of Priests. However, the Tribe of Levi acts as Priesthood to Israel. Israel as a nation represents God, to all the Nations. We become a Kingdom of Priests, in Messiah, when we walk uprightly before God. We should see in all of this, how important to God it is, that we fulfill our role as Kings and Priests before Him. God was creating in Israel, a special people, who would lift up praise to Him in a world already infiltrated with sin. Thereby, they would bring glory, freedom, and the victory of God into the earth. They were to be

Priests to all Nations.

How special and vital the role as Priests to our God has become in the New Testament. We create the atmosphere of praise where God can speak and move among His people. As kings, we take authority over this earth and push back the darkness and subdue the enemy of God, so God's Presence can reign in the earth.

The Sacrificial System and the Priesthood ministry were both centered in the Sanctuary of the Covenant, which is the Tabernacle of Moses. All this began and was illustrated in the Tabernacle of Eden, the place where God met with Adam. Eden, as the Garden of God, was picturesque of the Tabernacle, Temple, Jesus, and finally the Believers in Jesus. The altars of the Patriarchal Fathers can also be seen as similar meeting places with God. The primary purpose for the Tabernacle is expressed in Exodus (Ex.25:8). God desired and still desires to dwell among us. The Tabernacle and all the ordinances along with the Psalms, give us our pattern for worship today. This has not changed, because the broken fellowship caused by Adam's sin was restored through the work of Jesus Christ. Man could once again approach God without a sense of inferiority or lack. This was the restoration that was demonstrated in David's Tabernacle.

12. The weekly Sabbath day was the Seal of the Covenant.

This sign or Seal of the Covenant was the weekly Sabbath. It is distinctly spoken of as a sign between God and the Nation of Israel (Ex.31:12-17). The Seal of this Covenant is worthy of studying because we need to be enlightened on the Sabbath. There are religious groups today that continue to keep Sabbath, or to observe the worship of God on Saturday, which is fine, as long as they are not trying to be legalistic. The Sabbath is a picture of living in the environment of God. Adam was created on the eve of the Sabbath. Upon the Sabbath's conclusion, he was placed in the Garden of Eden, which is also a picture of the environment of God. It was God's intention for man to continually live in His Presence. Believers in Jesus are given a restoration of this environmental peace. All they need to do is learn to appropriate it to their lives.

There are some important facts concerning the Seal of the Mosaic Covenant, which need to be referred to, in the fulfillment of the New Covenant:

- a. There was no Sabbath for twenty-five hundred (2,500) years.

There is no mention of keeping the Sabbath from Adam to Moses. Under the Covenant from Adam through Abraham, we have no information of the Sabbath for about twenty-five (25) centuries.

- b. The Sabbath's first mention is in Exodus.

The first mention of keeping the Sabbath is found in Exodus 16:23-26, concerning the gathering of the daily manna. Sabbath is also mentioned in contrast to the bondage of slavery in Egypt. Under Egyptian rule, Israel served harsh taskmasters. God would set Himself in contrast against the overbearing Egyptians, as a loving God, providing His people with rest.

- c. Keeping the Sabbath is the fourth (4th) commandment.

The Fourth (4th) Commandment of the Law at Sinai was concerning keeping the Sabbath. God took this Fourth (4th) Commandment to be the Sign and Seal of the Mosaic Covenant. Each Covenant had a Seal and Sign, which was specific to that Covenant. God did not use other Seals or Signs from other Covenants. This would have brought confusion to the Covenants.

- d. Keeping the Sabbath is a Ceremonial Law.

The Fourth (4th) Commandment concerning the Sabbath was really a Ceremonial Law. It was this "Ceremony" that was attached to the Covenant as its Seal. The Ceremonial part of the Mosaic Covenant should be understood as the spiritual aspects of that Covenant. These Ceremonial parts were given to depict spiritual truths that were fulfilled in Jesus Christ and those who put their faith in Him.

- e. There are also special Sabbaths in Leviticus chapter twenty-three (23).

There were also other special Sabbaths besides the weekly Sabbath. These Sabbaths were the holy days of the festivals. There are seven (7) festivals of the Lord. These festivals are: Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Pentecost, Trumpets, Day of Atonements, and Tabernacles. Of these seven (7) feasts, three (3) were special, Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. It was mandatory that all male Jews appear before the Lord in the Holy Place of Jerusalem three (3) times a year at these specific feasts. All these Sabbaths, days, or times of rest, fell in their appointed weeks, as well as the weekly seventh (7th) day Sabbath.

Only the Israelites or a stranger who had taken the Rite of Circumcision could partake of the Feast of Passover during the Old Testament period. They were called the "Feasts of the Lord" (Le.23:2). These festivals were

holy rehearsals, and they remain rehearsals for Israel and the Church (Co.2:16-17; 1Co.5:7-8). There remains a futuristic purpose in our present day rehearsal of these feast days. God created the festivals to enjoy His people and for them to enjoy Him, and each other. There was singing; dancing, eating, remembering and celebrating what God had done for them.

f. There were also Sabbath years.

There were Sabbath years to be kept also. Every seventh (7) year, and every fiftieth (50) year, were Sabbath years of rest for the land. The Sabbath rests for the land came under the conditions of the Palestinian Covenant. The tragic history of the chosen Nation shows how they failed to keep the Sabbaths, both for the people and the land, thus, breaking the Sign and Seal of the Mosaic and Palestinian Covenants.

Scripture clearly states that the reason for the Babylonian captivity of seventy (70) years was the failure of Israel to keep the Sabbaths of the Lord. The Sabbath days and years became burdensome to them; they despised them and thus, brought Divine Judgment upon themselves. God's displeasure was specifically brought against the Children of Israel because of their failure to let the land lay fallow in the seventh (7th) and the fiftieth (50th) years. The violation of the Sabbath is an indication of faithlessness.

13. The Sabbath has been misinterpreted in the New Testament.

When we look at the New Testament concerning the Sabbath, we see how its keeping has been misinterpreted and corrupted. The New Testament reveals Christ as the Lord of the Sabbath. This shows Him as the Lord of Peace. The New Testament also reveals that the Sabbath is fulfilled in Christ. The spiritual truth, which the Lord sought to teach, was that which pertained to rest. The physical day or days of rest pointed to spiritual rest.

"Servile work" spoke of the labors of man, or man's efforts to provide for himself what was needed. Sabbath rest spoke of man ceasing from his own works and entering into and enjoying the work of God, as pictured in the work of the High Priest on these particular days. So, as Believers in Christ, we are called upon to cease from our works, as a method to establish and secure righteousness, and find rest in Jesus Christ. Unbelief will not cease from self-effort. Faith alone enters into rest.

The Christian can cease from his own works, believe and enter into rest because of the finished work of Christ. Here are some important facts from the New Testament concerning the Seal of the Sabbath and its relationship to the New Covenant Seal.

a. The Sabbath was made for man.

Jesus made it very clear that the Sabbath was made for man's benefit. Man needs physical rest, as well as time for spiritual refreshment (Ex.23:12; Mk.2:27-28).

b. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath.

Jesus presented Himself as the Lord of the Sabbath. We see that He is higher than the day. Some Jews made a big deal out of keeping the Sabbath, adding numerous rules and regulations, and missed the spirit of the Sabbath.

c. Paul, the Sabbaths and Feasts

Paul taught that the holy days, new moons, and Sabbath days were a shadow of things to come, but the substance is Christ (Co.2:16-17). These passages clearly show a futuristic purpose in keeping and understanding the Festivals of the Lord.

d. True Sabbath rest is in Christ.

Last of all, in Christ the Believer finds true Sabbath rest. He ceases from his own works and rests in the finished work of Christ. This fulfills "the Perpetual Covenant" of Sabbath rest. It is not in the keeping of the day, but in the receiving of the person of Christ Jesus our Lord (Mt.11:28-30).

This Covenant finds its perfect fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the only Man who ever perfectly kept the Law in all its requirements. It was at the Cross that He fulfilled all that pertained to the ceremonial and externalities of the Law. Of course, there was righteousness in the Law, that which was holy, just, good, spiritual and even perfect. However, it finds its fulfillment in Christ Himself, reliving His life in the Believer, who walks after the Spirit. Christ's new law, from God and man, is written on the tables of the heart, by the Spirit Who enables us to live a life that is pleasing to God.

F. The Palestinian Covenant

The Palestinian Covenant was made in the land of Moab. It was made with the second generation of the chosen nation of Israel to come out of Egypt. In the closing chapters of the Book of Deuteronomy, the children of Israel, who was the physical seed of Abraham, were facing a crisis in their national existence. They are about to pass from the proved leadership of Moses into the unproved leadership of Joshua. They are standing at the entrance to the land that was promised to them by God. God had promised the land of Canaan to Israel in the Abrahamic Covenant (Ge.17:7-8). Forty years of wandering in the wilderness has passed and this second generation is just about to enter into the Promised Land.

This Palestinian Covenant laid down for all generations the conditions for entering and maintaining control of the Promised Land. Because of its close association with the Mosaic Covenant, the Palestinian Covenant has often not been recognized as a Covenant in its own right. However, Deuteronomy clearly distinguishes it from the Mosaic Covenant (De.29:1). While the Mosaic Covenant was made at Sinai with the first generation out of Egypt and gave laws for the people, the Palestinian Covenant was made in the plains of Moab with the second generation and gave laws for the land.

We must realize that while this new generation received a new Covenant, the Palestinian, it also received a rehearsal of the moral and civil law of the Mosaic Covenant. This rehearsal in the Book of Deuteronomy was called "the Second Law." So, we see this new generation that was under the Mosaic Covenant, received the Palestinian Covenant and entered the land promised in the Abrahamic Covenant. So we can see all of these Covenants in operation at this time.

The failure of the first generation to keep the Abrahamic and the Mosaic Covenants made it necessary to give the Palestinian Covenant. Israel's failure is recorded for all to see (Nu.chps.13-14). At Kadesh-Barnea, they searched the land for forty (40) days, believed the evil report, and in unbelief rejected the Covenant Land promised to Abraham. God extended the forty (40) days into forty (40) years of wandering in the wilderness. They experienced the penalty for His "breach of promise" and God's displeasure for their unbelief. So, the first generation died in unbelief, failing to enter into the Covenant-Rest of God. The same thing can happen to us today. We can wander around our whole lifetime after receiving the promise and not enter into the rest of God. It is required of us all to take hold of the promises and go on into the fulfillment and rest by reliance on what God has done.

The old generation experienced the cycle of probation, failure and judgment, which led to the new generation receiving the next Covenant. We have seen this cycle, ever since the Covenant with Adam.

1. The words of this Covenant focus on the Land.

The words of this Covenant include the word “land,” written one hundred eighty (180) times in the Book of Deuteronomy. By this we see the primary focus of the Palestinian Covenant was on the Promised Land. This Covenant would naturally be given to that generation that was about to enter the land. It gave them the conditions for living in the land.

2. There are Promises in the Palestinian Covenant.

The Book of Deuteronomy gave that generation a graphic description of the Promised Land. God was allowing them to enter into that land as stewards over it, but it was God's Land. God gave an excellent description of the land (De.8:7-10; 11:8-17). Who wouldn't want to live in a land like this?

God told them that it was a land of hills and valleys, watered by early and latter rains, which caused it to be a fruitful land, a land of rivers and fountains, and a land of mineral wealth or prosperity. God said that He would watch over the land.

God promised that if they were obedient, many blessings would come upon Israel and over take them. They would be placed high above all nations. Moses gave each Tribe a particular blessing, even as Jacob had blessed each of his twelve (12) sons (De.33:12).

Deuteronomy tells us of the blessings that would come upon Israel (De.28:1-14). So, the blessings of the Palestinian Covenant were for the people to be blessed in the city, field, fruitfulness, daily provision, daily activities, victory over their enemies, in their store houses, blessed in labor, blessed in seasonal rains, in national position, and in commerce.

The fulfillment of these promises of blessing began with the ministry of Joshua as he led them in conquest and possession of the land promised originally in the Abrahamic Covenant, confirmed in the Mosaic and now given in the Palestinian Covenant. The Israelite's enemies, who have shown that they will resist any attempt by Israel to enter the land, possessed the Land promised to Israel. It was impossible for them to return to their former status as a slave nation, and the land to which they were journeying as strangers and pilgrims seemed to be shut before them.

Great importance is attached to this Covenant.

- a. It reaffirms to whom it belongs.

This Covenant reaffirms to Israel, in no uncertain terms, their title deed to the Land of Promise. In spite of unfaithfulness and unbelief, as shown in Israel's history from the time that the promise was made to Abraham until that time, the Covenant was not revoked.

- b. God had not changed His mind about His purpose.

The establishment of a conditional Covenant, the Law, under which Israel was then living, could not and did not set aside the original gracious promise concerning the purpose of God (Ga.3:17).

As long as Israel obeyed God and His Word, blessings came upon them. When they became disobedient and turned to other gods, the blessings stopped and things took their natural course on and around them. Blessings follow obedience while curses come upon the disobedient. This is why Jesus came to take away the curse and set us free.

Man could not be obedient, for it was not in him to obey. It took the coming of Jesus and the power of the Spirit of God on the inside of man to cause him to love God and keep His Commandments. If God did not and could not forget His great promise to Israel, why would we ever doubt that God would not keep His promise to us? We make up the "spiritual Israel," "the Church," "the Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ." As a man of God said, "If God kept us and watched over us while we were still sinners, living for the devil, why would we think He's not going to take care of us now that we belong to Him?" Certainly He will!

The Book of Joshua records Israel's victory over their enemies and the dividing of the land unto the different Tribes. The greatest extent of their land conquest came through the leadership of King David and the greatest extent of their material prosperity came during the reign of King Solomon. The age of David's reign is a type of the Church age and the age of Solomon's reign is a type of the "Millennial Reign" of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. There were curses in the Palestinian Covenant.

God promised Israel that if they were disobedient, many curses would come upon them, and over take them. God was, and is, bound by His Word to judge them for their disobedience. The blessings of Deuteronomy would be turned into curses if the people did not obey God (De.28:1-14). There were also some added curses,

such as diseases, defeat by their enemies, curses in captivities, and curses in possessions. The fulfillment of these promises of curses began in the time of the Judges, when the people turned away from God and turned to idols. They suffered greatly for it.

God calls the Promised Land His, for He has purposes for this land. Everything concerned with the end time and the prophetic centers around this land. God has put His Name there and any peoples, who try to take it to put his or her name there, God will certainly deal with.

In the Books of Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles, we see a record of times in which the promises of cursing were fulfilled in the history of Israel. The ultimate fulfillment of these curses, in the Old Testament, came with the captivities of the House of Israel and the House of Judah.

4. The terms of the Covenant resided in Israel's obedience to moral laws, civil laws, and laws of the land.

God had already stated that the land was His and He had established the fact of His ownership and rulership over the land (Le.25:23-24). God presented Himself to Israel as the Lord of the land, Israel's "Land-Lord," so to speak. As such, He laid down conditions for their possessing the land. God is the best "Land-Lord" anyone could ever have. Most landlords are looking out for their own best interest. But God, as "Land-Lord," is looking out for our best interests.

Under the Abrahamic Covenant, the land had been promised as an everlasting possession (Ge.17:8). Under the Palestinian Covenant, conditions were added that had to be met for the promise to be fulfilled. In the Law of Moses, there had to be obedience to moral and civil laws and under the Palestinian Covenant there had to be obedience to moral laws, civil laws, and laws of the land. The most specific term attached to this Covenant was the keeping of the seventh (7th) year rest for the people and the Jubilee Sabbath Rest for the land. The terms of the Covenant are as follows.

- a. They were to be obedient to the Ten Commandments.

When entering Canaan, they were to write the Words of the Covenant on plastered stones (De.27:1-4). They were to keep the Word of God before their eyes (Pr.4:20-22).

- b. Israel was to love God (De.6:4-9; 10:12-16).

- c. There must be a rest for the land.

These rests were in multiple parts.

- 1) Every seventh (7th) year was to be a year of rest for the land.

God had already instructed them carefully about a year's rest for the land.

- 2) Every fiftieth (50th) year was to be a Jubilee Rest for the land.

God promised tremendous blessing of fruitfulness in the years of labor, enough to provide for them through the Sabbath years.

The word "jubilee," "yov'e!" in the Hebrew, means "to flow, to bring with pomp, to bring forth, flow forth." The "Day of Jubilee" means "clamor, acclamation of joy or battle cry;" especially, the "sound of trumpets as an alarm, loud noise, rejoicing, shouting, a high joy sounding." Notice the wording of First Thessalonians 4:16.

It is a tragic story that Israel failed to keep the terms of this Covenant and judgment by expulsion from the land resulted. God foreknew and foretold this by Moses, even before they entered the land (De.31:15-21). The people experienced the curses of the Covenant, the sicknesses and plaques of the land, and finally they were rooted out of the land and cast into another land because of their forsaking the Covenant.

5. While no oath is attached to the blessing, there is one attached to the cursings of this Covenant.

This oath was meant to assure Israel of the sure punishment from God if they should disobey the Covenant. Daniel refers to the oath of this Covenant concerning its curse (Da.9:11). To understand this Scripture, we need to remember that both the Mosaic and the Palestinian Covenants were given to Moses, so both can be referred to as "His Law."

6. There was to be a Book of the Palestinian Covenant.

God told Moses to write the Law in a book and place it inside of the Ark of the Covenant (De.31:9-10, 24, 26). This was done as a witness against Israel. Moses wrote this Book of the Law, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It contained

the revelation of the beginning of the human race, the chosen Hebrew race and the scattering of the Gentile nations. This Book contained the account of Israel's miraculous deliverance from Egypt and the failure of that first generation to enter into the land of Canaan. The Book declared all the Words of the Mosaic Covenant, with its moral, civil, and ceremonial laws. The significant thing about the Book of the Law was that at the end of every seven (7) years, in the year of release, during the Feast of Tabernacles, the Levites were to take the Book of the Covenant out of the Ark and read it to the people. This was to take place in the land of Israel, during the Feast of Tabernacles, which was in the seventh (7th) month of the religious calendar

Ebal, a bare mountain with no growth of vegetation on it, is descriptive of the cursing. On this mountain, the altar of the Lord was erected. It was there that Joshua read the words of the Law to the people.

Believers are called "a Royal Priesthood!" When we receive a message, concerning the need for prayer, we are activated as intercessors, "the go between", we are the mediators, between God and the person in need. This is the New Testament Priesthood in action. The Priesthood, of Old Testament times, mediated between God and man. The High Priest was consulted by the leaders and recognized as the man who heard from God. Moses, acknowledged by almost all Jewish sources as the greatest prophet of God that ever lived, heard from God for the people.

In the blood of the Covenant we find no change. The Palestinian Covenant sacrifices followed the same pattern that was laid down in the Mosaic Covenant. On the day they passed over Jordan, they were to build an altar of unhewn stones. Upon this altar, they offered sacrifices of burnt offerings and peace offerings unto the Lord (De.27:5-7).

When Israel brought their offerings to the Lord, these offerings involved the shedding of sacrificial blood for their atonement. These offerings were made so that Israel's sins could be forgiven and they could inherit the land of promise. There could be no land of rest apart from sacrifice. We find no rest until we come into Covenant with our Father God by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We see the Priesthood established under Moses with it acting as the mediator of the Covenant. After the death of Moses and Aaron, Eleazer was chosen to be the next High Priest. Under Eleazer's Priesthood, Joshua would receive direction from the Lord concerning the conquest and division of the land into the Tribal inheritances. Along with Eleazer the High Priest, was the ministry of the Levites (De.33:8-11).

Once Israel had passed over the Jordan and come into the New Land, all the people stood on two mountains to hear the Levites shout the blessings, and the curses decreed by God (De.27:9-26).

The Levites were to teach the people the "Laws of God." They were to be the mediators of the Words of the Covenant. God brought the people into agreement with His Words by once again reminding them of what He expected them to do. This "Giving of the Law" a second time, brought them back to the place of blessing. The lives of the Children of Israel improved greatly with the establishment of the Palestinian Covenant.

7. The Land was the sanctuary of the Covenant.

The Land itself was considered to be God's sanctuary. We know this to be true because of the dedication service, in which God, through Moses, told Israel to observe and perform all things that He commanded them to do, the day they entered the Promised Land. Here are some facts that point us to this truth.

- a. Upon entering the land they were to write the Words of the Covenant on great plastered stones.
- b. Upon the altar which they built for the Lord on Mt. Ebal, they offered the sacrifice, dedicating the Land to God by blood atonement (Jos.8:30-31).
- c. The Ark was centered between the two mountains, Gerizim and Ebal (Jos.8:33). That Ark was the dwelling place of the Lord on earth, His presence among the people.
- d. Palestine, the blessed and rich land of promise, was spoken of in very glorious terms. Here are some of the words used in Scripture to describe the Land.
 - 1) The Land of Promise
 - 2) The Pleasant Land
 - 3) It was the Glory of all Lands
 - 4) It was the Glorious Land
 - 5) It was Emmanuel's Land

- 6) It was called the Land of Rest
- 7) It was the Sanctuary Land of the Lord (Ps.78:54; Ex.15:17)

Speaking prophetically, the Church has now entered into the "rest of God." When we accept the atoning work of Christ, we receive and enter into the promises and rest of God. Israel, the physical seed, did not enter into "the rest of God" because of disobedience and unbelief in the promises of God.

The Palestinian Covenant given to the Jews. However, today the Islamic Peoples, which are descendants of Ishmael, claim all of Palestine to be their land and the city of Jerusalem to be their capital. They call themselves "Palestinians," but the Covenant was not made with them.

When God set the boundaries for the inheritance of all other tribes, He gave each their own land. Nevertheless, He chose Palestine as "His land, His sanctuary." This land belongs to God, but the Jews were/are the tenants of the land.

The Covenant was made with Israel. The Ishmaelites were trespassing on God's property. In this "God Land" was the "Holy City," the "Holy Hill," the "Holy Temple," and the "Holy Mountains" of Sinai and Zion. This was the Land where Messiah would come, and fulfill the Covenants of God.

When God looked down upon all the countries of the earth, the Promised Land was "His Sanctuary," the place on earth that was "Holiest of All." This was the place destined to bring forth God's Covenantal-Purposes, which would ultimately lead to the New Covenant and the Cross of Jesus Christ.

All these things mentioned concerning the entrance into the land constituted the Land as "the Sanctuary" of the Palestinian Covenant.

8. The seal of this Covenant had two (2) parts.

The two (2) parts to the seal of this Covenant are the Sabbath rest for the land, and the early and later rains.

Israel was responsible before God to keep the Sabbath year of rest for the land. Every seventh (7th) year being the year of rest for the land, the Israelites were not to till the land. Also every fiftieth (50th) year was to be a Jubilee year of rest for the land (Le.25:8-17). Upon Israel's obedience to this Palestinian Covenant, God promised to send the early and latter rains as His seal upon the land. It was a token of God's Covenant blessings. But if they did not keep the terms of the

Covenant including rest for the land, God promised to withhold the rains from the land.

Israel's history reveals their suffering the terrible consequences of breaking both the Mosaic and Palestinian Covenants. Their major violations were idolatry, immorality, and their failure to keep the Sabbath. These sins repeatedly displeased God. Israel's sins forced God to judge them. God judged them by withholding the rains at many different intervals through their history. Finally, God dispersed them out of the land, diaspora.

9. The Land was divided into two (2) Kingdoms.

In 722 B.C. Sargon destroyed Samaria. He deported the vast majority of Israel's people to Assyria and replaced them with masses of foreigners. At this time Israel ceased to exist as a nation.

The Babylonians took the Southern Kingdom of Judah captive in 612 B.C and led them away into Babylon. They were permitted to return to the land after seventy (70) years, as prophesied by the Prophet Jeremiah. These seventy (70) years were to make up for the seventy (70) Sabbatical Years, in which the Hebrew peoples did not allow the land to rest. After seventy (70) years, the remnant of Judah, along with many from the other eleven (11) Tribes, who had held their identity even in Babylon, returned to the land. The people who relocated to Jerusalem rebuilt the city and the Temple.

God's purpose was to maintain a Righteous Line until the coming of the Messiah, Who would establish a New Covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah (Je.31:31).

Just as God preserved a remnant of the Hebrew peoples and brought them back into the land for Messiah's first coming, today, God has, as a sign, preserved and brought back a remnant of Hebrews from all the nations. They have returned to the Land in preparation for the Second Coming of the Messiah.

Scripture indicates that the Jews will receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and will be grafted back into the olive tree, by faith, in the New Covenant, established in Messiah. All of this emphasizes the fact that God's Covenant-Purposes, for His natural people, are extended even to this day. This land was promised to His people in the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant. It was confirmed once again in the Palestinian Covenant. Ezekiel shows us that God has established an Eternal Covenant with the Jews. The basis for the New Eternal Covenant, along with the Mosaic Covenant and the Palestinian Covenant, were established in the Abrahamic Covenant. God promises to even be with them, in

the land to where they will be driven and to be a Sanctuary for them there, until the time He brings them back to the Promised Land (Ezk.11:16-20;16:53-63).

G. The Davidic Covenant

As we begin the study of the Covenant God made with David, we see that it is an extension of the Abrahamic Covenant. We find the major promises of the Abrahamic Covenant confirmed and amplified in the Davidic Covenant. It is also a confirmation of the Mosaic Covenant. We can see in the progression of the Covenants, the unfolding of God's plan for the restoration of humanity in the coming of Messiah. The Davidic Covenant is picturesque of the coming New Covenant that God will make with Israel and Judah through Messiah. David is a picture of Messiah and His coming reign. Just as David triumphed over all of his enemies and was able to establish a Sanctuary for God among His people, so Jesus triumphed over all of His enemies making a way for God to indwell His people, even as He did the Temple.

We are going to see in this Covenant that the chief promise is that of Kingship. We should remember that in the Abrahamic Covenant, made prior to this, there was a promise of Kingship. Kingship was promised to Abraham (Ge.17:6). God said "...Kings will come out of you..." This was also given to Jacob when God said "...Kings shall come out of your stock" (Ge.35:11). The promise was also given to Judah, the Covenant Tribe. Jacob gave the blessing to Judah in the forty-ninth (49th) chapter of Genesis. This blessing pictures Judah as a powerful Tribe that is to be feared (Ge.49:10). This Scripture tells us that Judah is the scepter of government.

The scepter is the symbol of power, rule, kingship and authority. Remember Aaron's rod that budded and bloomed overnight was the mark or sign of authority, and leadership. God, as the authoritative tribe, through which Messiah would reign as King, chose the Tribe of Judah.

1. Kingship was also promised in the Mosaic Covenant.

It was promised to Israel, God's Covenant nation (De.17:14-20). However, God was speaking by His foreknowledge. In First Samuel 8:7-9, God directed Samuel to anoint them a King. God told Samuel that it was because the people of Israel had rejected God from being their King.

Kingship was promised to David, the youngest son of Jesse. Jesse was from the chosen Tribe of Judah. Samuel had all of Jesse's sons to pass before him so he could find the one (1) to be anointed King. It was not until David stood before him, that Samuel recognized God's chosen one (1). Upon receiving confirmation from God, Samuel anointed David, King of Israel (2Sa.7:12-16; Ps.89:20-37).

In its ultimate sense, the Davidic Covenant includes in itself the New Covenant because the major promise of Kingship from the line of David, finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the son of David (Lk.1:30-33; Is.9:6-7).

The relationship of the Abrahamic, the Davidic, and the New Covenant is clearly seen in the promise of Kingship that culminated in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. To Him was given the keys of "David's Kingdom and power." To understand the linking promises that these Covenants reveal is to understand God's will that Israel have a theocratic monarchy to establish them as a nation and a kingdom. However, as seen in the "probation cycle," Israel failed to wait for God's will and time in establishing the Kingdom. While under the probation of the Mosaic and Palestinian Covenants, and while developing as a nation, Israel's form of government was theocratic. In other words, the government of the people was by the immediate direction of God. God as their King rose up ministries to lead them, beginning with Moses and Joshua and continuing with the Judges until Samuel. However, during this time there was recognition of the need for a Godly King. Without a king to guide them and command them, Israel wandered away from the Lord into idolatry, immorality, rebellion and complete lawlessness.

In Bible history, we see that God elevated Samuel, the Prophet, in a time of spiritual digression for both the people and the Priesthood. Samuel was a Godly man. However, his sons, as Judges over the people, became perverse in their judgments. This brought about the people's rejection of Samuel's household and brought about the premature desire for a King to judge them. Israel desired a King like the other nations. Israel cried out for a King. Though this was not God's perfect will for the people, He allowed divinely appointed men to rule over Israel instead of Himself. Israel chose Saul, son of Kish, as the first King of Israel (1Sa.9:17).

Saul was not from the Tribe having the Covenant promise of Kingship. It is so interesting to note that the Abrahamic Covenant promise of the land was fulfilled forty (40) years late because of Israel's unbelief and now the Abrahamic Covenant promise of a King came forty (40) years early because of Israel's impatience. It was after the forty (40) year reign of Saul and the enthronement of David over all Israel that God made the Covenant with David.

God's timing is very important. David, "the man after God's own heart," received the final Covenant of the Old Testament era. The next Covenant to be revealed was the New Covenant.

2. There were Covenant promises of blessing.

a. The appointed land had to have the heathen driven out.

In David's time, Israel was dwelling in the Abrahamic Covenant land. Under the Abrahamic Covenant, God clearly established territorial boundaries for the Promised Land. The Palestinian Covenant expounds on and continues the Abrahamic Covenant concerning the land. King David, by driving out the heathen nations from the land, perpetuates the Abrahamic and the Palestinian Covenants, bringing them closer to fulfillment.

b. There was a promise of victory over his enemies.

This is an extension of the promise God made to Abraham that "His seed would possess the gate of his enemies." This started with the conquests of Joshua, continued with the Tribe of Judah and was consummated with David's victories over all his enemies. David not only regained territory that had been lost but he also conquered all the Land promised to Abraham. David's victories pointed to the spiritual victory of Christ, The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and of the Church (Mt.16:18).

c. Covenant blessings were established with David's seed.

God promised, in the Covenant blessings, that David's house would be established with His Seed, Throne, and Kingdom forever (1Ch.17:11-15). The Davidic Dynasty included his descendants reigning from his throne, his house, and Kingdom. Under the Abrahamic Covenant, God chose the nation, Israel, and from the nation He chose a tribe, Judah. From the tribe of Judah, He chose the family of David. The promise of God finds fulfillment in the unbroken dynasty of the Davidic Kings, from Solomon to Zedekiah, in the Promised Land. None of the Kings over the House of Israel were of the Davidic Seed. Zedekiah was the last Davidic line King to reign over the Southern Kingdom of Judah. His reign ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. The last King of the Davidic Line, with his sons, went into captivity in Babylon. This was the end of the Biblical record of the national Davidic Throne.

d. Some people claim an apparent contradiction in the Bible.

God did not forget His Covenant promise to David. God promised that David's seed, house, throne, and kingdom would endure as the sun and moon remained. There are theories to consider concerning this apparent contradiction.

- 1) One theory is that the natural and national fulfillment from the time of Zedekiah was unneeded and irrelevant because of the spiritual fulfillment that came in Christ six (6) centuries later (Ac.2:29-36).
- 2) Another theory is that the natural throne of David over the House of Judah was transferred to the House of Israel in the British Isles. This came about by Jeremiah bringing a daughter of Zedekiah of the Davidic line to be married to a Prince of Judah, in the Zarah line. This made a lineage of the kings of Ireland, Scotland, and England the ongoing fulfillment of the natural and earthly throne of David. There are Scriptures that seem to support this (Je.41:10; 43:6; 44:14,28; 15:11,14; 33:17, 24-26).

e. There were additional blessing promises.

Another promise of blessing in the Covenant was God's sure mercies extended to David and his seed. God promised David that if his seed committed iniquity He would chastise them, but not take away His mercy from them as He did in cutting off the household of Saul by death. For this reason David continually spoke of the Covenant Mercy of the Lord (Ps.89:1-2, 14, 28-34). The New Testament shows the ultimate fulfillment of the sure mercies of David to be the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

It was David's desire to build a house for God that prompted the giving of the Davidic Covenant (2Sa.7:1-11). David set the Ark of the Covenant in a tent on Mt. Zion. Along with the Ark, there was an order of singers and musicians to praise and thank the Lord continually. In the dedication of this tent, David offered burnt, meal, and peace offerings. He did not offer the trespass or the sin offering. These offerings were to be offered in the Tabernacle of Moses. David offered only the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving before the Ark of God.

We see two (2) Tabernacles in existence for a period of time, one (1) on Mt. Gibeon, and one (1) on Mt. Zion. The Tabernacle on Mt. Gibeon had the functioning Priesthood with all of its sacred vessels, except for the Ark of the Covenant. The Tabernacle of David, on Mt. Zion, the location of the future Temple, housed only the Ark of the Covenant. The Tabernacle on Mt. Gibeon and the functioning Priesthood made it possible for David to participate in this new form of worship. This is a pattern of what was to come in the institution of the Temple. These two (2) complementary types of worship, that were established in the Tabernacles, would both be seen

instituted as one form of worship in the Temple. These two (2) complimentary systems form a picture of present day worship in Messiah. Messiah provided the necessary Priesthood and sacrifice so that we can offer up sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. We see the Tabernacle of David with its functioning Priesthood with no Outer Court or Holy Place. In type, this was a symbol of worship within the Holy of Holies. It was a kind of access and worship before the Presence of the Lord within the veil.

The Lord had given David rest from all his enemies. As David sat in his house of cedar, he expressed to the Prophet Nathan his burden to build a House for the Lord. Nathan encouraged the King to do what was in his heart. However, God spoke to Nathan instructing him to tell David, that he would not be able to build God a house. David was a man of war and had shed much blood in battle. It was for this reason that God would not allow him to build His House.

Because David was concerned for the House of God, God said that He would establish his lineage as the rightful heirs to His Throne and Kingdom forever. All of these words were given to David through the Prophet Nathan with regards to the Davidic Covenant. Even though the Covenant was communicated to David, it was ultimately given to Messiah, the Seed of David. In the Adamic Covenant, God spoke of a "Seed" who would crush the head of the serpent. This is symbolic of the rule of Messiah over the enemies of God. In the Davidic Covenant, we see the continued promise of a "Ruling Seed" Who, like David, triumphed over His enemies. Ge.3:15).

God did not permit David to build His House, however, Solomon, David's son, did build a House for God. Solomon's Temple was a magnificent, awe-inspiring edifice (1Ch.28:2-6). This Temple prefigures Messiah and all those who put their faith in Him. One of David's sons built God a House, and another of David's sons, was God's House (Ep.2:19-22). The Davidic Covenant, like the Abrahamic Covenant, contained no curses. However, some Kings of the Davidic line did bring judgment upon themselves by their willful transgressions of the terms of the Covenant.

3. There were terms to the Davidic Covenant.

a. Faith was required in this Covenant.

The Old Testament word for faith in Habakkuk 2:4 is literally "firmness, security, fidelity." The word most often translated, as a synonym to faith is trust. We see that David most often used the Hebrew word "*batach*" which

literally means, "to trust, be confident, or sure." In the twenty-seventh (27) Psalm, the words of David reflect a heart that is responding to the Covenant. This shows the heart of David. His words reflect a confidence and sureness in the provision of God. These words reflect the strength of his faith.

After David received the Covenant-Words he worshipped the Lord, expressing his Covenant-Faith (2Sa.7:18-22, 28-29). God expected David's descendants to continue in the faith David expressed.

Care must be taken to see that the enemy does not rob us of our Covenant-Promises. By our failure to be strong and continuously respond to the Covenant, we fail to reap the benefits of the Covenant. Even after sin and weakness, he continued being an active partner with God, exercising his Covenant rights.

b. Obedience

God's testimony concerning David was that "He is a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will" (1Sa.13:14; Ac.13:22). The Covenant God made with David required David to adhere to His Word. The outstanding attribute of David's Covenantal-Relationship with God was that David was quick to repent when he sinned. He had a pliable heart toward God. Under the Law, adultery demanded death, but God forgave David, when he repented. God did not take His Spirit away from David. This is a vivid picture of the New Testament Christian.

The terms of the Davidic Covenant required obedience. Disobedience would result in expulsion from the Land. This is the reason for the Babylonian captivity (2Ch.7:17-20).

4. This Covenant was confirmed with an oath.

This Covenant, being part of the Abrahamic Covenant was confirmed with an oath. In due time, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the oath was recorded in the Book of Second Samuel, chapter one (1), and of course in the Psalms. All the Covenants we have studied thus far are all inter-related. God's purpose and plan for man has always been defined from the beginning. God's plan has always been revealed to us, in His Word.

5. Blood sacrifice was required in the Davidic Covenant.

The sacrifice of the Davidic Covenant had its foundation in the sacrificial system of the Mosaic Covenant. David could not participate in the Levitical Priesthood of the Mosaic Covenant, but he could act as King-Priest in the Davidic Covenant. God allowed him to establish the Tabernacle of David under this Covenant. Another thing we need to recognize is that David did not disregard the still standing Tabernacle of Moses, but held it in high esteem as part of God's plan. The entire Davidic Covenant is dependant upon the foundation of the Mosaic Covenant. Without the basis of the Mosaic Covenantal structure, the progressive benefits of the Davidic Covenant could not be realized. The Mosaic Covenant was a revelation of the plan of God, which was continued in the Davidic Covenant.

Therefore, the Davidic Covenant is picturesque of the structure and foundation of the New Covenant. Jesus' sacrificial work of Atonement makes it possible for us to commune with God and offer up spiritual sacrifices. When David brought the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem, he brought voluntary offerings and peace offerings before the Lord (2Sa.6:17-19; 1Ch.16:1-4). David did not offer sin or trespass offerings, but he voluntarily offered free-will offerings of the burnt, the peace and the meal offerings with a heart of gratitude and thanksgiving. That is why our music today, in the day of the re-building of David's fallen-down Tabernacle, is all about the praise and thanksgiving of what God has done and about who He is, giving glory to Him.

6. David was the King-Priest.

The mediator of this Covenant was David, acting as King-Priest, as well as involving the Levitical Priesthood in the Tabernacle of David (Am.9:11-12). Let's look for a moment at the ways that David portrayed the King-Priest, even though he was not from the tribe of Levi.

- a. The linen ephod was David's garment when the Ark was brought to Jerusalem.

David wore a linen ephod, a priestly garment, symbolic of righteousness, as he danced the eighteen (18) miles before the Ark of the Covenant being brought upon the Priest's shoulders into Jerusalem.

- b. He offered Priestly sacrifices.

We have read where David offered Priestly sacrifices before the Lord. Saul, in doing this, was dealt severely with by God (1Sa.13).

- c. There was a pronouncement of Priestly blessings.

David officiated in pronouncing the Priestly blessing upon the people in the name of the Lord. To offer the Priestly blessing was not the responsibility of the King. However, David, being a man after God's own heart, and winning favor with the Lord, was permitted to exercise this Priestly right.

- d. There was transference of the Presence of God.

David set up another Tabernacle and placed the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord in it, even as Moses had set up his Tabernacle centuries before. The transference of the Presence of God from the Tabernacle of Moses to the Tabernacle of David was in preparation for the coming Temple and the New Covenant.

- e. There was a combination of the King-Priest ministry in David.

David's horn was to be like Aaron's rod that the Lord caused to bud and be fruitful. So God combined in David the King-Priest ministry that foreshadowed our ministry before the Lord, today, under the New Covenant.

We see that David left the majority of the Levitical Priesthood to minister in the Tabernacle of Moses, keeping the Mosaic order, but he appointed a great number of Priests, to minister in the Tabernacle of David, under this Covenant. This company of Priests was under the leadership of Chenaniah, the master of song, as well as Heman, Asaph and Ethan. There were, in David's day, two (2) companies of Priests, performing two (2) orders of worship, in two (2) different Sanctuaries, on two (2) different mountains, according to the two (2) different Covenants.

The New Testament reveals that the Levitical Priesthood yielded to the order of Melchidezek. These things that took place under the Davidic Covenant pointed to the ultimate fulfillment of the New Covenant (Ac.6:7; Re.1:6; 5:9-10).

7. Zion became the capital of the Nation.

During the reign of David, Zion, Jerusalem, became the capital city of the Nation and the city of the throne of David. Here many of the Kingly Zion Psalms were born (Ps.chps.48, 72, 110). Earthly Zion foreshadows heavenly Zion, from which King Jesus rules and reigns over His people, the Church.

The city of David was the political and religious center of Israel. Here the Davidic Tabernacle order of worship was centered. It was on Mount Zion, that the people of Israel gathered to worship and praise the Lord. Jerusalem had become the spiritual and the political center of Israel as was prophesied by and the Prophets (De.16:2, 11; 1Kg.11:36; 2Kg.21:4).

The fulfillment of the Tabernacle of David is found in Christ and the Church. Both Old and New Testament's show that Christ would sit in the Tabernacle of David, His church and both Jew and Gentile would gather together to worship Him who is the greater Son of David.

8. The Seal of the Davidic Covenant was the sun, moon, and stars.

In the Covenant with Noah, God used the rainbow as the Token and Seal. In the Abrahamic Covenant, God used a multiplicity of the stars as a witness of the promise of multiplied seed from Abraham. However, in the Davidic Covenant, God used the heavenly bodies of the sun, moon and stars to be its Sign and Seal (Ps.89:34-37).

God promised David that as long as the ordinances of heaven remained the sun by day, and the moon and stars to govern the night, that David would have a seed upon his throne.

H. The New Covenant

The New Covenant was made with the twelve (12) Apostles, who represented the House of Israel, and the House of Judah, after the flesh. These appointed men were the foundation of the New Covenant Church, chosen by Jesus. This Covenant, which became the fulfillment of all previous Covenants, fulfilling and doing away with the temporal elements of those Covenants, and making possible the Everlasting-Promise in all the Covenants, which had come before (Mt.26:27-28; Mk.14:23-24; Lk.22:20).

The word "ratify," means "to make valid especially by formal approval, to sanctify, to set apart, to sanction." All along, in our study of the Covenants, we have seen how the Sacrificial Blood was used to make the Covenant official. It also represented a life of commitment of those entering into the Covenant. Here, in these Gospel passages, we see Jesus announcing the bringing of the New Covenant, thus completing the cycle of the Covenant-Revelation. Here it was, the ultimate Covenant, made by God Himself, in the personage of the Son, Jesus Christ.

In the background of the Covenants that we have already studied, we see that the Covenant made with Adam, before sin, was called the Edenic Covenant. Then, God made a Covenant with Adam, after sin, involving redemption for Adam's race. The

Covenant made with Noah included all mankind and all creatures. After those three (3) Covenants, God then chose to specifically Covenant with the only chosen Nation, Israel. This began with the Abrahamic Covenant, then progressed through the Mosaic Covenant, the Palestinian Covenant, then ended in the Old Testament, with the Davidic Covenant. The promised Messiah would consummate all these Covenants, and the revelation contained in them, in the making of the New Covenant.

We have seen the tragic history of the Nation's repeated failure and judgment in spite of God's grace through Covenant, to this chosen people. The Lord Jesus Christ came fulfilling Genesis 3:15, born of a virgin, as the Seed of the woman, the Seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the Seed of the House of David. The failure of the Nation was not unanticipated by God. God, foreseeing the failure of humanity, made provision and planned for restoration for fallen man, in Messiah. The grace extended to humanity by this act, was also extended to Israel. In the first century, sources such as the Book of Acts and Josephus estimate that one (1) out of every six (6) Jews believed that Jesus is Messiah.

Jesus came to bring redemption from sin to them, as well as to other Nations. He came to reveal God, the Father, to them. Jesus came as the fulfillment and the fulfilling of all the Covenant-Promises given to their Fathers (Ro.15:8). By the time Christ came, some of the leaders of the Jewish Nation had perverted and trusted the Mosaic Covenant, by their traditions. Jesus said to them (Mk.7:8), "You disregard and give up and ask to depart from you the Commandment of God and cling to the tradition of men, keeping it carefully and faithfully." They had become spiritually proud of their choice under the Abrahamic Covenant.

1. The last Covenant with Israel and Judah is the New Covenant.

The New Covenant was the last Covenant ever to be made with the House of Israel and the House of Judah (Je.31:31-35). From the Mosaic Covenant, prophecies were given of a future Covenant between the House of Israel and the House of Judah. The Old Testament prophecies through the Prophets, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, of this future Covenant. It must be viewed as future for Israel, because it cannot be realized, by Israel, until God has affected Her final Salvation and Restoration to the Land. This New Covenant for Israel must follow the return of Christ at the Second Advent (Ro.11:26-27).

In the New Covenant, these are promises of spiritual blessings and promises of earthly blessing. The Gentiles, like Israel, are promised Salvation, the forgiveness of sin, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Yet, the Gentiles are never promised inheritance in the land. Just as the Gentiles, in Messiah, receive the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant by faith (Ga.3:13-14), without being under or fulfilling that Covenant. So, the Gentiles may receive blessings through relationship with

Messiah, from the New Covenant, without using or fulfilling the New Covenant. By placing their faith in Messiah, Gentiles come into direct relationship with the New Covenant.

There is revelation of this Covenant in the Old Testament, in what we call types. We have some major types given to us showing the coming of the New Covenant, such as:

- a. There are major types in Abraham's two (2) sons.

Paul used the two (2) Sons of Abraham as an allegory to explain the two (2) Covenants (Ga.4:21-28). An allegory is a description of one (1) thing under the image of another.

We see that Ishmael represents the perversion of the Mosaic Covenant into a legalistic approach to God, by works. Scripture clearly shows some Jews took this approach. However, this was not the mentality of the majority of the Jews. The majority followed the precedent set by Abraham in approaching God, by faith. Abraham's son, Isaac, typifies this approach, through faith in Messiah, the basis and foundation of the New Covenant. When Isaac was weaned, it became apparent that Ishmael could not be of heir of the Abrahamic Covenant.

This foreshadowed that the Mosaic Covenant would be modified and renewed as the New Covenant. We can see this major type of the coming New Covenant through various Old Testament passages.

- b. The Mosaic Covenant was typical.

In Second Corinthians chapter three (3), Paul illustrated how the Mosaic Covenant was typical of the New Covenant. He spoke of the gloriousness of the Old Covenant, which caused Moses' face to shine. However, the New Covenant is written on the tables of the heart, never to be done away with. It will last forever.

- c. The marriage laws of the Mosaic Covenant are typical also.

Paul shows us in Romans 7:1-4, how the Old Covenant marriage laws typified the transfer from the Mosaic Covenant to the New Covenant. Israel was married to the Lord at Mt. Sinai on the basis of the Mosaic Covenant. The marriage of the Lord to Israel at Mt. Sinai is a picture of Jesus' marriage to His Bride.

Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus involved in the New Covenant, Gentile Believers are now grafted into the "Olive Tree" and will be eventually part of the Bride of Messiah.

d. We are justified by faith.

One last type in Scripture concerning the New Covenant in Romans chapter four (4), Paul refers to Abraham being justified by faith, while uncircumcised, as an example of the Gentiles, who are called the uncircumcision being justified by faith under the New Covenant. He also referred to the Jews, who were the circumcision, under the Mosaic Covenant, as being by faith under the New Covenant. So we see, by reason of the New Covenant, Abraham is the Father of all who "believe" whether Jew or Gentile, circumcision or uncircumcision (Ro.2:29; Php.3:3). So a true Jew is one who has experienced the spiritual circumcision of the heart, whether he is Jew or Gentile.

2. The New Covenant was prophesied.

Not only was the New Covenant typified in the Old Testament era, it was also clearly prophesied. The Prophets looked forward to a brighter day when they would walk under a New Covenant-Relationship with God.

a. Paul confirmed this prophecy in Isaiah's prophecy.

Isaiah foretold of the coming Redeemer to Zion and the turning from transgression by reason of the Words and Spirit of the coming New Covenant (Is.59:20-21; Ro.11:26-27).

b. Jeremiah prophesied of a New Covenant.

We see the prophet Jeremiah giving a clear and full prophecy concerning the New Covenant. He shows us that the Lord said "He would make with the house of Judah and the house of Israel in the last days (Je.31:31-34; Je.32:38-40). Along with Jeremiah's prophecy, we see the writer of Hebrews clearly stating how parts of the Mosaic Covenant had become old and decayed, and was ready to vanish away once the New Covenant was established (He.8:6-13). The promises of the New Covenant involve a new heart and a new mind, upon which the Laws of God would be written, instead of upon tables of stone.

c. Ezekiel prophesies of a New Covenant.

Another great prophetic voice that foretold the coming of the New Covenant was Ezekiel. Ezekiel spoke of this Covenant as “a Covenant of Peace.” Who needs a Covenant of Peace more than the Jew living in the land of Israel today? Of course, we know and understand that because of the New Covenant and the Cross, “Jesus is our peace, who has broken down the middle wall of partition between the Jew and the Gentile, and made us one.” (Ep.2:14). However, Ezekiel, in his prophetic word, told of the reception of a new heart and a new spirit by the power of the Holy Spirit’s work and the removal of the stony heart (Ezk.11:16-21). These promises are contained in the New Covenant for us. A man or woman who does not have God’s life on the inside of them, that person is a hard person. Their heart is hardened against the things of God. They have no understanding of spiritual things. Their heart cannot direct them because it is stone, with no feeling in it for God or His ways. However, under the New Covenant Promises, at the time of Salvation, or receiving the life of Christ, God gives a heart of flesh that is responsive to the touch of God. This is why, in a gathering of the Saints, God can touch hearts and move upon hearts to desire Him and to remove all foreign material out of their systems.

d. Hosea prophesied of a New Covenant.

The last example that we will use of the New Covenant being prophesied is in the beautiful picture of marriage by the Prophet Hosea. Hosea foretold the coming of the New Covenant both by his words and the symbolic marriage he experienced. Hosea found that his wife, the mother of his children, had played the harlot. Under God’s instruction he put her away. The children born of Hosea’s wife had symbolic names. One was named “*Lo-ruhamah*,” meaning “not having obtained mercy” and “*Lo-ammī*,” meaning “not my people, and I will not be your God” (Ho.1:6-9;2:1-2). All of this was symbolic of Jehovah’s marriage to Israel. However, God spoke through Hosea saying that the people, though cast off, would be as the sand of the sea. This was an Abrahamic Covenant promise, and in due time they would become the sons of the living God. This is an example of the New Covenant promise. To illustrate this, God told Hosea to redeem Gomer back to Himself. He did and it became symbolic of the fact that though national Israel was divorced under the Old Covenant, by redemption at the Cross, they would be restored back to God into Covenantal-Relationship.

In the New Testament writers, especially Paul and Peter, they took these words of Hosea and used them to show that under the Old Covenant, both Israel and the Gentile at one time or one point in history found no mercy, and were not the people of God. But now, under the New Covenant, Israel and Gentiles can find mercy and become His people and He become our God (Ro.9:23-26; 11:26-36).

3. There are temporal and everlasting elements of the Covenants.

There were, in the previous Covenants, both temporal and everlasting elements. Jesus Christ, by the New Covenant, came to be the fulfillment of the Messianic Promises in those Covenants and that makes those promises everlasting. He, through the work of the Cross, abolished or did away with the temporary elements in those Covenants.

For example, the Seal of the Abrahamic Covenant was circumcision. While the Seal is not expected of Gentile Believers, it is still expected of Jewish Believers along with circumcision of the heart. The circumcision of the heart is the goal of circumcising the flesh. Circumcision can therefore be seen as a spiritual application of cutting off or mortification of the flesh thereby destroying our old nature. It is replaced with the circumcision of the heart, and spirit It is now and internal Seal rather than external one.

Another example is that under the Mosaic Covenant, there were many temporary elements: the Law on Tables of Stone, Sacrifice, and the Priesthood. These aspects were fulfilled at the Cross of Christ. We can also see that previous Covenants had everlasting elements in them. While the New Covenant fulfilled and abolished the temporal elements, it made it possible for the everlasting elements to remain. The things can only be eternal or everlasting by reason of the Messiah, Who is eternal and everlasting. Christ, the anointed one, lives in the power of an endless life. He is the guarantee of the everlasting elements contained in the New Covenant.

4. The Words of the Covenant are from the Words of Jesus.

When we begin to consider the Words of the New Covenant, it is necessary to begin with all the Words of Jesus spoken in the Gospels. The words spoken by Jesus are certainly New Covenant promises. Romans 15:8-9 tells us that "Jesus Christ was made a minister of the circumcision" to confirm the promises made unto the Fathers. This New Covenant, with its blessings, is the fulfillment of the previous Covenants and its promised blessings.

The preaching, teaching, saving, and healing ministry of Jesus Christ was all a confirmation of the Covenants. All were intended to restore man back to the blessing and purpose God intended in Eden. The good news is that the New Covenant blessings go far beyond those of the Old Testament.

5. There are promises of blessing.
 - a. The first promised blessing is salvation.

The word "Salvation" includes in its meaning, "safety, security, preservation, deliverance and wholeness, health." The word "Salvation" in the Greek is "*soteria*" (*so-tay-ree-ah*). In the Hebrew, "*yeshua*," meaning "something saved, deliverance, victory, prosperity, help, health, save, welfare." The chief blessing of the New Covenant is Salvation. It is the greatest spiritual blessing that Christ came to bring. Theologically, this "great Salvation" includes the following benefits, all made possible by the New Covenant in Christ.

- b. There is a pardon in these promised blessings.

Pardon is the forgiveness and remission of the penalty of sin (Ac.10:43; 13:36-39).

- c. There is remission of sins in the promised blessings.

This word is used ten (10) times in the New Testament. In the Greek, it is a little word "*aphesis*" (*ap-es-is*), with a long meaning. It means freedom, pardon, deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, and remit." Remission also means, "to send away," in essence, "to send our sins away." Jesus forgave sins (Mt.9:2; Mk.2:5). Jesus brought Salvation to sinners (Lk.19:1-10). Zacharias was an Israelite. He was a sinner. The Amplified Bible says, "he was devoted to sin," but after Salvation, Jesus called him a "...real spiritual son..." of Abraham under the Covenant. The difference that we must remember is that the Old Covenant simply covered forgiven sin, while the New Covenant, provides cleansing of forgiven sin (1Jn.1:5-9).

- d. There is justification in the promised blessings.

Another benefit made possible by the New Covenant is justification. It means, the "pronouncement of being just, to be declared righteous "and" right standing" with God through Christ (Ro.5:1; 3:24-26). It also means, "To render, to show or regard as just" or "innocent, free, justify, being

righteous."

God's court system and the world's court system are very different, even though the pattern came from God. The world system began by declaring a person innocent until proven guilty by evidence. The evidence must be gathered and proof must be established that the person is guilty, without reasonable doubt. God's high court says, "All are guilty, all have sinned, and all must receive judgment from God, the Judge." Jesus our lawyer, our advocate, who paid our debt and took our judgment upon Himself, steps forward to intercede on our behalf. When we receive Him and believe in His work, then we are declared justified, free from judgment, innocent of past sins, and brought into right standing with God. At one time, we were enemies of God, not reconciled to Him, not in a right standing. But after Salvation, we are called new creations. No past is attached to our record. God does not call us innocent by the works of the Law, under the Mosaic Covenant, for Law could justify none. It is only by faith we are justified. This wonderful New Covenant makes possible justification by faith in an accomplished work. Did our works bring it about? No, the works of Jesus brought it all about.

e. Regeneration is one of the promised blessings.

Not only do we have pardon and justification in the New Covenant, but we also have regeneration, the act or process of producing offspring; procreation.

It is God saying "...let us make man in our own image..." The bringing forth of a man, who would be in the likeness of God, to take dominion like God and bring another generation of mankind into the earth, to be like God. The story of Eden quickly brought us to the demise of man, the falling away or putting away from God that the sin of Adam brought to all mankind. Regeneration is the means by which one is born again into the family of God and can once again call God "Father."

Under the Old Covenant none could be born again. They could only be declared righteous because of their believing God, through faith.

f. Assurance is one of the promised blessings.

Assurance means that we have the witness of the Spirit, that we are secure in obedience to the Word of God. As a born-again child of God, the Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we truly are secure in Christ.

g. Sanctification is one of the blessings also.

Not only are we assured of our Salvation, but also we are sanctified or set apart unto the Lord for His holy service and use. After salvation, we are not our own. God calls us to be separate from the world and dedicate ourselves to God and His Holiness. The New Covenant Believers saw it as a separate work of grace and called it sanctification (Jn.17:15-19; 1Th.5:23; Ep.5:25-27).

h. Adoption is indeed a blessing.

Another promise of blessing to us, through the New Covenant, is the wonderful act of adoption. This is where one is placed as a son in the family of God (Ro.8:15, 22, 23; Ga.4:4-5). This adoption sets us in as mature members of the family of God and Jesus is the first-born among a vast family of brethren. Under the Old Covenant Believers never experienced Son-ship as do New Covenant believers (Ro.8:29).

i. Glorification is a future promise.

The last promise of blessing in this group that we are looking at is the promise of glorification. This word means, "to render or esteem glorious, honorable," or "to magnify." We should all know and hold in great anticipation that the final word of redemption is glorification. We remember that man fell from the glory of God when he sinned in Eden. The New Covenant makes provision for the Believer from justification to glorification (2Co.3:18). The New Covenant brings the Believer into the fullness of the glory of God. It is true that Saints, under previous Covenants, may have experienced some of these blessings in measure. Still, there is uniqueness to these blessings because of the New Covenant Believer's experience of being "in Christ." It is by the miracle of the "new birth." This glorification will have its finalization when we see Christ face to face, and receive our glorified body.

6. There are blessings in the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Without the words or the promises contained in these covenants, they would be meaningless. So not only did Christ come to bring Salvation, but also to bring the Good News of the Kingdom of God. This involved the preaching and teaching ministry of Christ. The preaching and teaching of Jesus was an integral part of the Words of the New Covenant, the Gospel of the Kingdom. The Church is to be the instrument to continue the work that Jesus began to do and teach. We are to teach and to live Kingdom principles. The Kingdom has a King, King Jesus. The

Kingdom has subjects to honor and obey the King. We are the ones who have been brought into the Kingdom by Salvation!

The Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached to the entire world for a witness to all Nations, "*ethne*" in the Greek, before the end comes (Mt.24:14, 28:18-20). God is not going to bring this age to a close until the whole earth has been given the Gospel of God. It is by the preaching and reception of the Gospel people are born into the Kingdom of God. Jesus teaching and preaching covers all the basic laws and principles of Kingdom living for New Covenant Believers. Though these words are found in the Gospels as a whole, the major truths are found especially in Matthew's Gospel. Here we see some of the major truths found in the Book of Matthew.

- a. First, let us look at the Sermon on the Mount (Mt.chps.5, 6, 7).

In Matthew chapter five (5), we see recorded the great Sermon on the Mount. This is where Jesus gave the Beatitudes, which are a pattern of Godly attributes of Kingdom Principles for followers to live by. Then in chapters six (6) and seven (7), Matthew continues by giving us Jesus' principles of Kingdom living, such as how to pray, how to stop worry and anxiety, and how to seek God and His Kingdom. Matthew goes on with the Words of Jesus admonishing us against judgment of others and having a critical spirit. He reveals to us how to enter the narrow gate, which leads to life, warnings against false prophets, and how to recognize good fruit.

- b. A spiritual Kingdom was for now, with a literal Kingdom to come.

All these principles are working in a spiritual Kingdom at this present time. However, soon will be the principles of a true and literal Kingdom, which is coming. Some of the other truths found in Matthew are the truth concerning the "heart condition" of the Church and the keys of the Kingdom. Not only the Gospels, but also things written in the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation are the words of Jesus, given by the Holy Spirit through the Apostles. These all are New Covenant Words. The Church's mission or assignment is to teach, preach, and live the laws and principles of the Gospel of the Kingdom!

- c. There are blessings coming on the Gentiles.

We saw the origin of the Nations in the Noahic Covenant. All the races of people came from Shem, Ham and Japheth. We saw that the blessing of all these Nations was promised in the Covenant made with Abraham. But under the Mosaic Covenant, the Gentile Nations were excluded from the

Covenants of Promise apart from entering a Covenantal-Relationship with Israel. Now Gentiles are a part of the Covenants through the work of Messiah. In the beginning of His ministry, Christ told His disciples to go only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel (Mt.10:1-6). This was to give the Jews the first opportunity to receive the Messiah. God chose them and cut a Covenant with them. Looking at the purpose of God in dealing with Joseph, He used Joseph to feed and preserve his brothers, who became the twelve (12) Tribes of Israel. Joseph was called according to His purpose (Ro.8:28). Because it always was the plan of God to redeem humanity, God included the Gentiles into the Believing Community (Jn.1:11-12; Mt.15:21-28).

After His death and resurrection, but before His ascension, Christ commissioned His disciples to take the Gospel to all Nations. Does Jesus want the Arabs, the Moslem people to have Salvation? Yes! Taking the Gospel to all Nations was to fulfill the mystery of the Gentiles coming into Messianic blessing and becoming one Body in Christ with believing Jews. The Old Testament Prophets spoke of this mystery and of its coming to fulfillment (Is.60:1-3; Ps.18:49; Ps.117:1-2). Under the New Covenant we can see how God's promise of blessing all Nations has come to pass.

d. There is also the blessing of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Look at Joel's prophetic word concerning the outpouring of the Spirit (Joel.2:28-32). This Word has come to pass for us, we who are living under the New Covenant, but it is future for Israel. The "afterward" in that verse is interpreted to mean, "after the restoration of Israel." Another prophetic Word is in Isaiah (Is.44:3). These prophecies were based on a Covenant Promise God had made to Abraham. The blessing that was to come on all Nations through Abraham's Seed was the promise of the Spirit. Christ taught so much concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit, which is the Seal of the New Covenant.

In the Book of John there is a little background study of the time and significance of the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus was at Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles. Scripture tells us it was the most important day of the Feast (Jn.7:37-39). This Feast of Tabernacles was for Israel, the consummation of the sacred year, and was the "Feast of all Feasts" as far as the Hebrew mind was concerned. Jesus, being a Jew among Jews, was present at this celebration. Between the Feast of Pentecost and Tabernacles, there was an interval time of three months, these being the fourth, fifth and the sixth months. Passover and Pentecost were linked together by a few weeks but Tabernacles stood alone at the end of the

sacred year, separated from the spring feasts by several months. These months were dry months, when generally no rain fell. The Words of Jesus, during the Feast of the Latter Rain, are very appropriately spoken with the context of this Feast. A ceremony, called the "Water-pouring" Ceremony, was a part of this final day's activities, indicating the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

e. Healing is a blessing of the New Covenant.

Not every Christian recognizes healing in the New Covenant. Whether they recognize this benefit in the New Covenant or not, does not change the fact that healing of the spirit, soul, and body are in this Covenant. God has provided it all for us. Israel in the Old Testament had been given the Covenant of Healing from *Jehovah Rophe*, the Lord that heals. David spoke of the twin blessings: the forgiveness of sin and the healing of diseases (Ps.103:1-4).

Isaiah foretold that Messiah would take all our sickness and disease, as well as our sins, in His body on the tree, and by His stripes we would be healed (Is.53:4-5). The New Testament writers clearly interpret this to be speaking of Messiah's healing ministry, spiritually as well as physically (1Pe.2:24).

A man of God wrote a book that has a significant paragraph describing the Cross as a perfect remedy for the whole man.

"Now if God were a respecter of persons, and that it was His will to heal only some of those who needed healing, then look through the Gospel, and see how the friends of the sick decided which of the sick to bring to Him for healing (Lk.4:40). In this Scripture it indicates that even some unlucky ones (if there were any), were brought and all were healed. Surely God was doing and revealing His will. If you had been there and were sick, you would have been brought, and would have been healed with the rest, because they brought them all! Matthew, in his record of this same instance, tells why Jesus made no exceptions (Mt.8:16, 17). "He healed them all, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esias (or Isaiah) the prophet, saying 'Himself took our infirmities and bare our sickness.' The word our means "everyone." Not only on this occasion, but on every occasion since until today, He healed the sick "...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet..."

There was never a multitude large enough to have in it even one that Jesus wanted to remain sick and would not heal. The Gospels abound with the healing ministry of Jesus, which is a New Covenant blessing. Jesus, who came to confirm and make good the Fathers Will and confirm the promises made to the Old Testament Fathers was the New Covenant personified. The healing ministry of Christ continues on in the Church (Ja.5:14-16). Old Covenant saints never witnessed such healing power, as did the generation that received the New Covenant Messiah's ministry.

f. There are blessing of miracles in the New Covenant.

In addition to spiritual and physical healing, the New Covenant Messiah blessed Jewry with great miracles, such as feeding the multitudes with bread and fish, walking on water, calming the sea and turning the water into wine to name a few.

Jesus performed many more miracles, which attested to the fact that He was confirming the Covenant-Promise made to the Fathers (Jn.20:30-31; Ro.15:8-9). Miracles took place, under Christ's ministry, that never took place under previous Covenants. The gift of miracles has also been set in the Church to continue the New Covenant ministry of Christ (ICo.12:1-13). In verse 10, we see the word "miracle." Webster's Dictionary says it is "an event or effect in the physical world deviating from the known laws of nature, or transcending our knowledge of these laws. Salvation is a miracle! Feeding five thousand (5,000) is a miracle and calming the sea is a miracle.

g. There is the covenant blessing of deliverance.

One of the great blessings of the New Covenant, instituted by Christ was deliverance from the power of Satan, demonic oppression, possession and bondage. Jesus cast out evil spirits with His Word. He was the Word and when He spoke, demons came out and people were loosed from satanic power (Mt.4:23-24; Mk.1:23-27, 39). We need to realize that being delivered from the bondage and demonic power of Satan is a tremendous work that Jesus did for us under the New Covenant. Breaking the hold that Satan had over mankind could only be accomplished by the One who possessed the great authority to do so. This freedom from bondage was in fulfillment of that promise given in the Covenant with Adam (Ge.3:15), that the seed of the woman would bruise and crush the serpent's head.

h. The covenant blessing of authority over demons.

Here are some general facts about demons from the Bible. They are made subject to Christ and Believers because of the atonement made by Jesus.

The name of Jesus holds all authority and dominion over every force of evil. Thousands of them can enter into a person, and 3,000 to 5,000 take possession of one man at the same time. They can be discerned, tested, resisted, and rejected by Believers. They have more than ordinary intelligence (Mt.8:29). They hear the Scripture, so they can find out the plan of God. Demons know their fate and recognize those who have power over them. They also know those who do not have power over them as it was with the seven sons of Sceva (Ac.19:13-17). They fear God (Ja.2:19).

Demons wage war on the Saints (Ep.6:10-18). All unbelievers are, to one degree or another, in league with them, with or without the person's knowledge (Ep.2:1-3). This freedom from Satan's bondage is what the New Covenant has brought to the Church, the Body of Christ. There is no record, in the Old Testament Era, of any ministry having such power over Satan and his demonic forces. Such deliverance is part of the New Covenant blessings. The same ministry was given to the twelve (12) Apostles, the seventy (70) disciples, and the Church, Christ's Body (Mk.16:15, 17-18).

i. There is the covenant blessing of the resurrection.

When Adam and Eve broke the Covenant in Eden, they came under the penalty of death, which was Satan's greatest power (Ge.2:1-7). The Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil was forbidden fruit to Adam and Eve. The violation of eating that fruit brought the penalty death. First there was spiritual death, and then physical death came at some later point. Old Testament Saints looked forward to the breaking of the power of death (Is.26:19; Job.19:25-26).

There was even foreshadowing and examples in the Old Testament of God's power over death being broken. I and II Kings have the accounts of Elijah, through the power of God, raising the widow of *Zarephath's* son from the dead, while Elisha, raised the Shunammite's son from the dead. It was Christ, who both taught and demonstrated that He was the Resurrection and the Life. It was He, who conquered death for all mankind. Without Christ, the new birth and the revelation of the Word, we would be held in constant fear of death. It is good to live here in the abundant life. In defeating Satan, who had the power of death, Jesus

obtained the Keys of death and hell (He.2:13-15). Death cannot bring fear to the child of God. We received freedom from the power of death when we received Salvation.

For most people, death speaks of the unknown but for us, who know Christ, and believe His Word to be true, we have a destiny, an eternity, to spend with God. God has given the Church power to raise people from the dead (Ac.9:36-42). Why do we not have faith to raise the dead? Is it because we believe death come from God? Jesus said "...I have come to give you life..." (Jn.10:10). When Jesus said abundantly, He was saying "the sense of beyond, superior in quality, exceeding abundantly above, and beyond measure."

Jesus never said that He came to bring death. He came fulfilling the Will of the Father, bringing life beyond measure. We see this in the healing ministry of Christ. He healed them all because life was in Him, His Words and His hands. The Book of Hebrews 9:27 tells us that man is appointed to die, but only because of the fall. The Word of God reveals conditions one can meet, which will extend his life longer than what may be otherwise expected. Many Scriptures give proof of no set time to die (Ex.20:12; Ep.6:2; Ps.55:23; Pr.3:1-2; IPe.3:10-11) These Scriptures, very clearly, show that God's desire for man is long life, but that man may shorten his life by being disobedient to God's Commandments and His Principles. Psalms 91 is all about the Promises of God, to those who would meet the conditions of that Psalm. These promises cover every known need for man in this life. They also reveal to what extent God has made provisions to help man in his struggle to overcome sin, sickness and the devil and to regain the full dominion that he lost in Adam when he fell.

j. There is the covenant blessing of eternal life.

In contrast to the sentence of the fullness of death is the fullness of eternal life brought, by faith, in the righteousness of Christ (Je.3:16). This is to restore to man access to the Tree of Life, which was taken from him, under the Adamic Covenant, after Adam had broken it in Eden. This blessing of eternal life includes: the sharing of God's life, the relationship with Him, the quality of His Divine life and the duration of life everlasting. As He is, so are we in the world.

7. There are terms to the New Covenant.

All the Covenants we have studied so far have certain terms. It is the same with the New Covenant. This is a Covenant of Grace, which depends on faith above

works. It is greater than the Mosaic Covenant. God was so gracious in providing the New Covenant redemption, but grace did not exclude His setting forth certain terms by which this redemption is received. This Covenant is irrevocable but it is not unconditional. We must receive what God has freely given.

- a. Repentance is required for admission to the Covenant.

When Adam sinned, he turned away from God and the Covenant relationship. To restore that relationship, man must respond to God's Covenant by turning from sin back to a posture or condition of receiving and keeping God's New Covenant. This change of mind and turning to God is called "repentance." Genuine repentance, brought about by the Word of God and the Spirit of God, is evidenced by genuine sorrow and change. With faith, it brings assurance of forgiveness of sins.

- b. Faith is required to come into the Covenant.

Every Covenant that is made requires trust and agreement with the Words of the Covenant. The men who received the previous Covenants were men of faith. In the New Covenant, repentance is the first or initial step, but faith becomes the channel through which, the Covenant must be held. Faith is the act of believing without seeing. Faith brings into existence those things in which, we believe God for based on the promises of His Word. Faith brings the manifested presence of those things hoped and believed for (Ac.20:21;He.11:6;Ep.2:8). Because Christ is the New Covenant personified, being "in Christ" and by believing in Him is to be in Covenant with God.

- c. Obedience is required in this Covenant.

Faith is not a passive attitude of trust in the person and words of the Covenant. It involves active obedience to the term of the Covenant. James 2:17-26 very clearly shows us that faith without works is a dead faith (Ja.217-26). These Scriptures show us how the great men or woman of faith acted, on the Word from God, to achieve mighty acts and to perform great works.

Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My Commandments" In His teaching of the New Covenant, Jesus laid down many conditions. This is illustrated by how often He attached the word "if" to His Covenant-Promises (Jn. 15:6-7, 10; Mk.11:25-26).

As a Believer of the New Covenant, we are not under the Law of Moses, but under the Law of Christ. The Old Covenant required legal obedience to its Commandments, but the New Covenant requires loving obedience to the Commandments of Jesus. The Old Covenant gave an eternal standard and required strict and full obedience. The New Covenant imparts an eternal standard, as well as the grace to be able to keep it.

Jesus made many Commandments, which are found in the Gospels, particularly in the Book of Matthew. These Commandments tell us to: love God, love our neighbors, witness to others, be righteous, they also concern prayer, forgiveness, self-discipline, Communion and Water Baptism and these are just a few of His Commandments. Jesus' Commandments are summarized in the word, "Love" (Mt.22:37-40; Jn.5:3). It is true that salvation is by grace through faith, and the New Covenant Believer who loves Jesus will keep His Commandments.

8. There is an oath to the Covenant.

In certain of the Divine Covenants, the promises were confirmed with an oath. When this is the case, the covenant becomes irrevocable. This means that it cannot be recalled, annulled or repealed. The oath is the way of attesting the truth of one's word. The New Covenant is also confirmed with an oath, and this oath is focused particularly on the Priesthood of Christ.

What about this Melchizedek, King of Salem? Salem is the name of ancient Jerusalem. He, Melchizedek, is a seven-fold type of Christ:

- a. In genealogy there is no recorded father, mother, birth or death, so that he could be a type of the Son of God who really had no father, mother birth or death as a Divine Being.
- b. In His Endless Priesthood
- c. As King-Priest
- d. Greater Than Abraham
- e. Called King of Righteousness
- f. King of Peace
- g. His Sacrifice

Paul had a two-fold purpose in these Scriptures. First was to show that Jesus Christ was the person prophesied of in Psalms 110:4. This Psalm is the one Jews believe refers to Messiah. Secondly, it was to answer the objections of the Jews against Christ's Priesthood on the grounds that He did not come from Priestly stock and could not be the anti-type of Aaron.

The Priestly order of Aaron was done away with to make way for the original Priesthood that preceded it, the order of Melchizedek. This made it necessary to change the law and its sacrificial offerings which could not bring perfection, reconcile men to God, make them holy or take away sin.

The Book of Hebrews gives us the truth that Christ's Priesthood is after the power of an endless life. So this oath of an unchangeable Priesthood that was given prophetically in the Old Testament is now fulfilled in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ (He.7:11-28; Ps.110:4). It is the eternal Priesthood of Aaron, under the Mosaic Covenant and makes the New Covenant irrevocable. Priests officiated for man to God. Prophets officiated for God to man.

The "Book" of the New Covenant is the twenty-seven (27) Books of the New Testament. These Books contain the elements of the provisions of the New Testament made by Christ. The Gospels contain the Words and the Sacrifice of the Covenant. In the Book of Acts is given the Sign and Seal of the New Covenant. The Epistles, tells us all about the Sanctuary of the New Covenant. The Book of Revelation gives us the consummation and realization of the New Covenant.

9. There was a sacrifice of the Covenant.

In the New Testament, the atonement of Christ functions to initiate and maintain God's New Covenant with all humanity. While Christ's death may seem similar to the Old Testament sacrifices, it is not entirely so. Not only His death, but also His life is revelations of God's love, which work to reconcile an alienated humanity back to Himself (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 8:32). Christ's sacrifice of death and resurrection delivers humanity from sin and establishes a New Covenant with God. The Old Testament sacrifices are limited in usefulness to atone for the involuntary sins of those living under a previously established Covenant. Christ's incarnation is efficacious for all sin and for all people, regardless of their previous Covenant affiliation with God. His death is sacrificial, but not identical with the definition and function of the Old Testament system. Also, it should be noted that since the Old Testament sacrifices incorporated more than the sin offering, but worship and praise as well, the sacrifice of Christ is certainly not limited to any penal or judicial function.

Indeed, Covenant, "*diatheke*," in the New Testament expresses primarily the idea of forgiveness in connection with the work of Christ. Because of Christ a relationship between God and man has become possible in a way previously impossible. What the Law could not do in overcoming sin, God has done in Christ (Ro. 8:3-4). The writer of Hebrews speaks of a "better Covenant" (Heb. 7:22; 8:6). Paul compares the Old Covenant with a schoolmaster whose purpose was to lead Israel to Christ, while the New Covenant is spiritual and based on faith (Gal. Chapter 3). Each time the New Testament refers to the New Covenant as having been prophesied it links an explicit reference to forgiveness of sin with the New Covenant.

While it is clear that Christ establishes this New Covenant as a context in which forgiveness and reconciliation may occur, it is less clear how what Christ does can cancel the effects of sin and reconcile humanity to God. A number of metaphors are used to convey pictorially the means of atonement. These metaphors include the ideas of sacrifice, ransom, redemption, reconciliation, justification, adoption, and regeneration. The common element in these concepts is the concern to release the sinner from the wrathful consequences of sin and restore the penitent to fellowship with God through forgiveness. In interpreting these metaphors, it is important to remember that all of them must be understood against the background of the Covenant with its personal and relational implications.

Since the atoning work of Christ is frequently described with sacrificial terminology, it is tempting to understand terms such as "cross," "blood," "sacrifice," "lamb" as referring exclusively to Christ as a sin offering. Furthermore, the sacrificial victim in the sin offering is sometimes understood as having a vicarious penalty inflicted upon it. In fact, it is not clearly established that the sacrificial victim in the Old Testament absorbed the penalty deserved by the sinner. Instead, the victim reflected the repentance of the one who offered the sacrifice. Christ is spoken of as a "paschal lamb" by Paul (I Cor. 5:7) and the "Lamb of God" by John (John 1:29, 36), it is understood that He is to be a sacrifice but not a sin offering. The paschal lamb of Passover indicates celebration over deliverance from bondage.

Furthermore, the significance of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8), is that the atonement of Christ is not just the single act of the Cross, but is the "righteousness of God," the eternal, saving character of God, Himself. The death of Christ is the "eternal, suffering love of God for man," which may not indicate His absorption of His own penalty as much as it indicates the extent to which He will go to restore a Covenant, which He did not break and to deliver helpless humanity from bondage, which it brought upon itself.

These sacrificial metaphors imply that Christ's incarnation was a sacrifice to God, which fully achieved what the Old Testament ritual did only in figure and, in constant necessity of repetition. Also, it must be remembered that the sacrifice in the Old Testament was effective in restoring the Covenant-Relationship only when it was accompanied by the faith and obedience of the one on whose behalf it was offered. The wrath of God was averted by the obedient performance of a ritual made available by grace.

Christ thus becomes the ultimate statement of humanity's repentance and confession of faith. His atonement is vicarious not simply in that He became a sacrifice so that we would not have to be sacrifices, but it is vicarious in that by His life, death and resurrection He modeled to us how we were to be "living sacrifices" (Romans 12:1-2). It is only as our repentance and obedience are complete so that we are united with Christ in the sacrifice of His total life (Rom. 6:1-10) that sin is expiated and God is propitiated. In the Old Testament, God prescribed the sacrificial ritual whereby repentance was to be expressed. In the New Testament, the proper sacrificial attitude is exemplified by Christ's life and death. Instead of a sacrificial ritual we have a sacrificial example. This example does not simply inspire the sinner to moral renewal, but requires that the sinner also express repentance for sin and personal surrender to God by identifying in faith with the dying and rising experience of Christ (Rom. 6:1-10). Thus, by obedient union by faith in the events of Christ's sacrificial life and death, the Believer is enabled to conform to the Covenant expectations. This is justification since the Believer is now brought into a relationship of righteousness in the Covenant union.

Thus, a sacrificial understanding of the atonement in the context of the Covenant-Relationship emphasizes the need for participatory involvement in the "fellowship of his sufferings." Christ's work benefits me only as I experience it in faith and union with Him. When the objective work of Christ in atonement is divorced from the subjective need for the appropriation of His work by faith, the vicarious implications of Christ's dying "for many" (Mark 10:45) give way to a substitutionary emphasis in which, Christ's work becomes an external and transactional satisfaction of penalty, which tends to separate the Believer from responsibility for moral and spiritual growth.

By placing Himself among humanity as a part of it, Christ as the perfect expression of humanity in obedience to God took the place of our weakness and rebellion and accomplished reconciliation with God for us. God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21, NASV). The fact that He "bore our sins in his body on the cross" (1 Peter 2:24 NASV), gives us an example of what obedience to God really is. Peter has said in 1 Peter 2:18-23, that what finds favor with God is

obedience to Him in the face of unjust suffering.

In the Old Testament, the prescriptions of Covenant expectations were made clear so that the Believer would have measurable standards, by which his behavior was judged. In the New Testament, Christ is the incarnation, the example, of Covenant expectations. Ritual obedience to the Law could not make the Believer like Christ. Only union with Him in faith could make the Believer righteous. In this New Covenant, the Believer is asked to be his/her own sacrifice by a faith union with the perfect expression of Covenant obedience, the sacrifice of Christ's life, death and resurrection. Christ is not only a sin offering which expresses our repentance, He is the entire Covenant who also expresses our thanksgiving and worship and pattern for Covenant life. Christ, as our sacrifice, expresses repentance so perfect and complete that it expiates the effects of sin for all those who, in faith, allow Christ to be the expression of their repentance. Because Christ speaks for us and perfectly expresses our repentance and obedience, God's wrath against us is propitiated and we are restored to Covenant-Fellowship. Christ, therefore, as our expiation, establishes us in righteous relationship to God "that we might become the righteousness of God, in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Thus, Christ breaks the barrier between humanity and God (Eph. 2:14) not just by changing the attitude of God, but by expressing a change in humanity as well. Reconciliation occurs not because God's justice is satisfied by retributive punishment but by a correction of humanity's Covenant-Relationship to God and thus removing the cause for God's wrath.

The kind of obedience God desires is the kind Christ showed when He obeyed to the point of death. Thus, Peter makes clear that he understands what Christ did in His life and death to be the perfect example of obedience, in order that by identifying with His example of perfect obedience, we might "die to sin and live to righteousness" also in a relationship of acceptable Covenant obedience. The writer of Hebrews expresses a similar emphasis in calling Christ the "pioneer of our Salvation" (Heb. 2:10;12:2). The prevalence of atonement theories derived primarily from cultural and political settings, such as the penal substitution theory, has tended to obscure the Covenant emphasis of the Believer as a "living sacrifice" following Christ's example by faith-union with Him.

Under the symbolic sacrifices of the Old Covenant, it was the blood, which made atonement for the spirit and soul of man. Under that system, we can see how particular God was when it came to the details concerning both body and blood:

- a. The body of the burnt offering had to be wholly burnt on the altar. The blood had to be sprinkled according to God's Command (Le.chp.1).

- b. The body and blood of the Sin and Trespass Offerings were dealt with in a God-ordained way.

These pointed to, and found fulfillment in, that which pertains to the body and blood of the New Covenant sacrifice of Jesus. All those past sacrifices prophesied of Christ, who is the Covenant personified. The Book of Hebrews gives us two (2) chapters on the body and blood of Jesus in heaven for us (He.9-10). Both chapters show us that Jesus' body and blood is much more superior to animals. Thousands and thousands of animal sacrifices were offered in Old Testament times under the Covenant, but Jesus offered one (1) perfect, sinless, human sacrifice, once and for all.

The evidence of this sacrifice is in heaven. The body and blood of Jesus are incorruptible and so they are eternal! These will be the eternal evidences of our Salvation, both having been taken supernaturally to heaven. Jesus of the New Covenant would not have entered heaven without blood, no more than Aaron the High Priest of the Old Covenant would have entered the Holy of Holies without blood. It is the blood, which makes atonement for the soul. It is when God sees the Blood of Atonement that He accepts the Believer (Ex.12:12).

The body and blood of Jesus did not perish at Jerusalem, nor did they see corruption. They are in heaven for us and have been accepted by the Father God, as the basis of Christ's intercessory and mediatory ministry. Here are some truths concerning the body of Christ:

- c. His body in heaven is the result of the miraculous:
 - 1) For the incarnation, His body was entirely prepared by God in the virgin's womb (He.10:5).

Mary was the chosen carrier of the body, but the body itself and the blood that flowed through His veins were entirely made by the creative power of God.

- 2) His body in heaven once experienced sinless infirmities.

His suffering and death, but now is resurrected and glorified. Physically, Jesus was without blemish. He was the perfect man. Because He never sinned, He was not worthy of death and not subject to its forerunner, sickness. His acquaintance with sickness and pain all took place within the last few hours of His natural life. During his thirty-three (33) years, He walked among men and He was the perfect specimen of health. He was and is the Perfect

Lamb.

- 3) Christ's body in heaven assures our entry there.
- 4) His body in heaven will be the eternal evidence of His perfect sacrifice.

His body still has the wounds, through glorified, in His hands, feet, and side (Jn.20:24-29).

- 5) Christ's body in heaven is a guarantee.

By His body being in heaven, glorified, the bodies of the righteous dead will be raised and glorified. His body is the first fruits of the harvest of the resurrected redeemed.

- 6) Jesus' body originated on earth and was taken to heaven.

This shows us that our bodies will transcend natural laws, even as His did, moving in higher and spiritual laws. The day is coming when we will do the same. We will have bodies like Christ's that are adapted to the celestial realms for all eternity (Php.3:20-21). We are citizens of the Kingdom.

- 7) His body once sacrificed for sins.

Jesus, as the New Covenant sacrifice, fulfills and abolishes all previous Covenant Sacrifices. His sacrifice, as the Lamb of God, will always and eternally be fresh before God's Throne. The Cross was the altar upon which Jesus was sacrificed.

- d. His blood is ever effectual.

The blood of Christ is the most holy and precious thing. It is the very blood of God (1Pe.1:18-20). It is far more valuable than animal blood, or sinful human blood, for it is Divine Life. It is the blood of God.

Zechariah foresaw a fountain flowing, which provided cleansing for sins and for all uncleanness (Zec.13:1). Now that fountain has been opened for us, all true Believers, who have faith in the blood of Jesus, that was shed on earth at Calvary two-thousand (2,000) years ago and is now in heaven for us. Zechariah also said (3:9) "I will remove the iniquity of that land in

one day". In a short day's time, the Lamb of God became the sin offering for the whole world. Jesus Christ was a fountain sealed until the day His skin was pierced. When the skin of His body was punctured the fountain was opened. He is the source of the cleansing stream that washes away our sins (Re.1:5).

The back of Jesus was opened with a Roman scourge outside Pilate's judgment hall at the whipping post. The Roman scourge was different from the commonly thought of cat-of-nine tails, which was developed centuries later. This devious weapon was precisely built and used upon Jesus. Sharp bronze metal tips pierced at equally spaced points into Jesus' back. One writer describes the use of this instrument as follows:

"The blows were placed high on the shoulder area and ripped the flesh in straight lines to the buttocks area."

Christ foretold, this in Psalms, comparing His scouring to the plowing of a field (Ps.129:3). The Roman soldiers plowed His back with the scourge. They made long the stripes from the top to the bottom of his back. He also said centuries before He was tied to the whipping post, "I gave My back to the smiters..." (Is.50:6).

Blood gushed from His back," the mind of Deity had fore-planned. The whipping post was the means by which our sickness and pains would be borne. Jesus did not resist the soldiers as they led Him from the Judgment Hall to the whipping post. He knew that doing so; Isaiah's prophecy "...and with His stripes we are healed" would be fulfilled. The stripes were red stripes, the blood that flowed from His back purchasing our healing.

The crown of thorns, woven from the common thorn bush called a "Serpent Vine," in the Mid-East, opened Jesus' head to let the cleansing stream flow. This bush is said to have smaller thorns, but many more of them. A stinging poison, in the thorn, was released into His scalp as the mock crown was placed on His head and stuck with a reed or a staff (Mt.27:29-30). This is picturesque of the poisonous and evil thoughts, the wicked have imagined. The blood must have soaked this mock crown, showing the protection we have from evil spirits and a protective hedge for our own minds.

Blood and water flowed from His side, which pictured the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. It had to be more than just a few tablespoons, which collects in the chest cavity. This was an actual stream of water that fulfilled the type of the water from the rock in the Old Testament, and symbolized the living

waters that Jesus gives to quench our thirst. "Out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water" (Jn.7:37-39).

Three (3) other areas of Jesus' body were opened on the Cross, namely His hands, His feet, and His side. It was the custom of the soldiers to break the legs of those still living toward late afternoon, to hasten death. When they came to Jesus, they saw that He was dead already. They did not break His Legs. This, once again, fulfilled Scripture (Ps.34:20). Just as the children of Israel were instructed not to break a bone of the Passover Lamb, Christ, our Passover Lamb was sacrificed for us and His bones were not broken.

- e. There are benefits of His blood being in heaven.

Here are some of the benefits the believer, in Christ, receives by the New Covenant blood of Jesus being in heaven. We know and have looked at the justification and redemption through the blood, but what about reconciliation and peace with God through the blood? To reconcile means, to "cause to be friendly again, to bring back the harmony to adjust; settle." The synonyms for reconcile are "reunite, conciliate, propitiate, harmonize." The antonyms of reconcile are "estrangle, alienate, aggravate." We were an aggravation to God by our sins.

We have access to God by the blood, and our consciences purged through the blood (He.9:13-14). The rituals of the Law only cleansed the body, the flesh. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses the soul and the spirit and reconciles us to God. Dead works refers to the works of the Old nature, which deserved death and caused death in trespasses and sins. Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse our conscience of past sins and the works of the flesh.

We have communion through the precious blood. The communion, fellowship or sharing of the blood and body are represented in the fruit of the vine and bread. When we understand the Lord's Supper and partake of the elements in faith, there is a spiritual fellowship with the Lord and fellow members of the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ and the flesh that bore stripes for our healing, enter into the Believer by the Spirit and become manifest in his mortal body. There is healing in Communion, which naturally flows into our being as we discern the Lord's body (1Co.11:29). It was not a starchy, formal meeting, but a friendly and informal communing in the love of God. The Table of the Lord is a Covenant Table. Each time we come to gather at the Table of the Lord, we are confessing our unity and Covenant-Relationship with the Lord and with each other.

The body and blood of Jesus in heaven is made real and meaningful, by the power and Presence of the Holy Spirit, as we take the bread and wine in faith.

We have been made Kings and Priests unto God by the blood, and we have overcome Satan by the blood.

10. Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant (He.8:6).
 - a. He is a sinless Priest.
 - b. He is a Divine-human Priest.
 - c. He is the King Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Because Jesus offered a perfect Covenant-Sacrifice, He has accomplished a finished work and has sat down in the throne of God as the King and Priest of the New Covenant. He began His atoning work on earth at the Cross as a sacrifice and Priest. He continues His work, in heaven, as our High Priest. His Priesthood shows Him to be the perfect Mediator, Reconciler, Intercessor and Advocate for all New Covenant Believers.

11. The Seal of the New Covenant is Jesus, the Christ.

We have seen, in all the previous Covenants that God has made with man, that a Seal was attached to the Covenant as a reminder of the genuineness or the validity of that Covenant. It is no different in regard to the New Covenant.

However, the Seals of all the previous Covenants are fulfilled in the seal of the New Covenant. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Promise, and God seals us with the Holy Spirit (2Co.1:21-22).

The Holy Spirit is the Executor of the Covenant, to see that the Last Will and Testament of Jesus is carried out in the life of the believer (Jn.14:26; 15:26). It is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that makes possible, the blessings of the Covenant, brings faith in the Covenant, enables our obedience to the Covenant and makes us the Covenant Sanctuary of God.

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