

THE COVENANT PRINCIPLE IN THE STUDY OF YOUR BIBLE:

DEFINITION: A covenant is an agreement, promise or contract between men or between men and God. There are two kinds of covenants in the Bible:

1. **Conditional** – God’s agreement depends on man’s obedience. (God says “I will do this, if you will do that.”)
2. **Unconditional** - God’s promise to do something regardless of man. (God says “I will do this.”)

Four Covenants are accompanied with a sign:

1. Noahic – the rainbow
2. Abrahamic – circumcision
3. Mosaic – the Sabbath
4. Davidic – God’s Son

DIVISIONS:

1. Edenic Covenant: (Gen. 1:26-30; 2:15-17)

- a. God orders man’s life in the Garden of Eden and establishes His relationship with man.
- b. There are several conditions to this covenant:

- 1) Man is responsible to fill the earth with his seed
- 2) He is to subdue the earth to the needs of humanity
- 3) He is to have dominion over the animals
- 4) He is to only eat fruit and vegetables
- 5) He is to dress and keep the garden (“keep” implies to guard the garden against any enemy who might appear)
- 6) He is to abstain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
- 7) Failure to keep this last condition will result in death

- c. Adam’s sinful failure means he is expelled from the garden and will die physically and spiritually

2. Adamic Covenant: (Gen. 3:14-19)

- a. Made with Adam before his expulsion from the Garden
- b. It is unconditional and consists of a curse and a promise

- 1) The curse includes judgment on Satan as the serpent,
- 2) Judgment on the woman in multiplied conception and maternal sorrow, & subordination to the man,
- 3) Judgment on the man who will now have to work in a sin-cursed world – tears & death,
- 4) Judgment on the earth which will make man’s work difficult – thorns, thistles, etc.

- c. This covenant and its curse continues until the renovation of earth by fire

3. Noahic Covenant: (Gen. 8:20-9:17)

- a. Made with Noah when he left the Ark
- b. It is unconditional and the rainbow is its sign

- 1) God promises he will not again curse the ground
- 2) He will not again destroy all living by a flood
- 3) The natural order of the seasons will prevail
- 4) Man is commanded to be fruitful and replenish the earth
- 5) Man is again given dominion over the animals, and animals will prey on each other
- 6) Man is allowed to eat meat – as bloodless as possible
- 7) Capital punishment is established

4. Abrahamic Covenant: (Gen. 12:1-3)

- a. Made after God chooses Abram to become the father of a new people
- b. It is unconditional and circumcision is the sign
 - 1) Through Abraham will arise a great nation (although he is past child bearing age)
 - 2) God promises to bless all nations through Israel – the new nation
 - 3) Abraham's name will be made great
 - 4) Other nations will be blessed or cursed depending on how they treat Israel
 - 5) Other additions will be made to this covenant (see Gen. 13:14-17; 15:1-8; 17:1-8)

5. Mosaic Covenant: (Exodus – Deuteronomy)

- a. Moses is called to be the founder of a nation, not the father of a nation
- b. This is a conditional covenant; blessings are contingent on keeping the Law
 - 1) God gives His Law to Israel: moral, ceremonial, social and spiritual
 - 2) The sign of this covenant is the Sabbath for Israel
 - 3) Failure to keep the Law was seen as open rebellion to God – the Lawgiver - and the consequences were severe

6. Davidic Covenant: (2 Sam. 7:8-19) see also Ps. 89

- a. Made with David 500 years after the days of Moses
- b. This covenant provided for a Davidic house, throne, crown & reign or kingdom
- c. This covenant is unconditional: God said, "I will!" 2 Sam. 7:14
 - 1) David is promised a perpetual throne and a perpetual son for that throne
 - 2) David's son would have two thrones – heavenly and earthly (kingdom of God & kingdom of heaven)

7. Palestinian Covenant: (Deut. 29:1- 30:1-10) [this covenant is seen by some as a continuation of the Mosaic covenant]

- a. God promises His return as Israel's King after their repentance (thus a conditional covenant)
- b. He promises a regathering of His people from among the nations and restoration to their own land
- c. He promises the conversion of Israel
- d. He promises judgment upon nations which persecute Israel
- e. He promises great blessing and prosperity for Israel

8. New Covenant: (Jeremiah 31:31; Hebrews 8:8)

- a. This covenant was given to Jeremiah, the weeping prophet
- b. This is an unconditional covenant in stark contrast to the Old Covenant or Mosaic Covenant
 - 1) This covenant is made with Israel, as was the Old Covenant
 - 2) The Old Covenant was made on Mt. Sinai, the second was sealed with Christ's blood on Mt. Calvary
 - 3) Israel has no priest, no temple and no sacrifice (blood), and has been perplexed for 19 centuries, because she does not understand that the Old Covenant (Law) has been set aside
 - 4) The Old Covenant was written on tables of stone; the New Covenant is written on the tables of the heart
 - 5) The Old Covenant gave no means of obedience; the New Covenant is a covenant of grace and enables obedience
 - 6) The New Covenant was sealed with Christ's blood and will run beyond the Millennium to the new heaven and the new earth