Click to prove you're human

Lord’s Library editors assembled this resource highlighting all the Covenants in the Bible in order with meanings and key verses for new Christians. The concept of covenants is a central theme throughout the Bible, serving as a foundation for understanding the relationship between God and humanity. Covenants are essentially binding agreements between God and his people, outlining the terms of their relationship and establishing mutual obligations. There are several major covenants in the Bible, each with their own distinct characteristics and significance. The Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines covenant as “A mutual consent or agreement of two or more persons, to do or to forbear some act or thing; a contract; stipulation. A covenant is created by deed in writing, sealed and executed; or it may be implied in the contract.” There’s the Noahic Covenant in Genesis 9:8-17, the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 15:1-21, and Genesis 17:1-27, the Mosaic Covenant in Exodus 19-24, and the New Covenant in several places in the New Testament, including Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25, and Hebrews 8:6-13. This resource will explore the major covenants in the Bible, their significance and implications for the understanding of God’s plan of salvation, and their relevance to contemporary Christian life and theology. Through an examination of these covenants, we will gain a deeper understanding of God’s love and faithfulness towards his people, and the responsibilities and blessings that come with being in covenant with him. Note: Each of the covenants in the Bible listed below includes a brief commentary, key Bible verses to explore, and a summary of the key promise of each. Covenants in the Bible Noahic Covenant The Noahic Covenant is between God and Noah, and described in the book of Genesis in the Old Testament. It is one of five main covenants made by God with humanity, and it is significant for its role in establishing God’s relationship with all living things and setting forth a promise for the future of the earth. The Noahic Covenant is described in Genesis 9:8-17: Genesis 9:8-17: “And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.” Here one can see that God establishes a covenant with Noah and all men, promising never again to destroy all life with a flood. The sign of this covenant is the rainbow, which appears in the clouds as a reminder of God’s promise. This covenant is significant because it establishes God’s commitment to the preservation of life on earth and sets forth a promise for the future. There are several key elements of the Noahic Covenant that are worth exploring in greater detail. First is the promise never to destroy all life with a flood again. This promise is significant because it establishes God’s commitment to the preservation of life on earth. God recognizes the value of all living things and promises to protect them from destruction. This promise is a reminder of God’s love for all of creation and his desire to see it flourish. The Noahic Covenant is also significant because it sets forth a promise for the future. By promising never to destroy all life with a flood again, God established a sense of stability and predictability for the future. This promise provides reassurance that the world will not be destroyed again and that God has a plan for the future. The sign of the covenant, the rainbow, is a powerful symbol of God’s promise. The rainbow is a beautiful and awe-inspiring sight, and it serves as a reminder of God’s love and commitment to all living things. Every time we see a rainbow, we are reminded of God’s promise to preserve life on earth, and we can take comfort in that promise. The Noahic Covenant is a significant covenant in the Bible, establishing God’s commitment to the preservation of life on earth and setting forth a promise for the future. It is a reminder of God’s love for all of creation and his desire to see it flourish. The sign of the covenant, the rainbow, is a powerful symbol of God’s promise, reminding us of his love and commitment to all living things. As we reflect on the Noahiv Covenant, we are reminded by the Scriptures that while God will never flood the earth again, He will judge it according to His Word. God establishes a covenant with Noah and all men, promising never again to destroy all life with a flood. The sign of this covenant is the rainbow, which appears in the clouds as a reminder of God’s promise. The Abrahamic Covenant is a promise made by God to Abraham and his descendants, establishing a special relationship between God and the Jewish people. The covenant is a cornerstone of the Jewish faith and has had a profound impact on the development of Judaism and Christianity. It can be found in several places in the Bible, including Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 15, Genesis 17:1-14, and Genesis 22:15-18. Genesis 12:1-3: “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Genesis 15 Genesis 17:1-14: “And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.” Genesis 22:15-18: “And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” The first mention of the Abrahamic Covenant is in Genesis 12:1-3, where God calls Abraham and promises to bless him and his descendants. This promise to make Abraham into a great nation and to bless him and his descendants is the foundation of the Abrahamic Covenant. The promise includes a commitment to protect Abraham and his descendants, to give them a land of their own, and to make their name great. In Genesis 15, God reaffirms the covenant and promises that Abraham will have a son, even though he and his wife Sarah are both elderly and childless. God tells Abraham to look at the stars in the sky, promising that his descendants will be as numerous as the stars. This reaffirmation of the covenant strengthens Abraham’s faith in God’s promise and underscores the importance of trust and obedience in the covenant relationship. In Genesis 17, God establishes the sign of the covenant, which is circumcision. All male descendants of Abraham are to be circumcised on the eighth day of their lives as a symbol of their commitment to the covenant. God also changes Abraham’s name from Abram to Abraham, which means “father of many nations,” emphasizing the promise that Abraham’s descendants will be numerous and powerful. In Genesis 22, God tests Abraham’s faith by commanding him to sacrifice his son Isaac. Abraham obeys God’s command, but at the last moment, God provides a ram for the sacrifice instead of Isaac. This test of faith reinforces the importance of trust and obedience in the covenant relationship. The Abrahamic Covenant is significant for several reasons. First, it establishes a special relationship between God and the Jewish people. The covenant promises that God will protect and bless Abraham and his descendants and that they will be a great nation with a land of their own. This promise has been a source of comfort and hope for the Jewish people throughout their history. The covenant also establishes a framework for the relationship between God and humanity. The covenant is based on trust and obedience, and it emphasizes the importance of faith in God’s promises. This framework has had an incalculable impact on the development of both Judaism and Christianity. The Abrahamic Covenant is a reminder of the importance of faith and obedience in our relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Like Abraham, we are called to trust in God’s promises and obey his commands. A promise made by God to Abraham and his descendants, establishing a special relationship between God and the Jewish people. The covenant is a cornerstone of the Jewish faith and has had a profound impact on the development of Judaism and Christianity. Answer The Bible speaks of seven different covenants, four of which (Abrahamic, Palestinian, Mosaic, Davidic) God made with the nation of Israel. Of those four, three are unconditional in nature; that is, regardless of Israel’s obedience or disobedience, God still will fulfill these covenants with Israel. One of the covenants, the Mosaic Covenant, is conditional in nature. That is, this covenant will bring either blessing or cursing depending on Israel’s obedience or disobedience. Three of the covenants (Adamic, Noahic, New) are made between God and mankind in general, and are not limited to the nation of Israel. The Adamic Covenant can be thought of in two parts: the Edenic Covenant (innocence) and the Adamic Covenant (grace) (Genesis 3:16-19). The Edenic Covenant is found in Genesis 1:26-30; 2:16-17. The Edenic Covenant outlined man’s responsibility toward creation and God’s directive regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Adamic Covenant included the curses pronounced against mankind for the sin of Adam and Eve, as well as God’s provision for that sin (Genesis 3:15). The Noahic Covenant was an unconditional covenant between God and Noah (specifically) and humanity (generally). After the Flood, God promised humanity that He would never again destroy all life on earth with a Flood (see Genesis chapter 9). God gave the rainbow as the sign of the covenant, a promise that the entire earth would never again flood and a reminder that God can and will judge sin (2 Peter 2:5). Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3, 6-7; 13:14-17; 15; 17:1-14; 22:15-18). In this covenant, God promised many things to Abraham. He personally promised that He would make Abraham’s name great (Genesis 12:2), that Abraham would have numerous physical descendants (Genesis 13:16), and that he would be the father of a multitude of nations (Genesis 17:4-5). God also made promises regarding a nation called Israel. In fact, the geographical boundaries of the Abrahamic Covenant are laid out on more than one occasion in the book of Genesis (12:7; 13:14-15; 15:18-21). Another provision in the Abrahamic Covenant is that the families of the world will be blessed through the physical line of Abraham (Genesis 12:3; 22:18). This is a reference to the Messiah, who would come from the line of Abraham. Palestinian Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:1-10). The Palestinian Covenant, or Land Covenant, amplifies the land aspect that was detailed in the Abrahamic Covenant. According to the terms of this covenant, if the people disobeyed, God would cause them to be scattered around the world (Deuteronomy 30:3-4), but He would eventually restore the nation (verse 5). When the nation is restored, then they will obey Him perfectly (verse 8), and God will cause them to prosper (verse 9). Mosaic Covenant (Deuteronomy 11; et al.). The Mosaic Covenant was a conditional covenant that either brought God’s direct blessing for obedience or God’s direct cursing for disobedience upon the nation of Israel. Part of the Mosaic Covenant was the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and the rest of the Law, which contained over 600 commands—roughly 300 positive and 300 negative. The history books of the Old Testament (Joshua–Esther) detail how Israel succeeded at obeying the Law or how Israel failed miserably at obeying the Law. Deuteronomy 11:26-28 details the blessing/cursing motif. Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:8-16). The Davidic Covenant amplifies the “seed” aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant. The promises to David in this passage are significant. God promised that David’s lineage would last forever and that his kingdom would never pass away permanently (verse 16). Obviously, the Davidic throne has not been in place at all times. There will be a time, however, when someone from the line of David will again sit on the throne and rule as king. This future king is Jesus (Luke 1:32-33). New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The New Covenant is a covenant made first with the nation of Israel and, ultimately, with all mankind. In the New Covenant, God promises to forgive sin, and there will be a universal knowledge of the Lord. Jesus Christ came to fulfill the Law of Moses (Matthew 5:17) and create a new covenant between God and His people. Now that we are under the New Covenant, both Jews and Gentiles can be free from the penalty of the Law. We are now given the opportunity to receive salvation as a free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). Within the discussion of the biblical covenants, there are a few issues that Christians are not agreed upon. First, some Christians think that all of the covenants are conditional in nature. If the covenants are conditional, then Israel failed miserably at fulfilling them. Others believe that the unconditional covenants have yet to be totally fulfilled and, regardless of Israel’s disobedience, will come to fruition sometime in the future. Second, how does the church of Jesus Christ relate to the covenants? Some believe that the church fulfills the covenants and God will never deal with Israel again. This is called replacement theology and has little scriptural evidence. Others believe that the church initially or partially will fulfill these covenants. While many of the promises towards Israel are still in the future, many believe that the church shares in the covenants in some way. Others believe that the covenants are for Israel and for Israel alone, and that the church has no part in these covenants. In scripture, there are four major covenants which have to do with God’s relationship with his people. 1. The promises God made to Abraham, which are confirmed in Christ. (Galatians 3) 2. The Law of Moses (aka the old covenant). This was Israel’s covenant in the flesh. 3. The New Covenant. This covenant replaced the old covenant (Israel’s covenant in the flesh). This covenant was given to the house of Israel and the house of Judah (see Hebrews 8). Those among the people of Israel, who believe the gospel are given this covenant, and Gentiles who believe the gospel are grafted with them as the Israel of God. The seal of this covenant is not physical circumcision, but circumcision of the heart instead. According to Paul, those who are united in Christ (Jews and Gentiles) are the true Israel in the eyes of God. In Galatians 6: 12-16 Paul says the following: As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. Paul applies the title “the Israel of God” to those who have been reborn in Christ and not as a reference to ethnic Jews. If the Israel of God mentioned in Galatians 6 were a reference to the ethnic Jews, then the cross has been made of no effect, for there would be two covenant families of God and not one. Furthermore, if the Israel of God is a reference to born again ethnic Jews, then there is still a dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles, and again, the cross would be made of no effect. In view of all Paul has written in Galatians, the Israel of God can only refer to believers in the Messiah, who, in the fullest sense of the word are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise. Paul has made it abundantly clear that, in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision (which was the mark of Jewish national identity under the law) nor uncircumcision mean anything. What matters is being a new creature, and those who are such are the true Israel in God’s sight. In Ephesians 2 Paul tells us that the uncircumcised in the flesh are no longer strangers to the “commonwealth of Israel,” but have been made nigh to the covenants of promise through the blood of Christ. Jesus Christ has abolished the dividing wall which separated Jews and Gentiles, and now the two have become one in Christ. Jews who reject the gospel are cut off from being the people of God just as the scriptures declares: For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. ~ Acts 3:22-23 Gentiles who reject lost the gospel, are lost in their sins. 4. The oath God made with David. God promised David that he would raise up one of his descendants, who would be the Messiah, to reign as King forever upon his throne. David was the great King of Israel after the flesh. Jesus Christ is the King of Israel being exalted at the right hand of God. When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary he said concerning Jesus, “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.“ ~ Luke 1:32 In Acts 2, Peter interprets the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus at the right hand of God as the fulfillment of the scriptures that the Messiah would reign from the throne of David. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, the Lord said to my Lord, sit on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. ~ Acts 2:30-36 The apostle Paul referred to this as “the sure mercies of David.” And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. ~ Acts 13:13-37 CONCLUSION How do these covenants have a direct affect on the lives of Christians? 1. The blessing of Abraham, which is justification through faith in Jesus, is the inheritance of every believer. Through our faith in Jesus, we are members of the family of Abraham, which is the family of God. 2. Being in the family of God, no longer means being grafted into the physical nation of Israel, as was the case under the Law. Under Moses, physical Israel was God’s covenant people, and being in covenant with God meant that one had to be a citizen of national Israel. This is no longer the case. The family of God consists of people from every nation, for God fulfilled his promise to Abraham, to make him the father of many nations, through his Son Jesus Christ, who is the promised seed of Abraham. 3. In Christ we become partakers of a new covenant. This new covenant was given to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In this covenant, believing Gentiles are grafted in with believing Jews and become fellow heirs with them as the Israel of God. Paul uses the language of “the Israel of God” in Galatians 6 in conjunction with those who are circumcised, not with physical circumcision, but through the putting to death of the old man through the power of the Cross. The apostle Peter says, “ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light...” ~ 1 Peter 2:9 4. Christ is the exalted King of glory, and we are his ambassadors as in a foreign land. His Kingdom is not of this world, but through us, his power and Kingdom saves people from the darkness in this world. We are his messengers and representatives, and his Kingdom reigns over darkness through his power, in his people, who are his ambassadors in this world. One day, the King of glory will return and take over this world. For a long time, I had a tough time understanding the Bible. That is not to say that I have all my questions answered now. It is simply to say that when I read the Bible in the past, there seemed to be a disconnection between my expectations, my preconception, and what the Bible said. It was difficult for me to see how the whole thing fit together, especially when it came to the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. Table of Contents: A Conceptual Gap The Concept of Covenant The Biblical Covenants A Conceptual Gap Part of this difficulty is the distance of time, space, and culture that stands between the texts of the Bible and me. A major gap stands between 21st century America and first-century Palestine that can make understanding difficult. Why is so much ink spent on circumcision? Why is eating meat such a moral dilemma for these people? Why are the Samaritans so despised? However, there was a concept that made almost everything make sense once I understood it. The concept is covenant, and I would argue that it is one of the most important concepts to understand if you want to understand the Bible rightly. The Concept of Covenant A covenant in the ancient world was similar to what we in the modern world would call a contract, treaty, or a will. Each covenant established the basis of a relationship, conditions for that relationship, promises and conditions of the relationship and consequences if those conditions were unmet. One of the most familiar examples of a covenant for us is marriage. Why do I think understanding covenant is so important? It is because the covenants provide the skeletal framework for how the whole biblical story holds together. As the story of the Bible unfolds, we see God is a covenant making, covenant keeping, and covenant fulfilling God. God establishes covenants with certain people and these covenants are the way God unfolds his redemptive plan. The covenants are the structure of the story. The Biblical Covenants There are several covenants in the Bible, but five covenants are crucial for understanding the story of the Bible and God’s redemptive plan: the Noahic Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, The Mosaic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant and the New Covenant. The Noahic Covenant From Genesis 9, this is a covenant God establishes with Noah after the flood in which he resets and renews the blessings of creation, reaffirming God’s image in humanity and the work of dominion. This covenant promises the preservation of humanity and provides for the restraint of human evil and violence. The Abrahamic Covenant See Genesis 12 and 15. This is the most central to the biblical story. In it, God promises Abraham a land, descendants and blessing. This blessing promised to Abraham would extend through him to all the peoples of the earth. Understanding the Abrahamic Covenant is paramount to understanding theological concepts like a Promised Land, election, the people of God, inheritance and so on. It provides context for understanding practices like circumcision, conflicts with surrounding nations and divisions between Jews and Gentiles. The Mosaic Covenant See Exodus 19 and 24. This is the covenant God establishes with the people of Israel at Mt. Sinai after he led them out of Egyptian slavery. With it, God supplies the Law that is meant to govern and shape the people of Israel in the Promised Land. This Law was not a means of salvation but would distinguish the people from the surrounding nations as a special kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:1-7). This covenant was conditional and defined blessings and curses based on obedience or disobedience (see Deuteronomy 28-29). Understanding the Mosaic Covenant is foundational to understanding the cycles of blessing and curse in the Old Testament, the exiles of Israel and Judah, the disputes between Jesus and the Pharisees and Paul’s pastoral teachings about law and grace. The Davidic Covenant See 2 Samuel 7. This is the covenant where God promises a descendant of David to reign on the throne over the people of God. It is a continuation of the earlier covenants in that it promises a Davidic king as the figure through whom God would secure the promises of land, descendants, and blessing. This covenant becomes the basis for hope of a Messiah and makes sense of the Gospels’ concern to show Jesus was the rightful King of the Jews. The New Covenant See Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Luke 22:14-23. This is language first used in Jeremiah’s promise of rescue and renewal of the exiled people of God in Babylon. It promises a coming day when God would make a new covenant unlike the one which Israel had broken. This coming day would bring forgiveness of sin, internal renewal of the heart, and intimate knowledge of God. On the night of Jesus’s Last Supper, Jesus takes the cup and declares that his death would be the inauguration of this new covenant. These five covenants provide the skeletal framework and context for practically every page of the Bible. They are fundamental to understanding the Bible rightly. The Old Testament covenants establish promises that look forward to fulfillment. Much of the New Testament is concerned to show how Jesus Christ fulfills these covenant promises and what life should look like for a people living in the New Covenant inaugurated by his death and resurrection. Hopefully, this brief explanation of the biblical covenants will be a starting point to help you move toward greater understanding of the Bible as it did for me. Want more? Check out all the articles from Theology Thursday and return each week for a new post. Learn more about the College of Theology and available degrees by checking out our website or requesting more information with the button on this page. At a glanceWhat is a biblical covenant?Major covenants between God and ManThe New CovenantPotential covenants per definition of a covenantInnocence, in Eden, before sin (Genesis 1:26-2:3)Conscience, Adam and Eve, after sin (Genesis 3:14-19)Civil government, (Genesis 9:8-17)Abraham, blessing (Genesis 12:1-3)Abraham, land, (Genesis 15:9-21)Abraham, circumcision (Genesis 17:1-14)Abraham, offspring (Genesis 22:16-18)Law, Moses and the Israelites (Exodus 19:5-6)Land, Palestinian Covenant (Deuteronomy 30)David and the Kingdom of Israel (2 Samuel 7:8-19)The Kingdom proclaimed: John the Baptist (Luke 1:68-78)Jesus (Matthew 26:28)The church (Acts 2)The gentiles (Acts 9)The tribulation (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4)Kingdom and Millennium (Revelation 20)The new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21)Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38)What is a biblical covenant? A covenant is an agreement between two parties. In a biblical sense, covenants are made to humanity by God and are intended to ensure mankind acts together in harmony according to the teachings provided by biblical scripture. In some cases, biblical covenants may include symbolic sacrifice. In all cases, biblical covenants have no expiration date – and are enforced by God. Covenants in the bible may be categorized as (1) those made between God and Man, (2) the “New Covenants” introduced in the New Testament, and (3) various minor promises that could be regarded as covenants (by definition). No true “list” of covenants is given in the Bible but rather, inferred by instances of God’s promises to man as revealed through scripture. Major covenants between God and Man The following are the major covenants made between God and Man in the order they appear in the Bible. Noahic covenant In Genesis 9:8, God issued the Noahic covenant promising to never again destroy all life on Earth by flood. The rainbow symbolizes this everlasting covenant between God and every living creature on earth. Abrahamic covenant Also known as the Brit bein HaBetarim (Covenant Between the Parts), the Abrahamic covenant was issued by God to Abraham and his offspring. In Genesis 12 and Genesis 15, God grants land for Abraham and his descendants with no conditions placed on the covenant for fulfillment. In Genesis 17, the covenant of circumcision is issued as a condition to the promise from God to make Abraham a great nation, to give his descendants land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates (aka the Promised Land), and to make Abraham the father of many nations. Mosaic covenant In Exodus 19, God issues the Mosaic covenant promising to make the Israelites his treasured possession among all people, a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” – if they follow God’s commandments. As part of the covenant, God gives Moses the Ten Commandments. Priestly covenant At the end of Israel’s forty years of wandering, the Priestly covenant was made between God and Aaron and his descendants in Numbers 25:10 (and Exodus 40:12) in which God gave the tribe of Levi the responsibility to serve as Israel’s priests. The covenant was delivered to Phinehas, Aaron’s grandson, promising an everlasting priesthood as a reward for Phinehas’ religious zeal. Davidic covenant Covenants between God and Israel were clarified and extended in God’s covenant with David. In 2 Samuel 7:8 and 2 Samuel 23:5, the everlasting Davidic covenant was introduced to include David’s royal lineage in God’s plan. It is interpreted by Christians as a messianic covenant. The covenant consisted of three promises: a dynastic lineage, a kingdom, and a throne. As part of the covenant, God revealed that he would be the father to David’s son, who would act as God’s representative on earth. The New Covenant The New Covenant is the promise that God makes with mankind that he will forgive sin and restore fellowship with those whose hearts have turned toward him. It was alluded to in the Old Testament by the prophets Moses (who in Deuteronomy 29, predicted Israel would fail the Old Covenant but be given a time of restoration), Jeremiah (who in Jeremiah 31, prophesized the day would come when a new covenant is made with the people of Israel and Judah), and Ezekiel (who predicted in Ezekiel 36, a new heart and new spirit would be placed in mankind). The New Covenant includes the following principles. It was instituted at the Last Supper The New Covenant was instituted at the Last Supper (Luke 22:19) when Jesus told the disciples the covenant would be created through his blood (and was symbolized by the drinking of wine at the Last Supper). Jesus is the mediator Jesus is the mediator (between Man and God) of the New Covenant. His blood served as the required blood of the covenant Jesus’ death on the cross confirms what Jesus told the disciples at the Last Supper and is the basis for God’s promise. Jesus’ death served as an act of ratification and was the moment when Gentiles were brought into the New Covenant (Acts 10, Ephesians 2:13) Potential covenants per definition of a covenant The following are more specific instances of promises made by God. Some fall within the covenants mentioned above while others are single promises that are typically not included in the list of “major covenants” discussed above. Innocence, in Eden, before sin (Genesis 1:26-2:3) Known as the Edenic covenant (see Genesis 1:26 through Genesis 2:3), it was a conditional covenant between God and Adam governing man’s creation and life in Eden with complete innocence. It was broken shortly after it was made when Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Conscience, Adam and Eve, after sin (Genesis 3:14-19) Known as the Adamic covenant, it was an unconditional covenant (Genesis 3:14) made between God and mankind. It cursed the serpent, introduced physical and spiritual death, and changed women’s status. Civil government, (Genesis 9:8-17) As part of the Noahic covenant, the promises made in Genesis 9:8 are sometimes inferred to include God’s promise of civil governance. Abraham, blessing (Genesis 12:1-3) A sub category of the Abrahamic covenant, the covenant made in Genesis 12:1, blessed Abram with the promise to make his name great. Abraham, land, (Genesis 15:9-21) A sub category of the Abrahamic covenant, In Genesis 15:9, God promised Abram and his descendants the land from the Wadi of Egypt to the Euphrates river – the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites. Abraham, circumcision (Genesis 17:1-14) A sub category of the Abrahamic covenant, in Genesis 17:9, God placed the condition of circumcision upon every male. Abraham, offspring (Genesis 22:16-18) In Genesis 22:17, God promises to make Abraham’s descendants as “numerous as the stars in the sky” and ensures they will take possession of the cities of their enemies and that through their offspring, “all nations on earth will be blessed” because of Abraham’s obedience to God. Law, Moses and the Israelites (Exodus 19:5-6) In Exodus 19:5, God confirms that if his rules are obeyed, Israel will become a “treasured possession”. Land, Palestinian Covenant (Deuteronomy 30) In Deuteronomy 30, God tells Israel that if they return to the Lord and obey him with all their heart, then he will restore their fortunes and gather them again from all the nations where they have been scattered. David and the Kingdom of Israel (2 Samuel 7:8-19) In 2 Samuel 7:8, God tells David (through the prophet Nathan) that he will make his name great, “like the names of the greatest men on earth”. In one of the most vivid messianic prophecies in the Bible, God says, “When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son.” The Kingdom proclaimed: John the Baptist (Luke 1:68-78) In Luke 1:68, we are told the prophet Zechariah prophesied about John the Baptist, a “prophet of the Most High” who will “go on before the Lord to prepare a way for him”. In the prophecy, he confirms the covenants made with David and Abraham. Jesus (Matthew 26:28) In Matthew 26:28, Jesus makes a covenant with his disciples when he tells them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” The church (Acts 2) Acts 2 recounts a story of the wind sweeping through the church filling the occupants with the Holy Spirit and prompting each to begin speaking in foreign languages. Peter addresses the crowd, telling them God will pour his spirit on all people – sons and daughters will prophesy, men will see visions, and old men will dream dreams – and anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. The gentiles (Acts 9) In Acts 9, the Lord instructs Ananias to find Saul (Peter) and let him know that he is the “chosen instrument” to proclaim his word to the Gentiles. Upon finding Saul and relaying the message, Saul’s sight is returned and he begins travelling through the lands spreading Jesus’ message of salvation. The tribulation (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4) 2 Thessalonians 2:1 talks of the tribulation period and explains that the “day of the Lord” has not come and will not come until Satan is revealed, exalts himself over all others, and sets himself up in God’s temple proclaiming himself to be God. Kingdom and Millennium (Revelation 20) Revelation 20 tells the story of Satan’s destruction and subsequent released to “go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth” before being thrown into the lake of burning sulfur “where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown”. It reveals that the dead will be judged according to what they have done and anyone whose name is not found written in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire. The new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21) In Revelation 21, God reveals “a new heaven and a new earth” where God will wipe every tear from every eye, where death, mourning, and pain will not exist. Everything will be new. Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38) In Luke 1:26, we see an angel tell Mary, “Do not be afraid Mary, you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever. His kingdom will never end.“ Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. When Christians talk about having a personal relationship with God, they’re usually referring to having God as a friend, or a father, or even a teacher.But the Bible also frequently talks about our relationship with God in terms of a partnership. A partnership involves working alongside someone to accomplish a goal together, and we see this partnership in the beginning of the Bible. God creates a good world, full of potential and appoints humans as his partners in bringing about more and more goodness out of all that potential. 26 Then God said, “Let Us make mankind in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the livestock and over all the earth, and over every crawling thing that crawls on the earth.” 27 So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” 29 Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; 30 and to every animal of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food”; and it was so. 19 And out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.But the humans don’t want to partner with God. They rebel and try to create a world on their own terms (see Genesis 3). This broken partnership is the Bible’s explanation for why we’re stuck in a world of corruption, injustice, and the tragedy of death.And it’s not like one or two humans bail on this relationship. In the story of the Bible, everyone abandons the partnership with God. So God selects a small group of people and makes a new partnership with them, called a covenant. In a covenant, God makes promises, and then in exchange, asks his partner to fulfill certain commitments. His purpose is to use this covenant relationship to renew his partnership with everyone else.God initiates a covenant at four different points in the Old Testament: with Noah, Abraham, the nation of Israel, and King David. Through these partnerships, God is forming a covenant family into which all people will eventually be invited. The first covenant is with Noah. In this story, God uses a flood to cleanse the world of humanity’s corruption, and Noah and his family are the only ones left (see Genesis 6-9). So God makes a covenant with Noah saying, “Listen, I know that humans will continue to be evil, but despite that, I’m not going to destroy it like this again. Instead the earth will be a reliable place for us to work together.” And Noah doesn’t have to do anything! In this first covenant, God is promising to be faithful, even though he knows humans will fail. 8 Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, 9 “Now behold, I Myself am establishing My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; 10 and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the livestock, and every animal of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, every animal of the earth. 11 I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be eliminated by the waters of a flood, nor shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth.” 12 God said, “This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations; 13 I have set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall serve as a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. 14 It shall come about, when I make a cloud appear over the earth, that the rainbow will be seen in the cloud, 15 and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 When the rainbow is in the cloud, then I will look at it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” 17 And God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.”The next time God makes a covenant, he chooses a man named Abraham. God promises to bless Abraham and give him a large family and lots of land where they can flourish. In return, God asks Abraham to trust him and train up his family to do what is right and to seek justice (see Genesis 18:17-19). And God’s whole reason for this covenant is to somehow bring his blessing to all families of the world through this one family. 12 Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; 2 And I will make you into a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”Eventually Abraham’s family grows into the tribe of Israel, and so God makes a covenant with the whole tribe. He asks Israel to obey a set of laws, or guidelines for living well as a community of God’s partners. And if they do this, God promises to bless them so they become a people who represent him to the rest of humanity. 3 And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying