

The Concept of Covenant in the Old Testament

1) Introduction

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for covenant is always *b'rith*. In the New Testament, it is always *diatheke*. A covenant is a pact or agreement between two or more parties. God has initiated many agreements, or covenants, with different people throughout biblical history, i.e., Adam, Noah, and Abraham, and more. Covenant is an important part of biblical history and, therefore, theology.

There is a flow to the covenants found in the Bible. Basically, it is as follows. First, God the Father made a covenant with the Son with regard to the elect. This covenant was made before the universe was created and it consisted of the Father promising to bring to the Son all whom the Father had given Him (John 6:39; 17:9,24). The manifestation of that covenant occurs in our world in a sequence of additional covenants that God makes with individuals: Adam (Gen. 2:15-17), Noah (Gen. 9:12-16), Abraham (Gen. 17), the Israelites at Mount Sinai (Ex. 34:28), David (Sam. 7:12-16), believers in the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-37), etc. These additional covenants with people fall under the Covenant of Grace where God makes a covenant with the elect and promises them salvation through faith in Jesus.

A major question regarding the covenants is how many are there? Some theologians say there is only one covenant, the covenant of redemption and that within this covenant are all the other covenants. Others say that there are two covenants: the Eternal Covenant and the Covenant of Grace. Others say there are still more.

The Eternal Covenant, also known as the Covenant of Redemption, may be defined as the agreement between the Father and the Son giving the Son as head and Redeemer of the elect. The Son voluntarily took the place of those whom the Father had given Him: "The position of Christ in the covenant of redemption is twofold: First, He is a "guarantee" (NIV, NASB) a "surety" (KJV). This word appears only in Heb. 7:22 and means one who becomes responsible for the legal obligations of another; namely, fulfilling the legal requirements of the Law of God. In the Covenant of Redemption Christ undertook to atone of the sins of His people. And by taking the place of sinners He became the last Adam and is the Head of the covenant. He, then, is both surety and head." Heb. 13:20. The Covenant of Grace is the promise of God to redeem the sinner. This redemption is based upon faith in Jesus.

Every religion has to do with some form of union, fellowship, friendship or relationship with the Deity. "This is not peculiar to the Hebrew religion. What is peculiar to the Hebrew religion is that this union, fellowship and partnership with the Deity is based on a legal arrangement called a *covenant*. " ... covenant is a legal conception. . . . a legal basis is inherent in the very nature of the covenant." ⁱ

This means that God's union, fellowship and partnership with man are based on a legal contract. Further, God will have no relationship with His people outside of this legal contract.

Often, though apparently not always, God institutes a new covenant in conjunction with the new dispensation. The covenant specifies the promises God makes to man and the obligations or actions this covenant requires of man. The covenant God establishes with men usually includes a designated “sign” of the covenant. The sign of God’s covenant with Noah was a rainbow (Genesis 9:8-17). The sign of the Abrahamic covenant was circumcision (Genesis 17:1-14). The sign of the Mosaic covenant was the keeping of the Sabbath (Exodus 31:12-17; Ezekiel 20:12).

2) Definition of "Covenant"

A. The word "covenant" is used throughout Scripture. It is found 286 times in the Old Testament and 33 times in the New Testament. Even when it is not explicitly used the covenant forms part of the background of each passage or book. Because it occurs so often, and in such a variety of passages, it is difficult to form a precise definition, or even description, of the essence of the covenant. There have been many attempts, and all departments of the theological encyclopedia, Old and New Testament, Church History, Systematic Theology, and Practical Theology have contributed something to the literature concerning the covenant.

Covenant is the sovereignty administered relationship of union and communion between the Lord God and His people in the bonds of mutual faithfulness and love.

B. Terms for "covenant"

“In the Ancient Near Eastern it carries two meanings (1) oath and commitment, (2) love and friendship, and translations of *b^erît* must carry both connotations without exclusion.”ⁱⁱ

We can define covenant as a bilateral or unilateral agreement in which a previous relationship is formally defined and made binding through a verbal or symbolic oath. Covenant (Hebrew *b^erît*) was common in Ancient Near Eastern society, and an important concept in Old Testament faith and religion. Development of the God's covenant, from creation to the New Covenant, is considered and the common features noted.

Consideration is made as to the validity of covenant as a central theological motif for all of Scripture and to the significance of covenants in Israelite faith and religion.

Covenant in Arabic: (*a'hd, mítháq*) The spiritual contract binding God and humanity.

C. Understanding Covenant

The covenant concept, however, provides for a very unique and distinctive kind of fellowship with God.

It is a Lawful Fellowship.

The concept of fellowship with God based on a legal covenant meant that there was a stable and dependable element in the religion of the Old Testament. The covenant provided for a

"firmly regulated form of fellowship between God and man or man and God."ⁱⁱⁱ
The "legal concept is introduced to show that there is an established pattern in the dealings between God and man."^{iv} "There is no firmer guarantee of legal security, peace or personal loyalty than the covenant. . . . It means legitimate order as opposed to caprice, uncertainty and animosity."^v

It Is a Faith-Inspiring Fellowship.

The concept of a covenant fellowship with God gave the men of the Old Testament a mighty anchor to their faith. We may even say that it put them on vantage ground with God. God was obligated to them by the covenant (such is the love and condescension of God). He was their God. They were His people. He was bound to be loyal and merciful to His people. This is why we see examples of remarkable boldness to claim God's blessings. It was the covenant background which enabled Jacob to say to the Angel, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." Outside of the covenant relationship this demand would have been presumption.

We must not, of course, get the idea that the covenant operated automatically or that Israel could rest on God's pledge while she herself flouted her own covenant obligations. Yet if she sincerely turned from her sins, she could always claim God's favor (1 Kings 8:31-53; Ps. 106:43-47). This reminds us of St. Paul's words: " . . . if we are faithless, He remains faithful — for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. 2:13, RSV).

It Is an Exclusive Fellowship.

The covenant concept taught the Hebrews that fellowship with God was an exclusive fellowship. They alone were His chosen people. Yahweh alone must be their God. When we say that the covenant relationship with the Deity was peculiar to the Hebrews, this is not to deny that other nations may have thought of themselves as having some form of covenant with the gods.

It seems, however, that

“the covenantal idea was a special feature of the religion of Israel, the only one to demand exclusive loyalty and to preclude the possibility of dual or multiple loyalties such as were permitted in other religions, where the believer was bound in diverse relationships to many gods. The stipulation in political treaties demanding fealty to one king corresponds strikingly with the religious belief in one single, exclusive deity.”^{vi}

This idea of exclusive loyalty in the relationship between God and His people is well illustrated by the marriage relationship.

“The prophets, especially Hosea, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, seize on this thought and use it again and again to charge Israel with adultery.

Furthermore, the formula expressing the covenantal relationship between God and Israel, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Lev. 26:12; Deut. 29:12, [13]; etc.) is a legal formula taken from the sphere of marriage, as attested in various legal documents from the ancient Near East (cf. Hosea 2:4, [2]). The relationship of the vassal to his suzerain, and that of the wife to her husband, leave no place for double loyalty in a monotheistic religion.”^{vii}

This helps also to explain why prophets like Isaiah frowned upon any alliance which Israel might make with surrounding nations. Such alliances were forbidden by Israel's covenant with Yahweh.

Six guidelines for understanding covenants are suggested below according to Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart:

“1- The Old Testament law is a covenant: A covenant is a binding contract between two parties, both of whom have obligations specified in the covenant. In Old Testament times, many covenants were of a type called suzerainty covenants. These covenants were given generously by an all-powerful suzerain (overlord) to a weaker, dependent vassal (servant). They guaranteed the vassal benefits and protection. But, in turn, the vassal was obligated to be loyal solely to the suzerain, with the warning that any disloyalty would bring punishments as specified in the covenant.

2- The Old Testament represents an old covenant, which is one we are no longer obligated to keep.

3- Some stipulations of the Old Covenant have clearly not been renewed in the new Covenant... These are 1- The Israelite civil laws and 2- the Israelite ritual laws.

4- Part of the Old covenant is renewed in the New Testament... The ethical law are actually restated in the New Testament as applicable to Christians.

5- All of the Old Testament law is still the Word of God for us even though it is not still the command of God to us.

6- Only that which is explicitly renewed from the Old Testament law can be considered part of the New Testament “law of Christ”. (cf. Gal. 6:2).”^{viii}

3) Kinds Of Covenants

A. Human covenants:

A covenant is a promise or a contract entered into between two or more persons, usually under seal.

“Human covenants are mutual, voluntary promises or agreements, usually between two persons in which both sides obligate themselves to fulfill all the terms of the contract fully.”^{ix}

In observing different varieties of agreements among men, we note that they may be either between individuals or between larger units, such as tribes and nations. In a great majority of cases, however, they are between the larger units. In some cases, also, when an individual acts it is in a representative capacity, as the head of a clan, or as a king. When the covenant is between tribes it is thus a treaty or alliance. The following passages have this use of covenant: Genesis 14:13; 21:27,32; 26:28; 31:44; Exodus 23:32; 34:12,15; Deuteronomy 7:2; Joshua 9:6,7,11,15,16; Judges 2:2; 1 Samuel 11:1; 1 Kings 3:12; 15:19 parallel 2 Chronicles 16:3; 1 Kings 20:34; Psalms 83:5; Isaiah 33:8; Ezekiel 16:61; 17:13-19; 30:5; Daniel 11:22; Amos 1:9. In other cases it is between a king and his subjects, when it is more a command or ordinance, as 2 Samuel 3:12,13,11; 5:3 parallel 1 Chronicles 11:3; Jeremiah 34:8-18; Daniel 9:27. In other cases it is between

individuals, or between small groups, where it is an agreement or pledge (2 Kings 11:4 parallel 2 Chronicles 23:1; Job 31:1; 41:4; Hosea 10:4). Between David and Jonathan it is more specifically an alliance of friendship (1 Samuel 18:3; 20:8; 23:18), as also apparently in Psalms 55:20. It means an alliance of marriage in Malachi 2:14, but probably not in Proverbs 2:17, where it is better to understand the meaning as being "her covenant with God."

B. Divine Covenants

"A divine covenant is a one-way matter: God Himself totally makes the promise and sets the terms. It is essentially God's covenant with man, not God and man covenanting with each other."^x

Divine covenants always contain some blessing of God and are for mankind's benefit. The covenant relation is first and foremost divine in its origin, establishment, confirmation, and fulfillment. The covenant relation and all who are involved in it owe any and all fruition to the work of the Lord on their behalf.

The creation account is highly structured, using a framework of formulas (e.g. "it was so" and "God saw that it was good"). It presents God who is good and has good vision in mind for creation. He takes what was without "form, empty, and dark" and then forms and fills it. The first three days are occupied with forming, while in the next three days God fills what he has formed. The Biblical foundation of covenant is laid in the very act of creation.

"This is indicated by a strong parallelism between the creation and the Noahic flood narratives"^{xi} and "the fact that Creation stands as part of a historical process of creation/redemption."^{xii} "To speak of a creation or "Edenic" covenant is to assert that God's redemptive purpose continues his purpose in creation."^{xiii}

We see that God revealed Himself through creation and the creation of the world tells us things about Him. *In Hebrew 11:6 "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him"*

In the beginning the Bible speaks of a perfect God creating everything. "He is a creator, eternal, perfectly intelligent, wise, powerful, relational, communicator, good, love, the final authority over His creation." We see God's power in creation; God created simply by speaking and commanding (vv. 6, 9, 14, 20, 24).

"Creation is not the result of a struggle among gods or powers."^{xiv}

God's goodness is revealed in creation. The material world is good (vv. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). God creates in an orderly way, not in a random chaos. God creates humans as unique and special.

The six days are six ages of creation. A day can be 1000 years long (Ps. 90:3-6).

“Only God has life in Himself. The world has its origin from God. The world depends on God to sustain it. The world is real, not an illusion. The world is good, not evil. The world reflects God’s power (Ps. 62:2; 65:6-7). The world reflects God’s glory (Is. 6:3; Ps. 19:1-). The world reflects God’s order (Ps. 104:24-31).”^{xv}

1. The Covenant with Adam

A. The Covenant of works:

The agreement between God and Adam, whereby eternal life is conditioned upon obedience.

Life in the Garden of Eden was a period of probation or testing and Garden of Eden was part of this world Before the fall, Adam was sinless, had free will and could have obeyed God perfectly. God created Adam and Eve in His own image and likeness and made a Covenant with them (Genesis 1:27-31).

It simply was that God spoke to Adam saying, “you may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat of it you shall die” (Gen. 2: 16-17). This original covenant of God with man may be called the *covenant of life*. Everlasting life based upon obedience to God. The promise annexed to that covenant was life. The condition was perfect obedience. Its penalty was death.

In Genesis 2 is a detailed review of the creation story as it relates to humanity. We have a picture of just one scene in this story, we see God forming Adam out of the dust. God took specific care in making man, whose name “Adam” means “man” Breath of life indicates the spiritual part of man. He was first a body, but God then gave the body life. Man is a spiritual being living in a physical body, this spiritual part we commonly call a “soul” and “spirit”. This is where our ideas, desires and attitudes are formed and how God communicates with man.

V.8 Adam was dependent upon God for survival. Likewise we are dependent upon God for survival today. V. 9,15 God prepared good things for Adam. He is the same today. He gives good things to people (represented by the trees).

In Genesis 1: 27, it is written that when God created man in His own image, He created them male and female. As such, we can conclude by inductive reasoning that :

God is a Being of united masculinity and femininity.

God, as a Being of this nature, could not live alone. Needing an object partner, He created the world. Therefore, God created one man and one woman.

God's internal nature consists of masculine character, God as Father, and feminine character, God as Mother. Therefore, one can describe human beings and the universe created from God as embodying the God of dual characteristics, of masculinity and femininity.

God created man and woman with the purpose that the two love each other and become one. God did not create Adam for Adam's sake or Eve for Eve's sake. God created Adam for Eve and Eve for Adam. Likewise, God created Adam and Eve for His own love and His own joy. God did not create Adam and Eve for the sake of knowledge, power or

money. The omnipotent God does not need knowledge, power or money; He only needs love.

God purposed that human beings establish a foundation for love through the family. The world without love is hell; even God's existence loses its meaning. Understand the absolute law of creation: love is human beings' God-given purpose.

According to Genesis Three, the immediate consequence of Adam's disobedience was accompanied by:

- a) **Physiological results** - death, decay, suffering, sickness - all of this traces back to the original act of disobedience (*Gen. 3:17-19; Rom. 5:12; 8:19-22*).
- b) **Psychological results** - shame, guilt, and fear (*Gen. 3:7*).
- c) **Sociological results** - blame shifting and alienation (*Gen. 3:8, 12-13*). Sin separates people. (Consider the pattern in the O.T., e.g. Cain and Abel, Sarah and Hagar, Isaac and Ishmael, etc.)
- d) **Ecological results** - The ground is cursed - thorns, and thistles (*Gen. 3:17-19*).
- e) **Spiritual results** - enmity between the seed of woman and seed of Satan. Alienation from God - hiding, no desire for God's companionship - these trace back to original sin (*Gen. 3:8, 15, 4:1-15; I John 3:12*). a- Alienation from God: Our sin blot out God's face from us as effectively as the clouds do the sun. b- Bondage to self: sin brings us into captivity.

We are in bondage to sin. It is no use giving us rules of conduct, we cannot keep them. We need a savior. Our authority as children of God have stolen from us by the devil and our image had effected and changed by our sin.

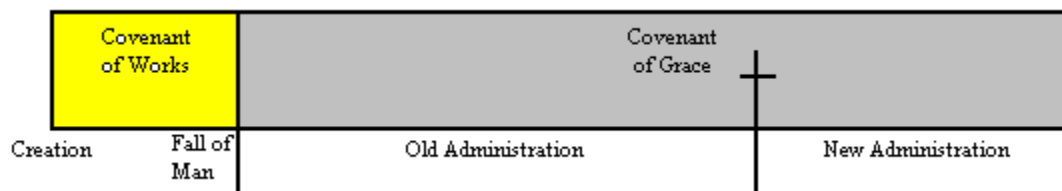
B. The Covenant of Grace: Gen. 3:9,15, 21-24

After the fall, he (and the human race) entered into "Covenant of Grace" by which salvation is a free gift of God, by grace through faith, not based on works or merit. Thus salvation is by works, before the fall; and by grace, after the fall.

God's grace and redemption was clear right in the beginning of the fall:

This may be defined as that gracious agreement between the offended God and the offending but elect sinner, in which God promises salvation through faith in Christ, and the sinner accepts this believingly, promising a life of faith and obedience.

This table is taken from William Payne:



“Nowhere does the Bible mention explicitly the covenants of Work, Grace and Redemption. There are no such passages or texts or chapter and verse that uses

the word covenant. It does not appear at all in Gen. 1-3, not even once. This theology is, at best, a hypothesis or an inference.

The view that after the fall salvation is always by grace for every one, is very biblical. Comparing and/ or contrasting Adam and Jesus, in the light of Rom. 5 and 1 Cor. 15, is also perfectly biblical: Adam from the earth, Jesus is from above. Adam was a living soul, Jesus brings the Spirit. Sin results in condemnation, Jesus brings justification. Adam had a perishable body, Jesus gives a glorious body. Adam is head of sinful man, Jesus is head of the saints. Adam disobeyed God, Jesus obeyed God. Adam introduced sin, Jesus brings the gift of grace. Adam brought death, Jesus gives eternal life. Adam affected all humans, so has Jesus. Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more.^{xxvi}

We can observe seven issues of God's plan to repair the breaks in the work covenant right after the fall: as found in the book of Genesis, chapter 3:

1. Divine initiative to seek them out. Where are you? Gen. 3:9
 2. God's response to devil: The promise One (the seed of a woman) will come and destroy you. The seed of the woman is a coming future person who save from sin, we will call him the promise one, Christ, savior promise. A prediction which fulfilled at various moments in history but receives its ultimate fulfillment in Christ. The seed of Abraham (Gen.12,15). The Prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15-22). The Davadic Kingdom (2Sam. 7) The Son of God (Ps. 2). Immanuel Prophecy (Isa. 7-8). Jesus and the Old Temple Jn. 1:14). The New Covenant (Jer. 31) etc.
 3. The promise One will crush the devil's head (the cross)
 4. V.14, 15 Enmity between woman's offspring and Satan (Galatians4:4; Heb. 2:14). The seed of the serpent is the devil (the curse on the devil). Satan had taken the form of a snake. This curse is partly against snakes. But mainly it's against Satan-what will happen on earth against him.
 5. God's response to sin: God clothes Adam and Eve with garments of skin, cover their nakedness V. 21. The death of an animals/ blood (Is. 61:10; Gen. 3:21)
- God putting them out of the garden and keeping them from the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24) God still loves man. Now even though man is sinful, God will still provide for him. In verses 21 and 24 we can see threads of God's plan to repair the breaks in community so God closes Adam and Eve with sacrifices. It seems to me that God killed the wrong animal (the lamb instead of the serpent). Why do you think, God covered them with skin? V.21 wasn't the fig leaves enough? (2:25; 3:7b; Mark 11:12-25) 'Genesis 3:21'; 'Hebrews 9:22'; and 'Leviticus 17:11.' In this illustration, we see Adam and Eve clothed, and we also see a slain lamb. The Bible in Genesis 3:21 tells us that God clothed Adam and Eve in animal skins. Thus, He must have killed at least one animal. We are not told which animal God used, but it is pictured here as a lamb as the first blood sacrifice. This is the first instance of death and bloodshed. This animal was slain as a sacrifice for their sin.
 - God then took the animal's skin and clothed Adam and Eve. This is a picture of what was to come in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Hebrews 9:22 tells us that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins,

and Leviticus 17 informs us that the life of the flesh is in the blood. Because Adam sinned and death was the consequence, then a life had to be given to pay the penalty for sin. Thus, without the shedding of blood, there can be no remission of sins. Of course, as the Book of Hebrews also tells us, the blood of bulls and goats can't take away our sin, which is why we needed a perfect Man. The Israelites sacrificed animals over and over again, but this is only a picture of what was to come in Jesus Christ. When the second person of the Godhead stepped into history to become a man and died on the Cross, He died once and for all, as the Scripture tells us, as He was the perfect sacrifice for sin. Note that if there was death, bloodshed, disease, and suffering before Adam sinned, this would make nonsense the atonement message and would also make nonsense of Hebrews 9:22 and Genesis 3:21. One can't have death, bloodshed, disease, and suffering before the first death and bloodshed, which is the whole basis of the atonement.

- Beginning of animal sacrifice. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. (John 1:29; Heb. 10:11-12)

6. God protected the tree of life from Adam: Rev. 2:7; John 3:16,36; 10:10, 1John 5:12
 God still loves man. Now even though man is sinful, God will still provide for him.

7. Salvation by faith Heb. 11:4; Gen. 4:1-26

Comparison of the Covenant of Works (the Adamic Covenant) and the Covenant of Grace.

Covenant of Works	Covenant of Grace
God is the Creator and Lord. Established because of His love and benevolence.	God is the Redeemer and father. Established because of His Mercy and Grace.
Man appears simply as God's creature, rightly related to his God.	Man appears as a sinner who has perverted his ways, and can only appear in union with Christ. (Sacrifices, blood, redemption)
No Mediator	Jesus is the Mediator/ Seed of woman

Law, tree of knowledge good and evil	Jesus is the tree of life, Salvation by Grace
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2. The Covenant with Noah:

Noah's son's offspring's went to build a city so they would not be scattered, to build a tower to touch heaven, and to make a name for themselves. God however confound their

language that they would not understand others resulting in dispersing them over the earth

What has been implicit in creation is now found explicitly in the first mention of "covenant" in the Bible. Noah alone was found righteous (in right relationship with God) among all creation. By the time of Noah, violence had become a way of life. God decides to destroy the world with a flood, but to save Noah and make a covenant with him. The flood represented God's punishment on the world, but also His grace. Noah and his family were spared to make a new beginning. After the Flood, the blessing was renewed. God spoke to Noah and his sons: "Behold I establish my covenant with you, and your descendants after you, and with every living creature..... That never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth" (Gen. 9:9-11).

Two covenants were contracted between God and Noah:

1- Genesis 6:18; I will establish my covenant with you...Covenant God's salvation, protection, covenant because Noah's faith. I will save you.

2- Genesis 9:8-17; The covenants tied with the blood sacrifices. Noah's sacrifices was pleasing to God. Covenant applies to the relationship between God an individual as well as descendants and it is established by the blood. Animals for food; Sanctity of life; God will not destroy the earth by water again; & The bow in the sky is a token of this covenant.

This covenant is universal "in the widest sense imaginable",^{xvii} encompassing all creation, for all time - making the near ubiquitous rainbow a most appropriate sign. "The covenant is unconditional, a necessity given the flood changes nothing of man's sinful nature."^{xviii}

Gen. 8:22 and Gen. 6:5 are significant - in the first instance the evil of humanity is the justification for the flood, in the second case the same justifies never again bringing a flood. Why then a flood at all? Because of God's desire to make explicit the purposes of the creator previously implicit in creation.

The first instance of covenant in Scripture is the covenant of God with Noah after the Flood. "It, perhaps more than any other in Scripture, assists us in discovering what the essence of covenant is. . . .

" There are five features in this covenant: 1) "it is conceived, devised, determined, established, confirmed, and dispensed by God Himself;" 2) it is universal, with all flesh; 3) it is unconditional; 4) it is "intensely and pervasively monergistic;" and 5) it is everlasting. Murray concludes that "Here we have covenant in the purity of its conception, as a dispensation of grace to men, wholly divine in its origin, fulfillment, and confirmation"^{xix}

Yet even in this case,

"where obedience to commandments is the means through which the grace of the covenant is to be realized and enjoyed, we must also take note of the fact that in other respects this covenant exhibits the features of divine initiation, determination, establishment, and confirmation which are so conspicuous in the

post-diluvian Noahic covenant. The idea of compact or agreement is just as conspicuously absent as in the post-diluvian.”^{xx}

We may think of Noah as co-operating with God in carrying out the provisions of the covenant but the co-operation is quite foreign to that of pact or convention. It is the co-operation of response which the grace of the covenant constrains and demands. God and man do not sit down and each propose and counter-propose the various clauses of the compact or contract. The covenant relation is brought into existence by God and God alone.

“ Like the Adamic covenant, the Noahic covenant shows forth God’s goodness and proclaims a blessing, which implies positively that physical life will continue through the ages. In that sense the covenant with Noah and all the earth is, like the covenant with Adam, a covenant of life.”^{xxi}

3. The Covenant with Abraham

The significance of the Abrahamic Covenant is the promise in Gen. 12:3. The scriptures, foreseeing that God will justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel before hand to Abraham saying, ‘In you all the families of the earth will be blessed.’

“The covenant is the foundation of Israelite theology and identity, and its history is therefore of understandable significance.”^{xxii}

To develop his redemptive purpose further, God calls Abram with a promise of land and descendants (Gen. 12:1-3). This promise becomes a covenant when God formalizes the relationship with through a theophany in which the promises are restated and made binding by an oath (Gen. 15 cf. Jer. 34:18-19; Heb 6:13-18).

“Against the background of complete faith that Abram showed every time God promised him something, God made His covenant with Abraham saying,,” to your seed I give this land....”^{xxiii}

Previously we noted God’s preface to the covenant: “ walk before me and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you....” Hence, walking with God and living blamelessly is a demonstration of faith and is essential for the covenant God was about to make with Abraham.

Promises of Abraham’s Covenant: Genesis 15, 17

Abraham would be called "father of a multitude" of many nationalities. Kings would come from him. The covenant is everlasting and for all future generations. Canaan, a foreign land, would be an everlasting possession. God will be their God. Circumcision is an everlasting sign of the covenant and applies to any nationality. All the families of the earth would be blessed because of Abraham's faithfulness. His seed would be as the stars of heaven...as the children of the Messiah, as the

personification of God's chosen ones. Abraham's heirs would seize, dispossess, take possession of, inherit, disinherit, occupy, impoverish, be an heir, come to poverty, to devour, to destroy, to ruin the lands of our enemies.

“The promise is eternal. It does not depend on human obedience, but on the sovereign intent of God. The disobedience of individuals cannot frustrate the purpose of God to bring salvation to the Gentiles.”^{xxiv}

Ratification

“God’s promises are ratified in a covenant/treaty
Abraham cuts the animals in half. God appears as a torch of fire. God walks between the divided animals. This covenant is un-lateral: God is responsible to keep His word. This covenant is most important. God takes an oath and swears by His life. This is the covenant which is mentioned in Exod. 6:2-4.

The content of the promise to Abraham a Land, a Seed and a blessing to gentiles.

The Land: the boundaries (15;8) from Euphrates to the river of Egypt. The river of Egypt is not the Nile, it is el’ Arish (eastern boarder of Sinai). After ca. 400 years; 430 years according to Exodus and after return from slavery.

The seed: A physical son, not Eliezer, a son by adoption. Not a physical descendant from Hagar but a son through Sarah. Numerous descendants as the stars in heaven and as the sand on the shore. Abram’s name is change to Abraham (Father of multitudes).

Royalty: Kings of peoples will come from Sarah. Sarai’s name is changed to Sarah (Princess). Go will develop special relationship with them: I will be their ... (Gen.17:8). This covenant will be forever.”^{xxv}

The Blessing to the Gentiles:

“This covenant, like that with Noah, has the broader purpose of blessing all humanity and is fundamentally universal in scope. It is appropriate that there is a response from Abraham.”^{xxvi}

Yet this is a response within a religious relationship; without which there can be no fellowship and hence no blessing. It is clear that God's conditional relationship with individuals must be distinguished from God's determination to work out his purposes in the theatre of redemptive history, a determination not conditional upon human response to divine initiative. So too with circumcision (Gen. 17:10-14).

Without question the blessings of the covenant and the relation which the covenant entails cannot be enjoyed or maintained apart from the fulfillment of certain conditions on the part of the beneficiaries.

“We must bear in mind that ultimately what God intends in His covenant with Abraham is not material blessing but spiritual, not the land of Canaan but a spiritual realm. To inhabit this land calls for a circumcision, not of the flesh, but of the heart.

Moses later said to the Israelites in the wilderness: 'circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn'. (Deut. 10:16)

Much later the prophet Jeremiah spoke similarly: 'circumcise yourselves to the lord, remove the foreskin of your hearts, O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem'. (Jer.4:4)^{xxvii}

The Obligation:

"The obligation of the covenant consisted of one thing: *circumcision*.(*Gen. 17: 9-11*).

God did require this one thing to keep the covenant. If there was failure in this regard, such a person had to be "cut off from his people" he had broken god's covenant. God would not renege on His covenant, but man by disobedience could break it and forfeit his place in the land.^{xxviii}

When we think of the promise which is the central element of the covenant, 'I will be your God, and ye shall be my people', there is necessarily involved, as we have seen, mutuality in the highest sense. Fellowship is always mutual and when mutuality ceases fellowship ceases. Hence the reciprocal response of faith and obedience arises from the nature of the relationship which the covenant contemplates. (cf. Gen xviii. 17-19, xxii. 16-18) (Murray 1954, 18).

Our obedience is the condition upon which the fulfillment of the promise given to us is contingent. Our failure, in the face of clear commands to obey the Lord's voice, to keep the conditions of the covenant, is culpable, eternally so. Breaking the covenant earns us the wrath of the covenant.

The Fulfillment:

Concerning both a multiplicity of descendants and the land of Canaan. Moses addressed Israel after forty years of wilderness wanderings; "*Go in and take possession of the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob...the Lord your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude*" *Deut. 1:8-9*. Later, after the land was occupied and Solomon was king, "*Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea; they ate and drank and were happy. Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates...to the border of Egypt*" *I Kings 4:20-21*. Thus were fulfilled both promises given to Abraham when God made a covenant with him. The gift affirmed, (Exod. 6:8) and the conquest under Joshua's leadership. The covenant of God with Abraham extends far beyond Canaan: indeed, according to the New Testament, The promise to Abraham and his seed is that they should inherit the world. Abraham was looking for more than earthly place; rather, he was looking for a city which has foundations; whose builder and maker is God. Eternal foundation; he was seeking an enduring home land...a better country...a heavenly one. Thus the world that Abraham and his seed were to inherit was the not the primarily a physical realm but a spiritual one. Was to happen through "Christ", the seed of the women, the seed of Abraham (Gal.3:16). Heirs according to promise. It is those in Christ to whom the promise belongs. No longer are the heirs those who descend from Abraham

according to the flesh, not even from the selected line within Abraham's seed. No longer is it physical Israel that inherit the promise, but it is those from any race and tribe, tongue, nation and people who have faith in Jesus Christ. Rom. 2:28-29

4. Sinai (Mosaic) Covenant

The covenant was renewed by Moses forty years later upon Israel's preparation to enter the promised land: *"The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb (Sinai). Not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive this day"* (Deut. 5:2-3)

The LORD our God made (*karath* - "cut") a covenant with us in Horeb (Deuteronomy 5:3). The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers (Deuteronomy 5:4). This didn't exist prior to Horeb although other types of covenants did.

He declared to us His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. (Deuteronomy 4:13).

Moses was to teach this covenant. And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess. (Deuteronomy 4:14).

Moses (leads Jewish slaves to Israel) is given God's commandments to govern relationships between man and God. Man is to keep God's laws as a test, but trust in God. Mosaic Covenant, 10 Commandments; all other commandments; land with signs and tokens of continuing with circumcisions and Sabbaths.

Obligation:

The Mosaic covenant is communal and universal.

"The commandments are addressed to the individual and require individual compliance, but there is a communal aspect also. The community which is answerable to God for the actions of its members and is to ensure personal and communal compliance to God's laws."^{xxix}

Furthermore, Israel are not called simply to obtain the blessing, but to be a "kingdom of priests" through whom God's blessing can be poured out on all humanity.

The promises of God, pledged on His part, were to be realized through Israel's obedience.

Unless Israel were obedient to God's commandments, there would be no possibility of receiving what God has promised.

In Exodus 19:4-6b, God spoke to Moses from the mountain: *"Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you and eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for the earth is mine, and you shall be my to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"* (Exod. 19:3-6).

"What is further remarkable, is that when Israel does, in fact, break the covenant (see Exodus 32), God's response is to forsake his right as suzerain lord to

consider the covenant annulled and instead chooses to forgive his rebellious vassal! Admittedly, Israel does pay a terrible price for rebellion (Exodus 32:28b,34-35) but God's determination to keep the covenant indicates that whatever formal marks of conditionality the covenant contains, the tremendous grace of God gives a measure of conditionality. No wonder the Israelites, who failed time and again to keep the covenant relationship, came to know God as "the one who keeps covenant."^{xxx}

It may help us to grasp the significance of this point if we observe that the covenant between God and His people is often likened to a marriage contract (see Ezek. 16:8, 60; Hosea 2:16; Isa. 54:5; Jer. 3:14; 31:32). In some respects Israel's solemn promise before Mount Sinai ("All that the Lord hath spoken we will do," Ex. 19:8) sounds like a bride making her wedding vow. The marriage contract, of course, is only one illustration and by no means exhausts the meaning of God's covenant with His people. But since this concept of a marriage contract is still with us moderns, it does help us to understand the biblical thought that our union with God is first of all a legal union. Just as the most sacred human relationship is based on a legal covenant, so God's union with man must be based on a legal covenant. God, being holy love, will have nothing to do with spiritual fornication.

Ratification:

The ratification of the covenant is by blood. By sprinkling blood on the altar and the people, there was the expression of a deep covenantal relationship between God and the people of Israel. Thus there was a solemn establishment and ratification of the covenant. Thereby the covenant of God with His people was confirmed. God Himself was deeply involved. The sprinkled blood on altar and also on the people. Subsequently God established the sacrificial system with Israel (Book of Leviticus), a system that culminated in the Day of atonement, whose purpose is purification and forgiveness. We observe that the sprinkling of blood followed upon the commitment of the people to do all the words the Lord has spoken.

Promises

The promises of God in the covenant are essentially twofold.

“First, Israel was to be God’s ‘own possession among all peoples.’ Israel was to be a special possession unto God, His own people. Second, Israel was to be to God a ‘kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ Israel was to have a special place before God, namely to offer sacrifices to Him, to stand in a unique relationship to God, to be set apart as a holy people.”^{xxxii}

The promise of the offspring is found in Exodus 19:5-6, “*Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and holy nation*”.

“This promise that Israel would become a national entity, sustaining a unique relationship to God, is not without historical antecedent. It has been observed that the Abrahamic promise envisioned a people who would become a great nation and who would have the Lord as their God.”^{xxxii}

The promise of divine blessing for Gentiles may be found in Deuteronomy 28:9-10, where Israel’s obedience will cause the nations to see that she is “called by the name of the Lord”, and the nations will fear Israel.

The Book of Deuteronomy teaches that if Israel is disobedient she will become subject to these nations (28:49,65). These verses deal with Israel’s destiny among the nations as determined by her relationship to God.

The fulfillment

The call of Moses lays the scene for the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham (Ex. 3). To him, God reveals a new name - "Yahweh." (Ex. 3:14).

“This name is found earlier in the Pentateuch (e.g. Gen. 6:1-8) thus demonstrating the writer's understanding of continuity with the patriarchal religion.”^{xxxiii}

In Deuteronomy 5:1-4 The Lord made a covenant with Moses

In this text Moses reminds the people of the Law that had been given to the Israelites in Horeb (“desert” synonym for Mt. Sinai), and the covenant relationship with Him that it spelled out.

Conditional fulfillment is not peculiar to the Mosaic only. The reason for the liberation of the Israelites is to fulfill the Abrahamic covenant. In both the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants union and communion with the Lord is at the center of the relation (Exod 6:7 and Deut 29:13). Also, the Mosaic covenant "was made with Israel as the sequel to their deliverance from Egypt. That is, because of the Abrahamic covenant of which they are already a part the Mosaic covenant is brought to realization. It is a further working out of God's covenantal ways. It is making more patent, in a broader sociological setting, the features latent in the Abrahamic covenant.

“From God’s side the covenant he made with Israel would never be broken. God is faithful to His covenant, even if Israel should prove faithless and disobedient and be punished by going into captivity again (Lev. 26:44-45). 1- Regardless of Israel’s failure, even to breaking God’s covenant, they could not annul the covenant, for it was God’s covenant, not Israel’s. Israel might, and did, violate the conditions, but the covenant remain firm. 2- Since god’s covenant remains firm and the problem rests basically in the heart, God will provide a way for the changing the heart. Much else will be needed, including a remission of sins that animal sacrifices cannot mediate and a deeper knowledge of God, but God as the Lord will surely bring it out. 3- Since Israel as a nation finally provided intractably disobedient, God did not hesitate to move beyond national Israel to claim a people out of all races and nations.”^{xxxiv}

5. The Davidic Covenant

Israel is initially administrated by Judges and later by Kings (its first king was Saul.) Israel and Judah are both guided by God's commandments to Moses and Abraham's faith covenant; with a moveable tabernacle including the ark of the covenant for the place to worship God.

The Promise

God anoints David king over Israel with a promise for a kingdom that would last forever through his seed that of Jesus who will reign forever. Solomon, David's first offspring, built the temple in Jerusalem for Israel to worship God with sacrifices.

God spoke to David through Nathan the Prophet: *“When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you...and I will established the throne of his kingdom forever....And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established forever”* 2Sam. 7:12,13.

This covenant was made soon after David had become king over all Israel. Throughout the years of his kingship David had this covenant assurance from God, for among David's last words spoken were these: *“he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure”* 2Sam. 23:5.

The covenant with David (2 Sam 7; 1 Chr 17, Ps 89) is preceded by two significant events, the capture of Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5) and the return of the Ark of the Covenant (2 Sam. 6), which prepare for the building of the temple and the kingship of Israel. Both were interrelated, for the king of a nation was considered the divine representative, and the temple was considered the earthly abode of the deity. Thus, both kingship and temple would speak to Israel of God's presence in their midst. It is not coincidental, therefore, that when David raises the issue of a "house" for God (2 Sam. 7:2), that God refuses David's offer and retorts by promising to build David a house (2 Sam. 11f.) - the divine response demonstrates that God needs no assistance from humanity, but rather is always graceful in his dealings and ready to bless.

In this case, the blessing takes the form of a covenant with David, in which perpetual rule by his descendants is assured (2 Samuel 7:16).

The Ratification and Obligation:

“The ratification is by God Himself, it could not be any higher or more certain, since it is God who swears by Himself. (Psalm 89:34-35) and (Psalm 132:11).”^{xxxv}

This covenant is unconditional (2 Sam. 7:13b; 23:5; Psalm 89:4-5; 29-30; 33-37) as David makes no oath which could be construed as making the covenant bilateral. Yet there is an element of conditionality also (Ps. 89:29-32; 32-40, 50; 132:12; 1 Ki. 2:4; 8:25; 9:4-5). If any one of David's descendants fails to properly serve Yahweh, then that particular king's rule would not be guaranteed. Ultimately, events would demonstrate that

God was indeed prepared to withdraw his blessing from Israel, if Israel withdrew their loyalty from Him.

“Yet despite the virtual failure in physical terms of the Davidic line in 586 BC, the un-conditionality of the covenant is demonstrated in the spiritual continuity through Messiah in the person of Jesus Christ. Yet God's intention is not to bless one individual only. The promise of perpetual reign requires a perpetual kingdom and so the promise entails that Israel will enjoy political stability as long as God is honored. David is thus seen as the agent through whom the Exodus deliverance ("rest" in the land of promise) will be achieved.”^{xxxvi}

Furthermore, when understood in its full Messianic and eschatological significance the David covenant is universal and is intended ultimately to bring God's blessing to all humanity.

In the Davidic covenant several previous themes are brought together demonstrating that this is a renewal and fulfillment of the promises to the patriarchs. For instance, a parallel is drawn between David and Moses by the use of "my servant".

“David is a second Moses; Solomon is a second Joshua; Moses and David started their tasks but Joshua and Solomon finished them. Moses brought Israel out of Egypt to Mt. Sinai and led them in the wilderness, but it was Joshua who led them into Canaan. David captured Jerusalem, brought the ark, conquered an empire and financed the project, but it was Solomon who built the Temple. Bringing the ark to Mt. Zion is considered David's most important accomplishment. The people traveled from Egypt to Canaan, conquered the land and then settled in their homes. God also left Egypt and entered the promised land with them. Unlike them, He and Qiryat Ye'arim. Only when David brought the Ark to Mt. Zion could God finally finish the journey and settle in His permanent residence.”^{xxxvii}

The covenant has its main purpose in the promise of the Messiah. Even though David recognizes, at the end of his life, that his sons are not living according to the commands of the covenant, yet the Lord "hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for it is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he maketh it not to grow" (2 Sam 23:5).

The Fulfillment

The Land: The empire which David conquered corresponds to the land which God promised to Abraham (Gen. 15:18=1Kings 4:21=2Chr.9:26). By capturing Jerusalem and bringing the Ark to Mt. Zion, David fulfills God's promise concerning a central sanctuary, a resting place. (Deut. 12:10-14). The empire makes it possible to finance building the temple. The empire enables Solomon to be a man of peace, eligible to build the temple.

The family: The population is numerous (Ex. 1:7,12; 1Kings 4:20) the name Abraham. The dynasty fulfills the promise of royalty (cf. the name Sarah). The special relationship is that of Father-son (2 Sam 7:14; 1 Chron. 17:13).

Blessing to the Gentiles: God brings blessings into Gentiles in several ways. Everyone came to hear Solomon’s wisdom= God’s word (1Kings 10:23-24). Bringing gifts to Solomon anticipates the gentiles bringing gifts to Jesus. The queen of Sheba praises the Lord (1Kings10:9). The temple is a house of prayer for all nations (1Kings8:41; Isa.56:7). In 2Sam. 7:19, the words torah “Adam may be a messianic promise, referring to the Son of David in the distant future who will be God’s standard for judging the world. This son turns out to be Jesus.

There are, too, obvious allusions to the Abrahamic covenant; the concept of a Davidic Kingdom whose boundaries match those of the land promised to Israel (2 Sam. 7:9b-11a cf. Gen. 15:18; Deuteronomy 11:24ff), the promise of a great name (2 Sam. 7:9 cf. Gen. 12:2), and the reference to "seed" (2 Sam. 7:12 cf. Gen. 15:3-4). And not an allusion only, there is also a fulfillment as the descendants of Abraham are gathered into the land of promise under the rule of David and his heirs.

“According to Samuel, David fulfilled God’s promises to Abraham. According to Chronicles, when David brought the ark to Jerusalem, God finished His journey from Egypt to Mt. Zion. Now God can rest from His travels and settle in His own place, Jerusalem.”^{xxxviii}

God’s covenant with David repeats and is based on God’s promises to Abraham. 2Sam.7

Great name	Gen. 12:2	2Sam. 7:9
Land/ place to dwell	Gen. 15:18	2Sam. 7:10
Abraham’s seed	Gen. 17:7-10,19	2Sam.7:12
Father-son relationship	Exod. 4:22	2Sam. 7:14
Covenant relationship	Exod. 6:7	2Sam.7:23-24
Adonai Yahweh	Gen. 15:2,8	2Sam.7:18-19

6. The Prophets

The kings became corrupt; Judah & Israel worshipped false gods in false places of worship. Israel & Judah are both guided by God's commandments to Moses & Abraham's faith covenant. But because of their sins God through His prophets judged the people.

The covenant theme is taken up and expounded elsewhere in Scripture. In Judges 2 and 2 Kings 17 disobedience by covenant people leads to national calamity (the operation of the covenant curse). For this, repentance and faith only is the cure and will lead to God's forgiveness and restoration to covenant relationship. Such a theology of history lay behind the books of Kings and Chronicles, but it is clearly evident also in the preaching of the prophets.

The pre-exilic prophets (Jeremiah and Isaiah) foresaw judgment and exile but also looked ahead to the day of restoration. Ezekiel, the prophet of the exile, saw the eternal character of God's covenant, and that this would lead to restoration and renewal of Israel's former glory.

The post-exilic prophets (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi), in the context of a people whose hopes had been frustrated when the newly restored Israel did not meet expectations, preached that full covenant fellowship and its attendant blessings were delayed because of sin (Hag. 2; Zech. 2). However, through it all was the underlying assurance that God's covenant is eternal, that God is a God of promise, and that people would yet witness the breaking in of the age of that everlasting covenant of peace. Thus, the failure of Israel to live loyally as the covenant people led to the development of eschatological hopes and ultimately to an understanding that God's purpose in covenant was far greater than simply the provision of the law to Israel.

7. The New Covenant

“The use of the word “new” does not indicate a totally separate covenant distinct from the previous ones, but it is an extension of them with new features and dimensions added.

The new covenant in 600 B.C. occurred in Jeremiah 31:31-34. This proclamation of the new covenant is generally considered to be the foremost of the prophet's contributions to theology.”^{xxxix}

Law written on the heart. The covenant formula, “I will be their God...” (repeated). Everyone will know God from the least to the latest by the Holy Spirit (1John 2:18-29). Forgive sin not based on ark. Worship system will change, Jesus is the high priest. New system is the work of Christ no animal sacrifices.

God takes the initiative to declare that the Sinai covenant was flawed from inception (Heb. 8:7) because its legal framework could never engender the heart response which had been presupposed in its very institution. Thus, a fundamentally different covenant is proposed, to be written, not on tablets of stone, but upon the human heart (Jer. 31:31-34). Although this covenant was made necessary by the failure of the Mosaic covenant, paradoxically it will also act as its fulfillment by bringing people into right relationship

with God. This covenant will initiate a new community - the people of God - it will rest upon divine forgiveness and have an eschatological focus.

The one **obligation** for the fulfillment of the new covenant is faith in Jesus Christ. This does not mean that by faith we achieve what God has promised, rather we receive the blessings He has in store.

The promises and their fulfillments:

* The promise of the law within the heart: (Jer. 31:33). The compulsion to do God's command will no longer be from without but from within, it will stem from a willing heart. On a deeper level, what is really called for is a new mind, a new heart, a new spirit: and such is the promise.

This promise is fulfilled through the Spirit of God, it is no longer a law that leads only to sin and death, but to eternal life in the Spirit.

* The promise of a unique relationship between God and a people: I will be their God and they shall be my people. (Jer. 31;33). This relationship is no longer to the Israelite nation or race only, but to those- whoever they may be- who are called by God.

The fulfillment is to be found in the New Testament. Paul sees it as the Gentiles coming to salvation. In 1 Peter 2:9-10, once you were no people but now you are God's people. It matters not whether they are Jew or Gentile, what counts is that through faith in Jesus Christ there is a new birth, a new relationship.

* The promise of the knowledge of the Lord: (Jer.31;34).

There isno knowledge of God in the land..... My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. (Hos.4:1, 6).

The people of God will be people of knowledge, that of an immediate certainty. In such a direct and personal knowledge of God, all of life will find its profoundest meaning and fulfillment.

This promise is beautifully fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ who in His own person makes God known.

* The promise of forgiveness of sins: (Jer. 31:34). Jeremiah does not state how this will be done.

Under the old covenant, God established a pattern of animal sacrifices as a channel for the cleansing and forgiveness of sin. However, the very repetition of these sacrifices plus the fact that animals were the offering for sin signified that there was no full cleansing and abolition of sin.

The fulfillment of this great promise is vividly declared in the new covenant in Jesus' own words: "this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins". Sins are fully forgiven through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion:

The Old Testament contains an unfinished story. The Anointed One of Yahweh (Isa 61.1-2) was anticipated, who would once and for all deliver his people, establish his everlasting kingdom on David's throne, and exact judgment on the peoples of the earth who refuse to worship Yahweh. A forerunner ("Elijah") was expected before the coming

of that Day (Mal 4.5-6). Thus the Old Testament ends on a note of anticipation of the great coming Day of the Lord.

This study has developed a broad framework for further study of Old Testament biblical theology, as I continue to study the Old Testament exegetically. It has focused on God and his work in and through Israel as his chosen people who would be the vehicle of God's blessing of all the earth. The story of the outworking of God's purposes which was revealed in the Old Testament remains yet unfinished in human history.

*The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, **who is the image of God**. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (2 Cor 4:4-6.)*

It is the face of Jesus that we see God, and it is there that we see ourselves as we are supposed to be a beings created in the image of God, "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, **are being transformed into his likeness** with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18).

Through his conversion to Christ one dies to his existence "in Adam" and is transformed into new existence "in Christ." In his new spiritual existence "in Christ" one is under the reign of grace rather than the reign of sin and death, which is man's destiny "in Adam," under the law where transgression of the law condemns the transgressor to death. This is Paul's argument in his letter to the Romans. As sin reigns in death (i.e. the death of all those who transgress the law), grace reigns in life (i.e., the life of all those under the authority of the message Christ rather than the authority of the law).

Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom 5:20-21)

God has replaced the old covenant, Mosaic Covenant, Law of Moses with a new and better covenant. The new covenant, the Covenant of Grace which was fulfilled in the life and ministry of Christ. His death ushered in the new covenant., sealed with his blood. Upon his death the temple curtain that hid the holy of holies was torn, symbolizing that each person has direct access to God. We do not need priests or others to approach God for us. We are priests (ministers) of a new covenant. The Old Testament, Covenant, is useful for history, background study, a schoolmaster, a way to lead us to the new covenant. But we are not bound by its law and regulations.

We now have a new covenant a covenant of promise, a covenant of grace and mercy, but only if we become Christians, live a new life, put Jesus first in our lives, and do our best and ask forgiveness when we fail.

1 John 1:7 *"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin"*

ⁱ . Morris, Leon, *The Apostolic Preaching of The Cross*, p.257.

ⁱⁱ . Botterweck, G. Johannes et al. eds. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* Vol.2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 256.

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- iii . *Theological Dictionary of the new Testament*, vol. 2, p. 109.
- iv . Ibid., p. 110.
- v . Ibid., p.115.
- vi . *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, p. 278.
- vii . Ibid.
- viii . Fee, Gordon D., and Stuart, Douglas, *How to Read the Bible for all its Worth*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 136-139.
- ix . William, John Rodman, *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a charismatic Perspective*, (Grand rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 276.
- x . Ibid.
- xi . Bernhard W. Anderson *From Creation to New Creation: Old Testament Perspectives* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1994), 153.
- xii .Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics* III:1 Edited by G. W. Bromiley et al. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1958), 43. Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics* IV:1 Edited by G. W. Bromiley et al. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1956), 59. Sailhammer, John H. *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 31.
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- xiv . Harrison, R.K., *Old Testament Times*. (Grand rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 19) 60-63.
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- xviii . Freedman, David Noel 'Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: The Covenant Theme' in *Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: Selected Writings of David Noel Freedman* 2 Vols. Edited by John R. Huddlestun (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 174.
- xix . Murray, John *The Covenant of Grace* (London: Tyndale Press, 1953). p.12-13.

^{xx} . Ibid., p.15.

^{xxi} . William, John Rodman, *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a charismatic Perspective*, (Grand rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 279-280.

^{xxii} . Hill, Andrew E., and Walton, John H., *A Survey of the Old Testament*.(Grand Rapids, MI., Zondervan Publishing House, 1991.), 94.

^{xxiii} .William, John Rodman, *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a charismatic Perspective*, (Grand rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 281.

^{xxiv} . McComiskey, Thomas E., *The Covenants of Promise*. (Grand rapids, MI., Baker Book House, 1985.), 64.

^{xxv} . Massouh, Samir. Lecture.

^{xxvi} . Youngblood, Ronald. ('The Abrahamic Covenant: Conditional or Unconditional' in Morris Inch et al (eds.) *The Living and Active Word of God: Essays in Honor of Samuel J. Schulz* (Winona Lake, ID; Eisenbrauns, 1983), 37.

^{xxvii} .William, John Rodman, *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a charismatic Perspective*, (Grand rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 285.

^{xxviii} . Ibid.

^{xxix} . Freedman, David Noel 'Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: The Covenant Theme' in *Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: Selected Writings of David Noel Freedman* 2 Vols. Edited by John R. Huddlestun (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 175.

^{xxx} . Rendtorff, *Structuring Concept*, 391; For occurrences of "the one who keeps covenant" see Deuteronomy 7:9; 1 Kings 8:23 (= 2 Chronicles 6:14); Daniel 7:9; Nehemiah 1:5; 9:32; cf. Deuteronomy 7:12.

^{xxxi} . William, John Rodman, *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a charismatic Perspective*, (Grand rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 290.

^{xxxii} .McComiskey, Thomas E., *The Covenants of Promise*. (Grand rapids, MI., Baker Book House, 1985.), 67-68.

^{xxxiii} . Wenham G. W. 'Pentateuchal Studies Today' *Themelios* 22 (1) (1996), 10.

^{xxxiv} .William, John Rodman, *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a charismatic Perspective*,
(Grand rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 293-294.

^{xxxv} .Ibid., p.295.

^{xxxvi} . Dumbrell, *The Davidic Covenant*, 45 .

^{xxxvii} . Massouh, Samir. Lecture on the covenants.

^{xxxviii} . Ibid.

^{xxxix} . Hill, Andrew E., and Walton, John H., *A Survey of the Old Testament*.(Grand Rapids, MI., Zondervan Publishing House, 1991.), 332.

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