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AN INDUCTIVE STUDY OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF  
THE BIBLICAL COVENANT

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Department of English Bible  
Asbury Theological Seminary

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Theology

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by  
Alan Earl Marsh  
May 1961

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Approved:

  
First Reader

  
Second Reader

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

"In the beginning God'--with this opening phrase the pre-existent Cause of all that exists was introduced in the Bible as a self-existent Being actively engaged in bringing 'order out of chaos.' In definite successive steps, according to this account,<sup>1</sup> the cosmos sprung into being as God spoke "light," "firmament," "land," vegetation, and the sun, moon and "stars" into existence; and thereby established His laws of order and time. Then, He created marine, fowl and animal life. As the pinnacle of His self-expression, He created man in His own image, after His spiritual likeness and gave him dominion over all that lived.

Being especially pleased with this creative expression of His presence, God decided to express His character and glory in man. From the "dust of the ground" He "formed" man's body and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Thus, man became a "living soul." As a "living soul," man possessed (1) a high degree of intelligence with which to exercise wisdom, (2) a will with which to make important decisions, and (3) a heart capable of responding to love.

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<sup>1</sup> Some scholars do not accept Genesis chapters 1 and 2 as being historical. They consider it either as an allegory or "myth." This study assumes the narrative to be a historical event.

Moreover, as a "living soul" man was the recipient of Divine security and love. He was placed within the Divine enclosure of the garden of Eden where all the necessities of life were amply provided in the care of man. In this Paradise man was to work and live in peace with all the living creatures. God further expressed His love for Adam by providing him with a worthy companion to cherish and love. From this holy wedlock the earth was to be filled and subdued.

This Divine relationship was to continue as long as man was obedient to Him. After placing Adam in the garden God commanded him saying, "of the tree in the midst of the garden thou shalt not eat of it for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16). With this declaration God began His covenant relationship with man, and thereby revealed the beginning of man's probationary period. From this moment man was responsible for His own destiny. To live he needed to abstain from partaking of the forbidden fruit.

After partaking of the forbidden fruit, Adam and his companion were driven out from the holy and peaceful haven into the cold and relentless world of strife and pain. That was the untimely beginning of man's troubles, and he would have perished therein except for the mercy of God revealed in the hope promised subsequent to the fall. This

ray of hope became a reality when God selected Israel to be His Chosen people. As the medium of God's revelation the nation through the faithful remnant carried through the promise which became a reality in the Messiah. This covenant relationship with God formed the basis of fellowship, and became the foundation upon which the Christian Church stands today. The security of mankind rests upon the validity of this covenant relationship.

## I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to make an inductive investigation of the Covenant concept of the Old and New Testament, (2) to ascertain its relevance and significance in the Scriptures, (3) to show the nature and purpose of the Covenant; and thereby (4) to present the validity of the Covenant in the Scriptures.

Importance of the study. The idea of the Covenant is central in the history of Israel, and therefore, basic to the proper understanding of their history. For God's will and plan of redemption for man was presented in the form of the Covenant. In order to understand God and His will, it is necessary to study this covenant idea. The Christian Church was established on the principle, founda-



tion and structure of the covenant. In fact, the names given to the two main sections of the Bible "rest on the religious conception that the relationship between God and man is established by a covenant."<sup>2</sup>

Limitations of the study. This investigation was neither an exhaustive study of all the historical covenants nor an exhaustive study of the Scripture passages recorded in the Bible. It is confined primarily to the major covenants that determined Israel's history and the world's destiny.

There was no attempt to systematize the theology of the covenants, nor to form a chronology of the historical covenants, except to follow the order given in the Scriptures.

It was not intended to be a critical evaluation of scholarly thought, but a Scriptural and factual presentation of the Covenant concept in the Old and New Testament.

Justification of the study. The centrality of the covenant in both the Old and New Testament faith as evidenced in the cycles of apostacy, the subsequent punish-

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<sup>2</sup> George Mendenhall, Law and Covenant in Israel and The Ancient Near East (Pittsburgh, Pa.: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955), p. 24.

ment and mercy that predominates Israel's history, the repeated warnings of the prophets concerning the Covenant relationship in the Old and the eternal hope that permeates the New Testament, amply justify this study; as well as, the prevailing interest in the Covenant and the ultimate desire to understand the Covenant concept. It is the key to the proper understanding of the Bible.

## II. METHOD OF PROCEDURE

General method of procedure. The general method of procedure was an investigation of the original sources in the Old and New Testament and an examination of the secondary sources. The American Standard Version was the source of the Biblical quotations. The inductive method was applied to both the Hebrew word berith (covenant) and the Greek word diathēkē (covenant) and their usage in the Old and New Testament.

The specific method of procedure was an investigation of the etymology of berith and diathēkē, and their use in the Bible, a discussion of the non-Biblical covenants, and an analysis of the historical covenants noting their nature and primary purpose in the Scriptures with particular emphasis on the Covenant Mediator and His mediatorial role. The study was terminated by the final summary and conclusions. Tables were used to show the analysis of the

Biblical covenants and their specific purpose in the Scriptures.

It was the expressed aim of this study to present a factual and Scriptural analysis of the covenant idea in the Bible.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MEANING OF COVENANT

To become better acquainted with the Covenant idea in the Old and New Testament and to provide a foundation upon which to launch this study, the etymology of the Hebrew word berith and the Greek word diathēkē was first undertaken. Then the use of berith and diathēkē in the Scriptures was investigated to further clarify its meaning. This investigation was followed by an examination of the use of "covenants" in secular history. The original sources used for this study were the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament along with the standard Lexicons<sup>1</sup> and Concordances.<sup>2</sup>

#### I. BERITH

Distribution of berith. In the American Standard Version the Hebrew word berith is translated "covenant" some eighty-two times in the Pentateuch, about fifty-two

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Brown, Samuel R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (second edition; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952).

<sup>2</sup> Edwin Hatch and Henry Redpath, Concordance to the Septuagint (2 vols. Graz-Austria: Akademische Druck-Verlagsanstalt, 1954).

The Sacred Scriptures Concordant Version: A Comprehensive Lexicon and Concordance (Los Angeles, California: The Concordant Publishing Concern, 1948).

times in the former prophets, close to seventy-two times in the latter prophets, some twenty-three times in the poetical books and approximately thirty-five times in the remaining books. In the King James Version berith is rendered "league" twelve times in the former prophets and three times in the historical books, and "confederacy" once in the historical books, and "confederacy" once in the book of Genesis and Obadiah.

In all, Davidson says that the "term berith occurs well on to 300 times"<sup>3</sup> in the Old Testament. Using the American Standard Version Oman found the word was translated

approximately three-hundred and twenty-nine times as covenant, twice as the covenant of salt, seven times as the word of the covenant, once as established, three times as the tables of salt, twice as confederate, six times as the book of the covenant, eight times as league, twice as betroth, once as oath, twice as Baal-berith, and once as El-berith.<sup>4</sup>

Etymology of berith. The origin of the Hebrew word berith is not clear. The many attempts to determine the nature of berith from its etymology have failed to produce

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<sup>3</sup> A. B. Davidson, "Covenant," A Dictionary of the Bible (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 38 George Street, 1898), I, p. 509.

<sup>4</sup> Ruth Ann Oman, "A Comparative Study of the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants" (unpublished Master's Thesis, Asbury Theological Seminary, 1955), p. 12.

"unanimous" or a "convincing issue."<sup>5</sup> It is believed that berith may be the same as, or the Hebrew equivalent of, the Assyrian beritu which has the common meaning of "bond or fetter." The significance of the Assyrian root baru from which beritu is derived is not established, although Brown, Driver and Briggs<sup>6</sup> apply the meaning of "bind" to baru. Berry<sup>7</sup> admits that it may mean "to bind," but he believes the meaning of beritu as "covenant" comes "directly from the root rather than as a derived meaning from fetter." Some believe that the word "bind" more properly fits berith.<sup>8</sup> The Hebrew word berith, believed derived from the verb karat, carries the meaning of a "covenant," or "league" or an "agreement." Its verb karat, meaning "to cut," signifies the cutting up and distributing of the victim's flesh for eating in the sacrifice of the covenant. However, it is also believed that berith is commonly derived from the Hebrew word barah meaning "to cut," "to cleave." Lee<sup>9</sup> sug-

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<sup>5</sup> J. O. Cobham, "Covenant," A Theological Word Book of the Bible (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1951), p. 55.

<sup>6</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, op. cit., p. 136.

<sup>7</sup> George Berry, "Covenant," International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, 2nd edition, II, p. 727.

<sup>8</sup> A. B. Davidson, op. cit., p. 509.

<sup>9</sup> Samuel Lee, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (London: Duncan and Malcolm, 1844), cited in Gesenius's Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, p. clxi.

gests that in the Hebrew simple form the verb barah means "to cut" but in the intensive form it means "to eat." Brown, Driver, and Briggs<sup>10</sup> translate barah "eat." Davies and Mitchell<sup>11</sup> admit that as Lee suggests berith "may well come" from barah "to eat," hence properly not a cutting up, but an eating of it together, or a feast as a token of the agreement." The intense form of barah carries also the meaning "to choose" which conveys the idea of cutting and separating. Davies and Mitchell<sup>12</sup> believe that berith properly means "cutting up," but "figuratively" means "contract or covenant" and is used for any covenant. It would seem, then, that berith meant "to cut," but later came to mean "to choose or select." It could also carry the meaning of "bond or fetter." How this change came about is not fully known, but Fairbairn suggests,

the name was derived from the practice of ratifying such agreements by a religious act -- the contracting parties uniting together in the presentation of an animal sacrifice and passing between two parts of the victim... symbols of the Lord's presence confined strictly to divine covenants while in covenants generally sacrificing and eating together may have been all that was customary ... there is reason to believe

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<sup>10</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, op. cit., p. 136.

<sup>11</sup> Benjamin Davies and Edward C. Mitchell, Students Hebrew Lexicon (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1880), p. 104.

<sup>12</sup> Loc. cit.

that the solemn killing and eating usual at the ratification of important contract was what originated the peculiar expression for covenant.<sup>13</sup>

The three ideas conveyed by berith could be considered as three elements of the full covenant relationship:

(1) The cutting indicating the division of the victim and a symbol of the proposed bond between the two covenanting parties, (2) the choosing connoting the freedom exercised in activating the covenant, and (3) the binding signifying the obligations and trust the covenant has imposed upon both parties.

Interpretation of berith. To the usage of the Hebrew word berith in the Old Testament, Brown, Driver, and Briggs attribute various shades of meanings. Generally it means "pact, compact or covenant." However, when it is applied to covenants with men, it signifies primarily "treaty," an "alliance," or "league"; secondarily, "constitution," "ordinance" (between monarchs and their subjects); thirdly, "agreement," "pledge"; and fourthly, "alliance of friendship" (between David and Jonathan). In its use with covenants between God and man the primary meaning is a covenant "as a divine constitution with signs and pledges," and when used with phrases the primary meaning

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<sup>13</sup> Patrick Fairbairn, Bible Encyclopedia (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957), II, p. 71.



is "covenant-making."<sup>14</sup>

Davidson says,

the term berith ... signifies variously "covenant, appointment, ordinances, law. The word properly means a bilateral covenant with reciprocal obligations or undertakings applied to the terms of the covenant which were of the nature of binding ordinances."<sup>15</sup>

## II. DIATHEKE

Septuagint use of diatheke. In the Septuagint the Greek word diatheke is ordinarily used to supplant the Hebrew word berith in the Old Testament. Suntheke and entolai are used only once. Why diatheke was chosen is not established. It is believed that the Alexandrian translators made the deliberate choice of diatheke because they were aware of the basic meaning of berith, and wished to convey the correct meaning. To use suntheke would have implied that the covenant was mutual; entolai would have suggested that God's covenant with men is not entirely mutual. Fairbairn<sup>16</sup> believes that since it was "God's settled purpose" to convey to Abraham and his descendants "the inheritance of the land of Canaan" that was the reason why

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<sup>14</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, op. cit., p. 136.

<sup>15</sup> Davidson, op. cit., p. 509.

<sup>16</sup> Fairbairn, op. cit., p. 71.

diatheke meaning "disposition or will" was used rather than suntheke which means "compact or mutual agreement." Moulton and Milligan declare a covenant offered by God to man was no "compact between two parties coming together on equal terms."<sup>17</sup> Smith<sup>18</sup> concurs with this supposition. Arndt and Gingrich say that diatheke as a translation of berith loses the sense of will or testament insofar as a diatheke "decreed by God cannot require the death of the testator to make it operative." Nevertheless, it retained the essential characteristic of a testament in that "it is the declaration of a person's will" and not the "result of an agreement between two parties" as a "compact or contract. This they believe is "one of the main reasons" why the LXX used diatheke for berith in translation. Therefore, since God alone sets the conditions of the covenant, the English word "covenant" can be used to translate diatheke "only when this is kept in mind."<sup>19</sup> It is noteworthy that dia-

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<sup>17</sup> James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), p. 148.

<sup>18</sup> George Abbott Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1944), p. 107.

<sup>19</sup> William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek Lexicon of the New Testament (Cambridge: The University Press, 1957), p. 182.

theke is used nearly 300 times in the LXX<sup>20</sup> and is translated "covenant" rather than 'disposition' or 'will.'

Etymology of diatheke. Most scholars believe the Greek word diatheke is an offspring of the Greek root thē which means "put, set or place."<sup>21</sup> It is derived from the verb tithemi "to place" which literally means to "remove to a particular location."<sup>22</sup> The word diatheke consists of the two elements dia which conveys the idea of "thru" and is a connective of the genitive case denoting the channel or agent through;<sup>23</sup> and the "place." The compound word diathe carries the meaning "contract or covenant" which was "anciently done by sacrificing a covenant victim."<sup>24</sup> In composition the verb diatithemi means "to place separately, dispose, arrange, appoint" and signifies the arrangement and disposition of "ones own affairs."<sup>25</sup> The noun diatheke

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<sup>20</sup> Three hundred and forty-three times including the Apocryphal books and Origen's Hexapla. Hatch and Redpath, op. cit., pp. 300-302.

<sup>21</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, Lexicon Aids for Students of New Testament Greek (Princeton, New Jersey: University Press, 1949), p. 76.

<sup>22</sup> The Sacred Scriptures Concordant Version, op. cit., p. 262.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>25</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of New Testament Greek (Princeton, New Jersey: University Press, 1949), p. 76.

denotes the meaning of covenant and the derived meaning "covenant" conveys the idea of togetherness, understanding and obligation.

The word diatheke primarily signifies a "disposition of property by a will."<sup>26</sup> Moulton and Milligan say it is "properly disposito an 'arrangement' made by one party with plenary power, which the other party may accept or reject, but cannot alter."<sup>27</sup> Vine believes "it does not in itself contain the idea of joint obligation, it mostly signifies an obligation undertaken by a single person."<sup>28</sup> Arndt and Gingrich agree with Vine for they say that "it is the declaration of a person's will" and not the "result of an agreement between two parties" as a "compact or contract."<sup>29</sup> The Greek word diatheke, then, seems to convey the ideas of separation, preparation and authorization with the emphasis upon the initiator of the covenant.

The unifying idea between the Hebrew berith and the Greek diatheke is probably the idiomatic rendering 'vic-

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<sup>26</sup> There is general agreement by most scholars on this point.

<sup>27</sup> Moulton and Milligan, op. cit., p. 148.

<sup>28</sup> W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (London: Oliphants Ltd., 1948), I, p. 250.

<sup>29</sup> Arndt and Gingrich, op. cit., p. 182.

tim.<sup>30</sup> The basic meaning of both words suggests the death and sacrifice which imply a covenant victim or sacrifice. The idea of separation is also prominently conveyed by both words. The primary difference between the two seems to be that berith emphasizes the ceremonial sacrifice but diatheke stresses the personal sacrifice. The justification for the use of diatheke in place of berith in the LXX is probably due to the idiomatic rendering "victim." Moulton and Milligan<sup>31</sup> declare that any thought of some "special Hebraic flavour" about the use of diatheke for covenant is nullified by the distinction made in Greek literature.

New Testament use of diatheke. Into the New Testament the Hebrew is carried through the Greek by direct quotations or allusions. According to the Nestle's translation eleven quotations or allusions<sup>32</sup> are made to berith and translated by diatheke. They are: Luke 1:72 (Psalms 105:8), Acts 7:8 (Genesis 17:10; 21:4), Romans 11:27 (Jeremiah 31:33), Hebrews 8:8, 9, 10; 10:16,29; 12:24; 13:20 (Jeremiah

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<sup>30</sup> The Sacred Scriptures Concordant Version, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>31</sup> Moulton and Milligan, op. cit., p. 148.

<sup>32</sup> D. Erwin Nestle, "Explanations," Novum Testamentum Graece (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1948), p. 63.

31:31-34; Exodus 19:5; II Kings 6:16; Exodus 25:16,18,21; Jeremiah 31:33; Exodus 24:8; Zechariah 9:11; Isaiah 55:3; Ezekiel 37:26, respectively). In each case the English word "covenant" is used in translation. However, there are six instances (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; I Corinthians 11:25 (Exodus 24:8; Isaiah 33:12; Jeremiah 31:31; Zechariah 9:11; Hosea 7:22); Hebrews 9:20 (Exodus 24:6-8); Revelation 11:19 (I Rg. 8:1-6; II Mcc. 2:4-8)) with the Greek word diatheke translated by the word "testament" in the King James Version and "covenant" in the American Standard Version. Thus, seventeen of the thirty-three references to covenant in the New Testament are either direct quotations or allusions from the Old Testament.

The remaining sixteen uses of diatheke are considered free from the direct influence of the Old Testament. Nine of these sixteen references are translated "covenant," but seven are translated "testament" in the King James Version. They are: Acts 3:25; Romans 9:4; Galatians 3:15, 17; 4:24; Ephesians 2:12; Hebrews 8:6; 9:4<sup>a</sup>, 4<sup>b</sup> ("covenant"); and II Corinthians 3:6, 14; Hebrews 7:22, 9:15<sup>a</sup>, 15<sup>b</sup>, 16, 17 ("testament"). However, in the American Standard Version these passages are translated "covenant" except in Hebrews 9:16, 17. In the footnote it says, "the Greek word here used signifies both covenant and testament" (This refers to Hebrews 9:15<sup>a</sup>, 15<sup>b</sup> as well as verses 16, 17).

Vine analyzes the New Testament use of diatheke into the following six divisions: (1) a "promise" or a human or divine "undertaking" (Galatians 3:15); (2) a "promise" or a Divine "undertaking" (Luke 1:72; Acts 3:25; Romans 9:4; 11:27; Galatians 3:17; Ephesians 2:12; and Hebrews 7:22; 8:6,8,10; 10:16); (3) an agreement as a "mutual undertaking between God and Israel (Hebrews 8:9; 9:20); (4) "by metonymy" the sign for the covenant or promise (Acts 7:8); (5) "by metonymy, the record of the covenant" (II Corinthians 3:4; Hebrews 9:4; Revelation 11:19); and (6) the foundation or basis established by Christ's death "on which the salvation of men is secured" (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; I Corinthians 11:25; II Corinthians 3:6; Hebrew 10:29; 12:24; 13:20,31).<sup>33</sup> In comparing this last group with the Nestle's text it was noteworthy that all but II Corinthians 3:6 are quotations or allusions from the Old Testament. Thus, the influence of the Hebrew word berith through the LXX is evident. Arndt and Gingrich believe that diatheke acquired a meaning in the LXX "which cannot be paralleled with certainty in extra-Biblical sources," such as "decree," "declaration of purpose," or "set of regulations."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Vine, op. cit., pp. 250, 251.

<sup>34</sup> Arndt and Gingrich, op. cit., p. 182.

### III. SUMMARY

This chapter has shown that the basic meaning of berith is considered to be "cutting up." It is believed to be derived from the verb karat which means "to cut" or the word barah meaning "to cut," or "to cleave." It has been suggested that barah in the intensive form means "to eat." The intensive form of barah is believed also to carry the meaning of "to choose." Berith may be the Hebrew equivalent of the Assyrian beritu, "fetter" which was derived from the (Assyrian) word baru. The exact meaning of baru has not been determined, but some suggest it means "to bind" or "covenant." No doubt the basic meaning of the independent term berith meant "cutting up." All other meanings are derived from its use, namely: eating, choosing and binding.

Diatheke is a compound word derived from the root the which means "place" and the proposition dia "thru." In composition it literally means "thru-place." The verb diatithemi from which it is derived means "to separate, dispose, arrange" or "appoint." The word diatheke conveys the meaning of "contract or covenant." The derived meaning "covenant" suggests togetherness, understanding and obligation. The idiomatic rendering of diatheke is "victim."

The unifying thought between the Hebrew berith and diatheke is believed to be the idea of "victim" which re-



volves around the idea of "sacrifice." It is proposed from the above that the Hebrew word originally emphasized the ceremonial sacrifice and the Greek word stressed the personal sacrifice.

It was found that, although berith basically means "cutting up," its use in the Old Testament conveys various shades of meaning. In its use between men it primarily means "treaty," "alliance" or "league," but as used between God and man it means primarily "ordinance" or "constitution." The use of diatheke conveys various meanings, too. Primarily it means "disposition" or "will." However, it is believed that its use in the Old Testament conveys the basic meaning of berith. It is not a mutual agreement in the sense of a man to man relationship but a "declaration of a person's will" in which the conditions are set forth by one person. The influence of the Old Testament upon the New is very evident. The majority of the thirty-three words in the New Testament are direct quotations or allusions to the Old. The remaining sixteen words are indirectly related to the Old Testament.

Berith is translated by the English word 'covenant' some three-hundred and twenty-nine times and thirty-four times by other English words. Diatheke as used in the LXX is translated some three-hundred times as 'covenant.' In

the New Testament the word "covenant" is primarily used to translate diatheke. But the use of "covenant" is misleading in translation since the mutual idea it conveys is not always meant. The concensus is that in its Biblical use diatheke primarily stresses the unilateral idea which constrains man to faith and obedience.

TABLE I  
A COMPARISON OF COVENANT

Word	Root	Basic Meaning	Second Meaning	Third Meaning	Translation	Use
Hebrew:						
<u>berith</u>	<u>karath</u> or <u>barah</u>	"to cut" "to cut"	"to eat" "to choose"	"bind" (?) or "covenant"	"covenant"	treaty, league or decree
Assyrian:						
<u>beritu</u>	<u>baru</u>	"covenant" (?) or "to bind"	"fetter"	"alliance"		
Greek:						
<u>diatheke</u>	<u>the</u>	"place"	"separate,"	"contract" or	"covenant" or	disposition or
<u>tithenai</u>	<u>tithenai</u>	"to place"	"dispose,"	"covenant"	"testament"	will
<u>dia</u>	<u>dia</u>	"thru"	"arrange" or "appoint"			

Idiomatic rendering of diatheke "victim."

Significance: berith -- ceremonial; diatheke -- personal sacrifice.

Suggested similarity: Separation and union.

## CHAPTER III

### THE NON-BIBLICAL COVENANTS

Having determined the meaning of covenant, the second step in the analysis was to investigate the non-biblical covenants and to compare their basic features with the Biblical covenant; thereby determining the similarities and the contrasts between the two. To adequately accomplish this, it was necessary to examine the theories regarding the origin of the covenant idea and to proceed with the most recent data. It was found that Mendenhall had published an excellent discussion on Law and Covenant in which he categorically lists the basic features of the Hittite covenant, thus presenting excellent criteria with which to compare the Biblical covenant. After a brief discussion of the origin of the covenant and the role of the covenant, this chapter will be primarily devoted to a discussion of the Hittite covenant and other ancient covenants.

#### I. THE ORIGIN OF THE COVENANT

The historical origin of the covenant idea has not been established. Several theories have been advocated among which the more important are: the Semitic or Arabic, the Canaanite, and the International theories. The proponents of the Semitic theory believe that the covenant idea

originated in the primitive Semite people and prevailed among the Arab people. The Canaanite advocates believe the covenant idea originated among the Canaanites and was borrowed by the Hebrews as they gradually absorbed the Canaanite culture. Diametrically opposed to these two is the International theory which Mendenhall believes was inherited from Mesopotamian sources before 2,000 B.C.<sup>1</sup> and, therefore, could have been an established international form in Abraham's day. He spurns the Canaanite theory as absurd,<sup>2</sup> and he rejects the Arabic theory on the grounds of the distinction made between the Patriarchal and the Arabic nomadic culture.<sup>3</sup> At the same time he opens the door to the supernatural theory which propagates the idea that the covenant was divinely ordained and transmitted by God to the Hebrew people through divine communication.

## II. THE ROLE OF THE COVENANT

In his discussion Mendenhall makes a distinction between the covenant and law in showing that the covenant played an important role in the establishment of nations. By making a distinction between the recognized religious

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<sup>1</sup> Mendenhall, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

or judicial body of the community and the "techniques" whereby the stipulations of the policy were exercised and translated into action, Mendenhall clarifies the relationship between Divine and human law and reveals that the covenant is the foundation of all existing law. He believes that "religious obligations" arose first in the early community. Then, as the society expanded, the punitive action exercised against a wrongdoer became the legal obligation of the community. In other words when the wheels of justice were set in motion against the wrongdoer, the action was considered law regardless of the source of the body that set it in motion. These case histories or court decisions along with the technical legal procedure in time superceded the religious obligations and took precedence over them,<sup>4</sup> though in the ancient world, the religious and legal obligations were closely entwined. For example, the pagan king as the religious and judicial head was the recognized policy maker and the interpreter of that policy with divine sanction.<sup>5</sup> However, this was not true in the Israelite religion.

The foundation of the "religious obligations" was the covenant. Mendenhall asserts:

We know that covenant relationships were the very foundation of relations between originally separated

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Loc. cit.

groups, and the formation of a new legal community, as well as the undertaking of a new legal responsibility, took place most naturally by covenant.<sup>6</sup>

He further declares:

Since a covenant is essentially a promissory oath, it is only in this way that a social group could be made responsible to new obligations....it is only in this way (excluding overwhelming coercive force) that a legal or political community could and did expand, to include other existing social units. In the ancient world covenants were sanctioned usually by religious means; the breach of covenant was punished directly by the guarantor of the covenant who was a deity or group of deities.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, he believes that the "Decalogue was simply the stipulation of the obligations to the deity which the community accepted as binding."<sup>8</sup> He does not consider the Decalogue as law because "there are no provisions" within the text for punitive action against a transgressor. Instead he believes the Decalogue" is the source of community policy in law. The community body is compelled by the Decalogue demands to punish wrongdoers in order to stay the wrath of God from the society. This punitive action is "essentially law." Thus, Mendenhall concludes that the basic differences between covenant and law is primarily time. He says,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Loc. cit.

The stipulations of the covenant have to do with the future, while law has to do with the specific action which is in the past. The Decalogue describes the interests of the community by averting from itself the punitive action of God. Finally, the Decalogue becomes community policy--the definition of right and wrong to which the community is bound, and law consists primarily of those techniques of community action whereby those policies are served and protected.<sup>9</sup>

Clarification of data. Two erroneous conclusions have been nullified by archaeological evidence and clarified in Mendenhall's treatise. Although it has been popular since Alt to refer to the "apodictic and casuistic laws" in the Pentateuch, thereby making a distinction between the two forms therein (Examples of the apodictic law are: The Decalogue "with its categorical imperatives and prohibitions: Thou shalt not ..."; "the curse form" in "Deut. 27:15-26;" and "the participle form of Exodus 21:12-17."), Mendenhall shows Alt's conclusion that the apodictic law is "unique in the ancient world" was rightly challenged. Not only does the Hittite source reveal a marked similarity with the Decalogue form, Mendenhall says,

the stipulations of the Hittite covenants are precisely a mixture of case law and apodictic very similar to the mixture found in the so called 'Covenant Code' of Exodus 21-23.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 5, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 6, 7.



The casuistic or case law which has been traced back to the "end of the third millennium BC ... introduces a specific case with the statement, "If a man' (commits a certain crime, then) "he shall" (suffer the following punishment)."<sup>11</sup> The seven different codes that exemplify this type of law (among which is found the Hittite code) used to be considered as legislation codified and established by kings as the law of the land. Mendenhall believes this idea has been undermined by Landsberger who has demonstrated that "not only are the codes not law in the modern sense of the term, but also that the concept of a written binding lawcode was completely lacking in old Mesopotamian law."<sup>12</sup> He also believes that the codes arose out of the need for a "standard of legal action"<sup>13</sup> in a changing political scene as a means to stabilize law or incorporate changes that were made. These codifications which began before 2,000 BC are actually the collective results of the action the ancient courts exercised in the ancient world. The main function of these codes of law was to describe the legal tradition regarded as stan-

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>13</sup> Loc. cit., citing Landsberger, "Die babyl. Termini fuer Gesetz und Recht" Symbolae Paulo Koschaker (Leiden, 1939), p. 223.

dard for the time. These codes in turn rested upon earlier collections of law. Thus, Mendenhall not only refutes the popular positions and clarifies the peculiar function of these types of law, but also declares that the Hittite covenant and law codes are dependant upon earlier sources. With this groundwork laid the way is now paved to discuss the Hittite covenant.

### III. THE HITTITE COVENANT

As a tentative solution to the many perplexing problems that confront the Biblical scholar, Mendenhall suggests the criteria of the suzerainty treaty of the Hittites. He offers as the justification of the study the fact that the two names of the Bible (Old and New Testament) "rest upon the religious conception that the relationship between God and man is established by a covenant,"<sup>14</sup> and this "implies that a form of action which had originated in legal custom has been transferred to the field of religion."<sup>15</sup> Therefore, a study of ancient covenant form would help clarify the issues and provide "objective criteria" with which to determine the unifying principle that governed

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>15</sup> Loc. cit.

the various pre-Mosaic groups "who became Israel."<sup>16</sup> He believes the covenant relationship was the only basis for the feeling of solidarity that existed among the Israelites. If this be true, then

The covenant relationship between Israel and Yahweh which is inseparable from the historical solidarity of the tribes, is not merely a stage in the history of religious concepts, but was an event which had a definite historical setting and the most surprising historical consequences.<sup>17</sup>

The two types of Hittite covenants. According to Korosec<sup>18</sup> the Hittite covenants consist of two types--the "parity" and the "suzerainty treaties." The latter is considered the basic form because the parity treaties are "in effect two treaties in opposite directions," that is, "each king binds the other to identical obligations."<sup>19</sup> In the suzerainty treaty the vassal binds himself to the Hittite sovereign. Mendenhall believes that this covenant form is very important as a genesis for the study because its use appears to have ceased before the "late second millennium BC."

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 24, 25.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> V. Korosec, Hethitische Staatsvertraege (Leipzig, 1931), p. 23., cited by Mendenhall, Ibid., pp. 27, 29, 32.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

The basic features of the covenant. Mendenhall warns us that the Hittite as well as the Babylonian language did not have a single word for contract or covenant. "In both languages," he says, "the covenant was designated by a phrase which would be literally translated as "oaths and bonds."<sup>20</sup> The covenant is known as the "sovereign's covenant" because the author specifies the obligations to be imposed upon the vassal. These stipulations are called the "words of the sovereign for to speak is to command when the great king delivers utterance."<sup>21</sup> The vassal obeys the commands being bound by his oath of allegiance.

The six elements. The Hittite covenant form consists primarily of six elements. However, Mendenhall cautions, occasionally one or the other of these elements may be missing.

The first element of the covenant form is the pre-face. This identifies the initiator of the covenant and proclaims his greatness as well as his "title," "attributes and genealogy. It begins with the formula "thus (saith) NN, the great king, king of the Hatti land, son of NN... the valiant."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>21</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

This introduction is followed by a detailed account of the personal relation that had existed between the king and the vassal. In this historical prologue the suzerainty treaties place great emphasis upon the "benevolent deeds which the Hittite king has performed for the benefit of the vassal."<sup>23</sup> But in the parity treaties, the prologue is considerably brief because the relationship is of a less personal nature and requires equal obedience. Mendenhall believes this section is very important because it reveals the nature of the covenant relationship. Concerning it, Korosec says:

What the description amounts to is this, that the vassal is obligated to perpetual gratitude toward the king because of the benevolence, consideration, and favor which he has already received. Immediately following this, the devotion of the vassal to the great king is expressed as a logical consequence.<sup>24</sup>

Then, Mendenhall declares:

In other words, the mutuality of covenant is present even in these treaties, but it is most important to see that the vassal is exchanging future obedience to specific commands for past benefits which he received without any real right.<sup>25</sup>

Upon receiving the gifts the vassal puts himself under obligation to the initiator of the covenant.

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<sup>23</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>24</sup> V. Korosec, op. cit., cited by Mendenhall loc. cit.

<sup>25</sup> Loc. cit.

In the "I-Thou form of address" which is characteristic of this section, the King as the author of the covenant speaks directly to the vassal in the first person. This "covenant form is still thought of as a personal relationship, rather than as an objective, impersonal statement of law."<sup>26</sup> The following illustration of this section reveals a striking resemblance to Deuteronomy 7:7.

Since your father had mentioned to me your name with great praise(?), I sought after you. To be sure, you were sick and ailing, but although you were ailing, I, the Sun (god), put you in the place of your father and took your brothers (and) sisters and the Amurru land in oath for you.<sup>27</sup>

The third element of this covenant form is the stipulations which consist of the detailed obligations "imposed upon and accepted by the vassal." They generally include both the negative and positive will of the great king. Absolute loyalty and obedience is expected of the vassal. Foreign relationships with other nations, enmity, spreading or permitting the spread of "malicious rumors" against the sovereignty and loyalty of the king, slavery or dependence upon another and the harboring of refugees is prohibited. The vassal must respond to the call of the king. The failure to do so is a "breach of covenant."

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>27</sup> Loc. cit.

The vassal must "hold lasting and unlimited trust in the king." The vassal is expected to appear before the king once a year or at least to pay tribute to the king. The vassal is expected to be faithful not only to the king but also to his parity relationship with fellow vassals. The king promises to intercede for the oppressed vassal for hostility against a fellow vassal is considered hostility against the king. Any controversy that arose between the vassals is to be solely judged and settled by the king. No indication is given of "interference in the internal affairs of the vassal state." The privilege of succession was given the vassal by the Hittite king.<sup>28</sup>

The obligations of the vassal are followed by the fourth element in which the provisions for deposit and periodic public reading are declared. Since not only the vassal king but also his entire state is bound by the treaty, Mendenhall believes that the written form was kept in the sanctuary of the vassal to proclaim "the sanction of the dieties" and permit the treaty to be read periodically for the purpose of acquainting the people with the terms of the treaty and to increase the respect of the people for their vassal king by describing his "close and warm relationship" with the Hittite king.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

The fifth element is the list of gods as witnesses.

In this part the gods of both the Hittite and the vassal witness, and thereby sanction and enforce the covenant. Deified "mountains, rivers, springs, seas, heaven and earth, the winds and the clouds" are also included.<sup>30</sup>

The witnesses are followed by the sixth and last element which consists of curses and blessings. These are treated as the "actions of the gods" and state about the same things that are found in "Deut. 28."<sup>31</sup>

To round out the picture Mendenhall adds three more basic elements not found in the "mere draft" or "written form." These are: (1) "the formal oath by which the vassal pledges obedience," (2) the "solemn ceremony which accompanied the oath, or perhaps was a symbolical oath," and (3) the provision for "initiating procedure against a rebellious vassal."<sup>32</sup> In all he believes nine different elements are involved in the complex covenant relationship familiar throughout the Mediterranean coastal lands in the period before the time of Moses.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>31</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 34, 35.

<sup>33</sup> Loc. cit.



## IV. OTHER ANCIENT COVENANTS

There are two covenant ceremonies known among men that give a clearer concept of covenants. The most ancient of these is believed to be those known as "blood covenanting" and observed among the Arabs. In this ceremony two parties publicly and mutually consent to enter into a closer relationship than previously existed. The stipulations are written, witnessed by friends and sealed by the blood of each covenanter after each drinks or tastes of the blood drawn from the vein of the other. In this manner the two became brothers. Self-cursing usually proceeds the blood seal.<sup>34</sup> In each case the idea of blood relationship has been established and is as binding as a marriage ceremony or a family relationship. Deity is the everpresent witness of the covenant and administrator of punishment for covenant breaking. Later, animal blood was substituted for human blood. In this rite the victim is slain and the hands of the "blood-lickers" who seek to enter into a covenant are dipped into the animal's blood, and the blood is afterward sprinkled upon the sacred stones representing deity or poured at the base. The dipping of the hands in the blood repre-

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<sup>34</sup> Henry Clay Trumbull, The Blood Covenant (London: George Redway, 1887), pp. 5, 6.

sented "communion in the act of eating."<sup>35</sup> In time the tasting of blood was superceded by the washing, sprinkling, and anointing with blood. These were later superceded by mingling of blood and wine. Finally, the commingling of blood and wine was represented entirely by wine.

The wine, of course, suggests the eating and drinking together. The feast, sacrificial or common meal, conveys the concept that the mutual eating established a union to which God was witness. It was believed that the act of eating and drinking together with others was a confirmation of fellowship and mutual obligation.

#### V. MODES OF RATIFICATION

Human covenants were generally ratified by the shedding of human or animal blood. In the former an incision was made in the arm, and through a quill inserted into the open vein the living blood was sucked into the mouth. The blood on the cutting instrument was carefully wiped on the written draft which was worn suspended around the neck or bound upon the arm, in token of the indissoluble relation."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> William Robertson Smith, Religion of the Semites (third edition; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1907), pp. 313, 314.

<sup>36</sup> Trumbull, op. cit., p. 5, 6.

The incision could be made in the palm of each covenanting party by a third party standing between them. In this case the "nap from the garment of each" was dipped into the blood and "seven stones in the midst" were anointed with it. The gods were invoked at the same time.<sup>37</sup> On other occasions the incision was made in the thumb of each contractor and the blood, after being tasted, was smeared on the seven stones; thereby making the gods parties to the covenant.<sup>38</sup> In case of federal contracts both parties would lick the blood after the incision or mingle the blood with wine and drink the concoction.<sup>39</sup>

When animal blood was shed, the covenanters either dipped their hands in the blood and lapped the blood from one another's hands and afterwards sprinkled the blood upon the sacred stones;<sup>40</sup> or after the victim was slain and halved the separate pieces were laid opposite each other, and the covenanting parties passed between these halves; thereby, "invoking upon themselves a fate similar to that of the slain animals, if they failed to observe their part

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<sup>37</sup> Herodotus, 111:8, cited in William J. Deane, Abraham, His Life and Times (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, no date), p. 80.

<sup>38</sup> Smith, op. cit., p. 313.

<sup>39</sup> Herodotus, 1:74; IV. 70 cited by Deane, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>40</sup> Smith, op. cit., p. 314.

of the agreement.' In any case Dean says, "Human covenants were always ratified by sacrifice."<sup>41</sup>

## VI. SUMMARY

In this chapter the importance of the Hittite theory and the role of the covenant has been discussed. The covenant was flexible enough to embrace and bind together all tribes under its influence. The exercised authority constrained by the covenant breaking, in turn, became the standard of law. The errors in early scholarly thought were discussed and served to show Mendenhall's position. The apodictic law once thought to be exclusive was really international. The casuistic law generally considered to be "legislation" was found to be temporary international codes describing the punitive action of earlier sources. The Hittite suzerainty treaty and its six essential elements reveal the past friendship that existed between the king and vassal and the past generosity of the king toward the vassal and the past generosity of the king toward the vassal which are the motivations for establishing the covenant, and the foundation of the covenant to which the vassal gratefully agrees to faithfully observe and obey; thereby establishing a bond of mutual loyalty and trust. The other an-

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<sup>41</sup> Dean, op. cit., p. 80.

cient covenants reveal both the need of personal sacrifice and the importance of blood in the ceremonies. . . These covenants were generally ratified by personal or ceremonial sacrifice.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BIBLICAL COVENANTS

The next step in the investigation was an attempt to analyze the Biblical covenants to show their essential character, and thereby, to formulate the Biblical concept of covenant. To arrive at a definite conclusion, it was found necessary to compare the various covenants in the Scriptures with each other to determine their similarities and contrasts. To make a thorough investigation it was found profitable to study not only the terminology, but also all the actual covenants recorded in the Scriptures. What follows in this and the subsequent chapters are the results of this effort.

#### I. OLD TESTAMENT COVENANTS

According to Brown, Driver, and Briggs there are two types of covenants in the Old Testament, those "between men" and those "between God and man." These two groups are sub-divided according to the shades of meaning the use of berith implies in the Hebrew language as we have seen in an earlier chapter. Under the first group, four distinct meanings are given for the use of berith between men with ample examples of each. It was found that in the illustrations supplied where berith means "treaty, alliance, league," the word berith was translated "covenant" in three quarters of

them, "confederacy" twice (Genesis 14:13; Obadiah 7), and "league" six times (I Kings 5:12; 15:19 (twice); II Chronicles 16:3 (twice); Ezekiel 30:5). When used between monarchs and their subjects, berith means "constitution" or "ordinance." In each of the four examples given the word was translated "covenant," as well as in the examples supplied where the meaning conveyed is "agreement" or "pledge" with the exception of Judges 8:33; 9:4,46 where the translation is "Baal-berith" and in the latter "El-berith." The fourth meaning of berith is "alliance of friendship" between David, and Jonathan and an "alliance of marriage" (Proverbs 2:17; Malachi 2:14).<sup>1</sup> In each instance the word "covenant" is used. So it seems a covenant is a means of establishing peace and promoting unity, discipline, and fellowship among men. With this in mind, we turn to the man to man relationships to analyze the covenant form.

#### MAN WITH MAN

The covenants in this group were found to be the covenants between Abraham and Abimelech, Isaac and Abimelech, and Jacob and Laban in the Book of Genesis; Rahab and the two spies, Joshua and the Gibeonites, Joshua and the people in the Book of Joshua; Ruth and Naomi and Boaz and

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<sup>1</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, op. cit., p. 136.

and his kinsman in the Book of Ruth; Jonathan with David in I Samuel; Abner and David in II Samuel; Hiram with Solomon, Asa and Benhadad, and Ahab and Benhadad in I Kings, Jehoiada with Joash and captains in II Kings; Zedekiah and his subjects in the Book of Jeremiah.

Pre-Mosaic. In the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech, as the leader of a host, Abimelech sought to make a covenant with Abraham because Abraham had won his respect (Genesis 21:22-32). He desired Abraham's word of assurance or oath that honesty and kindness would be shown to him and his family. Abraham agreed to give his word. An understanding was reached, and the covenant was established. The covenant consists of a positive request and a positive answer. How the covenant was sealed is not recorded, but Abraham had set aside 'seven ewe lambs' as a witness and a sign of his right to the well.

Years later Abimelech made a covenant with Isaac (Genesis 26:26-33). Like Abraham Isaac had won his respect. Therefore, Abimelech wanted the assurance of Isaac that no harm would be done to him and his host. Isaac prepared a feast for the Philistines, and they swore "one to another" and departed "in peace." Here the positive element of request was followed by a feast and rest, and the next morning a mutual swearing to one another.



Many years later Jacob made a similar covenant with his uncle Laban (Genesis 31:22-54). Laban had desired the covenant; Jacob had responded by setting up a stone around which other stones were piled in a "heap." After a meal the terms of the covenant were announced by Laban. The stones were to be both a symbol, a witness, and a boundary between Laban and Jacob. This covenant was ratified and sealed by both an oath, a sacrifice, and a meal. God was the ever present witness.

Post-Mosaic. The next covenant was found in the book of Joshua, where Rahab made a covenant with Joshua's two spies (Joshua 2:18-21). She desired to negotiate with them to save her family and herself. The spies agreed to the request and announced the conditions for her salvation. She agreed to the conditions, and the covenant was made. This covenant consists of a positive confession, a request, and an assurance which followed the conditions that formed the bond. The negative is implied in the need for secrecy. This is definitely a conditional promise given under oath of death.

After entering the promised land, Joshua is tricked into making a covenant with the Gibeonites (Joshua 9:6-15). The Hivites who desired to negotiate a covenant with the Israelites appealed to Joshua who made a covenant to let

them "live. From the context we learn that, although they deserved to die, the Hivites were permitted to be the Israelites' servants.

The covenant between Joshua and Israel is similar in form with the Hittite suzerainty treaty; Mendenhall believes it is the best example of this treaty in the Bible. All the basic features of the Hittite treaty are found in the form with the exception of the cursing and blessing formula. The stipulations consist of a positive declaration, a warning, and a command. The people agreed to serve God.

The covenant between Ruth and Naomi was different (Ruth 1:16). It was a positive statement of loyalty to Naomi consisting of a request, a pledge, and a self-cursing with God as witness. Naomi accepted the statement in silence. She left off speaking to Ruth.

In the negotiations between Boaz and his "kinsman," Boaz was granted permission to buy his brother's right to redemption. The transfer was confirmed by passing the kinsman's shoe and witnessed by the elders.

Monarchy. Jonathan made a covenant with David; whereby David was accepted as Jonathan's brother (I Samuel 18:3-4). This covenant was confirmed in chapter 20 and 23 (I Samuel 20:12-23; 23:16-18). The initial covenant consists of a union in love evidenced by Jonathan giving his own wearing apparel and equipment to David. On the word that passed

between Jonathan and David, the Bible is silent. The passage conveys the idea that it was a drawing together in love -- "Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (vss. 1,3). In chapter twenty David reminds Jonathan of this covenant (20:8). Jonathan assures David of his love, and the covenant was enlarged to include a positive statement of kindness to the house of David. The conditions of the covenant were rehearsed and the two depart. The covenant consisted of the witness, the mission, a self-cursing, a request, and the conditions. Chapter twenty-three records the positive element which is evident in the "thou shalt" that Jonathan uttered to assure David of victory and Jonathan's will that David was to be the next King. The covenant was confirmed before Jehovah as the witness.

The covenant between Abner and David is an interesting one (II Samuel 3:12-30). Abner sent his messengers to David to request a "league" with him. Abner promised in return to serve David. David agreed to make the league providing Abner brought Saul's daughter with him. She was taken from her husband and brought to David. A feast was provided, and Abner desired afterward to "gather all Israel ... that they may make a covenant" with David. Abner was sent on his way in "peace." Later, Joab "slew" Abner and when David learned of it, he cursed Joab. Here the relationship between league and covenant is apparent. League

signifies a joining of forces, but the use of covenant conveys the meaning of recognition and acceptance. However, both leagues and covenants were used to establish peace.

In the "league" between Hiram and Solomon, the latter King sent word to the former King that revealed his plan to build a temple. He requested that Hiram furnish the timber for the project. Hiram agreed not only to cut the timber, but also to deliver them in return for Solomon's kindness. Thus, Solomon hired the Sidonians and gave them food in return for their hire. This mutual agreement served to benefit both Solomon and Hiram in solving their particular problem (I Kings 5:1-12).

King Ahab and Benhadad made a covenant after King Benhadad had been defeated. The Servants of Benhadad in intercession for him requested that Ahab permit him to live. Ahab accepted Benhadad's promise to restore the captured cities and permit him to share in Damascus. In return, he permitted Benhadad to live. The covenant consisted of this promise of restoration.

Then, there is the covenant between Jehoiada and the captains (II Kings 11:4-11). He made an agreement with them and took an oath of them before showing the King's son. Afterward, they were assigned specific duties which were fully performed.

## GOD WITH MAN

In covenants "between God and man," the principle meaning of berith as used in the Old Testament is "covenant" as a "divine constitution with signs and pledges. In this group Brown, Driver, and Briggs lists the covenants with Noah (Genesis 9:9-17), with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 15:18; 17:2-21), with Israel at Sinai (Exodus) renewed in the plains of Moab (Deuteronomy 28:69; 29:20), with Phinehas (Numbers 25:12,13), with Joshua and Israel (Joshua 24:25), with David (II Samuel 7); with Jehoiada and the people (II Kings 11:17), with Hezekiah (II Chronicles 29:10), with Josiah (II Kings 23:3), with Ezra and the prophetic covenant (Jeremiah 31:31).<sup>2</sup> These seem to convey that the covenant is a means of establishing law to promote discipline and unity. An analysis of these covenants was made to verify this fact.

The principle covenants in this group were found to be the Edenic, Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Palestinian,<sup>3</sup> Davidic and Jeremic. One very important covenant was the covenant between God and Phinehas (Numbers 25:12, 13), but because so little is said about it, the covenant

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> Merrill F. Unger, Introductory Guide to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1951), p. 186.

will only be mentioned in passing. Of the man to man and God with man covenant relationships, some believe only the former can truly be considered a covenant. As Deane says in his discussion of the Abrahamic covenant,

This promise with the prediction is called a covenant, though rather by way of accommodation than strictly; for man under such circumstances cannot be conceived as an independent contracting party, or as conferring benefits proportionate to those which he receives.<sup>4</sup>

Although this is true flesh wise (God being a Spirit), it is equally true that the relationship between man and God is as certain and binding as the man to man relationships.

#### PRE-ABRAHAMIC

Edenic Covenant. The first relationship of God with man recorded in the Scriptures is in the Book of Genesis. In fact, there are four major covenants revealed therein--two are and two are not identified by terminology. Since the Edenic covenant is mentioned first, it is the most obvious one with which to begin this study. That it is a covenant is generally a matter of opinion. Some consider it a 'covenant of works'<sup>5</sup> in part on the strength of Hosea 6:7. Other scholars do not accept the account as histor-

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<sup>4</sup> Deane, op. cit., p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Fallows, The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopaedia (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1906), I, p. 466, 467.

ical; therefore they do not believe that Genesis 2:17 is a covenant. Still others believe it was a covenant relationship on the grounds of the promised restoration in Christ recorded in the last chapter of the Book of Revelation.<sup>6</sup>

The record of the covenant is very concise and pointed. It is contained in one verse, and it consisted of two elements, a positive and a negative. The positive element granted permission to partake of the life-sustaining substances, but the negative element restricted the partaking to the permissive fruit and served to separate one peculiar fruit in the midst that could not be rightfully partaken of under penalty of death from the permitted fruit. In these two elements we recognize the permissive and prohibitive will of the Creator. It is not the purpose of this study to discuss the problems that arise. It will suffice to say that the nature of the forbidden fruit is not definitely known, and the questions concerning the fruit are a matter of speculation. The presence of the forbidden fruit seems to serve as a means of making a distinction between two possibilities that confronted man and to show that he had to make a choice. According to the account a choice was made, and man suffered the consequences of his decision. Whether or not Adam agreed to abide by the terms of the covenant,

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<sup>6</sup> That what was forfeited in the garden of Eden is to be restored.

we are not told.

The Adamic Covenant. The Adamic covenant was made necessary by the disobedience of man and the inclusion of the penalty clause in the Edenic covenant. It certainly was not God's will to punish man. This is apparent in the account of judgment. God was forced on the basis of His Word and man's decision to punish man for the wrong committed. The situation was pathetic and would have been tragic except for the ray of hope that filtered the darkness of this event. Although this account is not identified by the word "covenant," it is considered by many to be one because of the positive element of hope recorded in Genesis 3:15. The advocates of this view believe it refers to the "atoning sacrifice of the Saviour."<sup>7</sup> The covenant account includes six verses and contains the positive element of judgment, hope, and suffering. The nature of the punishment is implicit in the judgment -- the tempter was to suffer isolation, humiliation and be the enemy of man; the woman was to suffer increased pain, increased childbearing and be dependent upon man; the man was to suffer the frustration and heartache of providing food for his family from an unruly ground. The sentence was carried out, and man suffered the burden of it.

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<sup>7</sup> Howard A. Hanke, From Eden to Eternity (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), p. 16.



The forbidden element was "the tree of life." The immediate punishment was banishment from the area. Apart from the ray of hope there is no record of anything but judgment. Man meekly accepted the terms of this covenant, because he knew that he deserved it.<sup>8</sup> This implies that man agreed to abide by the terms of the Edenic covenant. The degradation of man that proceeded the fall is a matter of record. The Scriptures record that man's plunge was so great that God could not permit him to live.

The Noahic Covenant. The Noahic covenant became necessary to preserve the human race and fulfill the terms of the Adamic covenant. It was the will of God to establish his covenant<sup>9</sup> with Noah. To do this God needed the cooperation of Noah. An essential part of His covenant depended upon the salvation of Noah. It was His will to save Noah. Noah was obedient; he fulfilled the demands of the initial covenant and rode securely through the judgment. Upon emerging from his ark of salvation Noah first offered a holy sacrifice to God which God accepted; God determined in his heart not to "curse the ground" nor "smite ... everything living." Then, God established His covenant with Noah and through him with "perpetual generations. The initial or

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<sup>8</sup> Genesis 3:17.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 6:18. This is the first use of the word covenant.

original covenant was made with Noah before the judgment (Genesis 6:13-21). In it the positive element of judgment, encouragement, and mercy is found. First, God reveals his will for the human race, then, his plan of salvation for Noah and the preservation of His creation. After the flood his will for Noah and the human race was established and confirmed (Genesis 9:1-17). In this covenant are found the positive element of permission and the negative element of prohibition. The positive statements granted Noah and his seed permission (1) to conceive and produce life (Genesis 9:1) and (2) to use the animal, marine life and vegetation for food (Genesis 9:2,3). The negative statement restricted the use of life for food to the animal, marine and vegetation, and served to make a distinction between them and human life which is further emphasized by the penalty of death. The positive statement of peace is added in which God says all flesh and the earth are equally free from destruction by water. This is to be an "everlasting covenant" sealed by the sign of the rainbow. The positive and negative statements of this covenant served to convey the permissive and prohibitive will of God. How well His will was obeyed is the subject of the subsequent chapters.

#### ABRAHAMIC

The Abrahamic Covenant. The covenant with Abraham is

considered the foundation and the key to the Old and New Testament history. The tendency is to divorce his covenant from any dependency on the pre-Abrahamic covenants. On the contrary the Abrahamic agreement owes its existence to the preceding covenants. According to the Scriptures the failure to obey the terms of the first covenant necessitated in the Adamic covenant. The hope of this covenant in turn necessitated in the Noahic covenant of restoration. The ray of hope of the Adamic covenant and the restoration and peace provided by the Noahic covenant served as the ground work for the covenant with Abraham. However, the actual history of Israel began in Abraham. God's covenant with Abraham revealed the pattern and the destiny of Israel's future. In the initial covenant only the positive element of separation, of prosperity, and protection is found (Gen. 12:1-3). The proceeding confirmations<sup>10</sup> reveal only the positive element. These are reassurances in the form of encouragements, assurance, and additional revelation. Circumcision was to be the sign of the "everlasting covenant." The only possible hint of negativism is revealed in the distinction made between "circumcision" and "uncircumcision," and the penalty for not observing the ritual (Genesis 17:14). Only those who carried the sign of the covenant in their flesh were considered within the covenant. This covenant was "vouchsafed" to

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<sup>10</sup> Genesis 15, 17.

Isaac<sup>11</sup> and Jacob.<sup>12</sup> Each subsequent book in the Bible is a record of the history of Israel and the fulfillment of the covenant with Abraham.

#### POST-ABRAHAMIC

The Mosaic Covenant. When God appeared to Moses, He introduced Himself as the "God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:6). The reference to a covenant prior to this introduction is to the Abrahamic covenant. In the recorded conversation God assured Moses of His intentions, His presence, and His identity. Henceforth, He was to be known as "I Am that I Am ... Jehovah, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob ... this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations" (Exodus 3:14,15). Thus, God introduced Himself as a real and personal God who would always be known as a personal God. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were witnesses of this fact. The covenant had been established. Now the time had come to activate the terms of the covenant. Moses was commissioned as God's representative to procure the release of the "children of Israel" from the Egyptian Pharaoh and lead them to freedom. Working as a team in

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<sup>11</sup> Genesis 26:1-5; 24.

<sup>12</sup> Genesis 28:13-15.

cooperation with God, Moses and Aaron persuaded Pharaoh to release the Israelites, and they brought them to Mt. Sinai. There the Mosaic covenant was initiated, and the Decalogue was inaugurated as the constitution of the nation Israel (Exodus 19:4-24:1f). The initial covenant<sup>13</sup> consists of the positive element of history, obedience, and ownership. After Moses delivered the word of God the people responded by saying, "all that Jehovah hath spoken we will do" (Exodus 19:8); thereby, agreeing to abide by the revealed word of God.

In the Decalogue we find both the negative and positive elements with particular emphasis on the prohibitive "thou shalt not." The positive element identified God and emphasized the need to observe the Sabbath and respect their parents (Exodus 20:2,8,12). The dominant negative aspect made a distinction between God and gods, God and carved creations and their worship, and honesty and dishonesty in relationship to the true God; and between holy and unholy acts in relation to man (Exodus 20:3,4-6,7,13-17). Having set forth the principles of holiness, the details of the covenant are then enumerated and explained with further revelations given (Exodus 20:23 - 23:33). The initial covenant, the Decalogue, and the "so-called 'Covenant Code,'"<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Exodus 19:4f.

<sup>14</sup> Mendenhall, op. cit., p. 7.

are considered the form of the Mosaic covenant. By making a distinction between "policy" and "techniques" Mendenhall discovered,

The Decalogue was simply the stipulation of obligations to the deity which the community accepted as binding. It is not as such law, for there are no provisions in the Decalogue itself for the action of the community against an offender. The Decalogue is ... the source of community policy in law, ...<sup>15</sup>

The punitive action carried out by a community against an offender of the covenant is considered "essentially law .... The stipulations of the covenant have to do with the future while law has to do with the specific action which is in the past."<sup>16</sup> He further concluded that the "morality and policy described in the Decalogue ... lies at the basis of the "Covenant Code."<sup>17</sup>

The Covenant Code is actually a description of legal policy--much more specific than the original foundation of the Decalogue, but showing us the concepts of legal, religious, and moral obligation which were regarded as those norms most in harmony with the nature of the religious community before the time of the monarchy, from whose life and action they came.<sup>18</sup>

After revealing the words and ordinances of God,

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

Moses wrote them in a book. This "book of the covenant" was read in the presence of the people who declared their intentions to obey 'All the words Jehovah hath spoken' (Exodus 24:7). Then, the blood sacrifice was sprinkled upon the people as a symbol of the covenant. Thus, the covenant was established with Israel.

Palestinian Covenant. Of the two opinions concerning the Book of Deuteronomy the "repetition" view seems to be more acceptable. Unger believes the name is an "inexact rendering" of chapter 17 verse 18, which should be translated:

This is the copy (or repetition) of the law. Deuteronomy, ... does not contain a "second law" distinct from the Sinaitic legislation, ... but simply consists of a partial restatement and explanation of previous laws to the new generation of Israel, which had grown up in the wilderness.<sup>19</sup>

Mendenhall says this "renewal of the covenant" was necessary from "time to time" because "covenants were not regarded as binding in perpetuity from the first."<sup>20</sup> At any rate some scholars believe that Deuteronomy 30 is one of the major covenants and others do not. The fact that some accept it as a valid covenant necessitates its inclusion in this study. Whether it is or not rests primarily on the concept of the

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<sup>19</sup> Unger, op. cit., p. 207.

<sup>20</sup> Mendenhall, op. cit., p. 40.

purpose of Deuteronomy and in part upon the fact of additional revelation. If we accept the view that Deuteronomy is a repetition of the law; then, we must look for additional revelation in Deuteronomy 30.

This chapter consists of the positive element of blessings and cursing. The steps leading to the blessing are enumerated as remembrance, obedience, compassion, possession, circumcision, protection, and blessing in the form of a prediction conditioned upon the fact of obedience. The cursing as the result of disobedience ends in death (Deuteronomy 30:17,18). The matter is summarized in verses 19, 20. The chapter is an enlargement of the inheritance promised to Abraham with special emphasis upon the nature of the blessings and the manner of their obtainment. This additional revelation seems to assure the Israelites of the land of Palestine. The added assurance could be considered another covenant with Israel because its fulfillment must await the second advent of Christ. Its prophetic nature could indicate a literal restoration. Some believe it was fulfilled after the restoration from Babylonian captivity. Others like Gaebeline believe its fulfillment must await the second advent of Christ.<sup>21</sup> At any rate it was God's will to give Palestine to His people. They took possession of the

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<sup>21</sup> Arno C. Gaebeline, The Annotated Bible (Wheaton, Illinois: Van Kampen Press, 1913), II, p. 432.



of the land and eventually demanded a king.

### MONARCHY

Davidic Covenant. This covenant was established with David after he had proven himself faithful. Nathan, the prophet, delivered God's word to David who accepted them as the positive element of rebuke, encouragement, assurance, love, and punishment. The Davidic dynasty was to be established forever. The covenant was vouchsafed to Solomon with the condition that Solomon be obedient and faithful (I Kings 6:11-13).

Jeremaic Covenant. The revelation of Jeremiah is a glimpse of the future Messianic Kingdom. Having heard the condition of the covenant, and having seen the degradation into which Israel had fallen, Jeremiah realized that his people would be punished for their breach of covenant. Yet, God assured Jeremiah that better days were ahead. Although Israel was surely to be punished, the day was coming when God's full presence would be eternally with them. As Mendenhall says, ... "the covenant was the foundation for their continued existence, and the ground for the reconstruction of a just law after the Exile."<sup>22</sup> There is to be a new Covenant made with the house of Israel and Judah as confirmed

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<sup>22</sup> Mendenhall, op. cit., p. 25.

in Hebrews (Hebrews 8:8-13). It is not to be like the old covenant written on tablets of stone, but a covenant written upon the hearts of man. There will be a closer relationship than was established before. This covenant is to be founded upon forgiveness and their sins would be remembered no more. It was to be done as surely as the laws of order and time. This promise of peace is found in Jeremiah 31:31-34f and consists entirely of this positive offer of hope in the face of the surety of punishment.

This hope is believed to be offered exclusively to Israel. It was not to be made with the Gentiles nor the church (although being grafted in, we now enjoy its benefits) as most believe. Since Israel does not enjoy the blessings of the atonement now, it is believed that this promise is yet to be fulfilled.<sup>23</sup>

#### MAN WITH GOD

There is another aspect of the God and man relationship that could be considered man with God, although probably it should be rightfully classified as "man before God."<sup>24</sup> Hastings considers Josiah (II Kings 23:3) and Hezekiah (II Chronicles 29:10, cf. Ezekiel 10:3) in this class.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., IV, p. 228.

<sup>24</sup> James Hastings, A Dictionary of the Bible. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1898), I, p. 510.

However, two others at least should be included since the passages seem to indicate a definite man with God relationship. They are Jacob (Genesis 28:20-22) and Hannah (I Samuel 1:9-11). In a dream God had spoken to Jacob, and he caught a vision of both God and his activity and heard his words. His immediate reaction was terror. In the morning he erected a pillar and "vowed a vow" that if certain conditions were meant, he would return a tenth of God's blessing back to him. Hannah, on the other hand, prayed unto God and she "vowed a vow" that if God would bless her with a son, she would give him back to serve God. The Scriptures relate that God blessed both. Others that might be considered here are Joshua (Joshua 24:15,19,28), Absalom (II Samuel 15:7,8), Jehoiada and Joash (II Kings 11:17), Isaiah (I Chronicles 15:12-15), Nehemiah (Nehemiah 9:36; 10:24). However, they probably would be better classified as "man before God. The intercession between Abraham and God (Genesis 18:1f 22-23) and Moses and God (Exodus 32:11-14) could also be included in this group.

## II. NEW TESTAMENT

Although the covenants in the New Testament are not as clearly defined as those in the Old, there are definite covenants therein that can be classified as man with man, God with man, and man with God relationships: for example,

King Herod with Herodias' daughter (Mark 6:22,23), the revelation concerning Jesus' birth to Mary (Luke 1:26-38) and to Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25); likewise to Zechariah (Luke 1:5-25). The latter particularly is similar to the promise to Abraham.<sup>25</sup> At the beginning of Jesus' ministry the man with man relationships began, such as the call and promise in Mark 1:17. Other covenants are the healing relationships (John 4:46-54; Mark 1:40-45), the resurrection command (Acts 1:4-6), and Paul's experience (Acts 9:3f.). An excellent example of man with God relationship is Jesus' Gethsemane struggle (Matthew 26:39,42; Luke 22:42-44). It is true that the word "covenant" is not associated with these particular passages, nevertheless, they have their counterpart in the Old Testament.

From Satan's proposed covenant with Jesus in the wilderness which Jesus repelled by the word of God, we glean a keener insight into the essential factors that make a covenant relationship. Since Jesus did not accept the terms offered by Satan, a binding obligation was not imposed upon him. However, if he had obeyed the request or given an affirmative answer, the covenant would have been activated and binding. Instead, Satan was recognized and repulsed, and Jesus won the battle of wills. In contrast with this vic-

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<sup>25</sup> Genesis 17:18, 19.

tory was Adam's defeat. The battle that was lost in the Garden of Eden was won in the wilderness.

If "a covenant is essentially a promissory oath,"<sup>26</sup> the promised gift of King Herod to Herodias' daughter is one. Being very pleased with his daughter's service before the court on his birthday, King Herod was moved to show his gratitude to her. He requested her to ask of him, and he would give her "up to half" of his "kingdom." Not being able to make the decision, the daughter asked her mother. Under the evil influence of her mother's will, she requested the head of John the Baptist. Although this request was displeasing to King Herod, his word had been given without exceptions and was witnessed by the court. Being bound by his oath, the king ordered John's death. Thus, he was faithful to his word.

Jesus also made a promise, but unlike King Herod's, it was conditional. He promised to make Simon and his brother Andrew "fishers of men," if they would follow him. Like Herod's promise it was witnessed by those present. No mention is made of an oath. What led to this promise we learn from Luke's account.<sup>27</sup> He tells us that Simon's boat was used by Jesus as he taught the multitude through the day. After Jesus had finished teaching, he asked Simon to launch

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<sup>27</sup> Luke 5:1-11.

out into the lake and drop his nets. Simon mentions his unprofitable night, but quickly adds, "at thy word I will let down the nets." He did and received a bountiful supply of fish. This miraculous success caused Simon to recognize Jesus as greater than he; therefore he acknowledged his unworthiness and need. Jesus, then promised Simon and his associates a fruitful ministry.

There are other incidents that could be included in this group, but these are sufficient to show the relationships in the New Testament. The "new" Covenant will be discussed in the next chapter.

### III. OBSERVATIONS

Specific observations. The man to man covenants of the pre-Mosaic period have been identified as parity treaties between the Patriarchs and their neighbors. In each case the head of the neighboring tribe desired to establish friendly relations with the other. After an agreement was reached both parties swore before God to be at peace with each other. The oath served as both the form and the final confirmation of the established peace and subsequent fellowship. The sacrifice is mentioned only in the covenant established between Jacob and Laban. The post-Mosaic covenants were not as easily identified because the word "covenant" is not found in the passages with the exception of the Gibeonites with

Joshua. This covenant is a parity treaty (although the negotiations were achieved on an inferior level under the cloak of deceit). The covenant between Joshua and the people is identified by the word covenant and is believed to be essentially a suzerainty relationship. Mendenhall shows that it has all the elements of this treaty. Actually, it is a covenant reaffirmation in which Joshua carries on in the place of Moses as the messenger of the covenant. Although Mendenhall does not believe that it is a continuation of the Mosaic covenant, the historical prologue would indicate that it is a renewal of the Mosaic covenant to the new generation. The agreement between Rahab and the two spies is similar with the suzerainty treaties; the cause and effect relationship was on a friendly basis. Rahab requested salvation from inevitable death in return for the act of kindness she had performed. To show their gratitude the spies agreed, if certain conditions are met. The other two are a personal commitment unto death and a transaction of an unearned right. The man to man covenants during the Monarchy were in the nature of parity or suzerainty treaties in the sense of mutual equality with the former and unequal rights in the latter. The covenant between Jonathan and David was on an unequal basis. David, a shepherd lad, through a heroic effort found favor with the King and his son. As an expression of warm gratitude the King's son bestowed his most precious possession

upon David as a gift, and thereby accepted him as his equal and more, as his own brother. In later confirmations of this mutual love, Jonathan recognized and accepted David as his elder brother and heir to his father's throne. Only one of some fifteen man to man relationships mention the sacrifice.

The covenants between God and men were definitely in the nature of suzerainty relationships. God as the Sovereign of the universe declared his will for man on specific occasions. The pre-Abrahamic covenants were universal decrees given for the benefit of mankind. As the Creator of man who found favor with Him, Jehovah God provided ample security for him. In return for these gifts Jehovah God asked man to observe one limitation. In gratitude man should have faithfully observed this ordinance of his Benefactor. For his unfaithfulness, Jehovah God pronounced judgment on man and took away His generous benefits. But his justice was tempered with mercy. He promised hope and bestowed the sacrifice and clothing necessary to atone for the transgression of His law. Under the sting of death man was condemned to provide for his own security. The Noahic covenant was established after man had again found favor with his God. Man was saved from the flood of wrath and he showed his gratitude by worshipping the God who had redeemed him. In return the Redeemer established His ordinances and



peace with his creations.

The Abrahamic covenant was an universal, a national and a personal one. Universal and national in the sense of holiness (separation from evil influences) fatherhood, inheritance, and honor and personal in the sense of holiness (separation and witness), honor, prosperity, and divine protection. Abraham no doubt found favor in the eyes of God either like Noah as the most righteous man in his generation or like Peter and Nathaniel because of potential inherent qualities unseen by man. The future benefits of this promise were to be had only through faith in obedience. The condition was "get thee out ... and I will" (Genesis 12:1). The word "covenant" is not found in this passage. However, it is recognized as a covenant. This promise of land to Abraham and his seed is confirmed from time to time. In Genesis, chapter fifteen God identified Himself and assured Abraham of his great posterity. Abraham "believed" (had faith) in "Jehovah" and this faith was "reckoned" (imputed) to Abraham "for righteousness" (Genesis 15:6). In obedience to the command of Jehovah Abraham prepared a sacrificial offering to Jehovah who solemnly assured Abraham of his national fatherhood and his descendants' inheritance. This solemn assurance was visibly ratified by Jehovah, Himself. The word "covenant" is used after the ratification. Genesis chapter seventeen reveals Jehovah as Almighty God who expects

obedience and perfection. He says, "... walk before me and be thou perfect and I will make ..." This statement conveys the idea of condition -- if you obey me and witness for me, I'll "make my covenant" with thee. The ordinance of circumcision is commanded as evidence of Jehovah's peace. Everyone who fails to observe this prescribed ordinance is in danger of the wrath of God. After additional confirmations and testings Jehovah bestowed the long awaited gift of a son. This growth in wisdom and stature in favor with God and man suggests that the covenant was a means to impart faith and trust.

The Post-Abrahamic covenants were essentially national with the exception of the one with Phinehas which is called an everlasting covenant "of peace" (Numbers 25:12). This covenant was given in appreciation of the holy service rendered by Phinehas. The priesthood was eternally established because of the atoning work Phinehas had accomplished for the descendants of Israel. The Mosaic covenant as a national constitution was established with Israel through the Decalogue (Exodus 20:1-17) and the detailed account given in the following chapters (21-23). These ordinances were written in the "book of the covenant" which was read to Israel and ratified by the blood of the atonement and peace offerings to God (Exodus 24:3-8). The Decalogue form has the essential elements of the suzerainty treaties with the ex-

ception of the fourth, fifth and sixth elements which are either not necessary or found in other chapters. The cursing and blessing particularly are found in Deuteronomy 30.

The Monarchy covenants with David and Jeremiah were both national and universal. National in the sense that it applied first to Israel; universal in that it was to have been given to the Gentiles through Israel. The punishment to be ministered for disobedience in the Davidic promise was not to be as severe as it had been. The Jeremaic promise does not include punishment only forgiveness.

General observations. Some general observations can now be made. First, the covenants between men are decidedly mutual. Both parties usually have a part in determining the conditions which they mutually agree to observe to obtain mutual benefits. However, this is not true in God's covenants with men. In these covenants God breaks into the thoughts and presence of men with His Word which He expects them to obey. In a sense God was entrusting His Word with man. Second, covenants are made for a special purpose. There is always a specific reason for making covenants. Third, when the covenant terms are accepted, a new relationship is established. Fourth, the new relationship permits privileges and generally establishes limitations that had not existed before the covenant. Fifth, the cove-

nant is a means of establishing friendly relations. Sixth, the covenant is not activated until it has been accepted through faith in obedience.

#### IV. SUMMARY

This chapter has served to show a comparison of the nature and purpose of the Biblical covenants. The man to man relationships of the pre-Mosaic period were parity treaties of peace witnessed, sanctioned, and enforced by God through the mutual oath which served as both the form and seal of the covenant (peace). The post-Mosaic covenants were in the nature of mutual negotiations sealed by a solemn oath, a solemn pledge sealed by an oath, and a solemn gift sealed by the passing of the shoe. The word "covenant" is not used in these three cases. The covenant between Joshua and the people closely parallels the Hittite suzerainty form. The covenants of the Monarchy period were in the nature of parity and suzerainty relationships.

The God with man relationships were in the nature of suzerainty relationships. The pre-Abrahamic covenants were in the form of solemn decrees establishing privileges and limitations. The limitations were to be obeyed under penalty of death in the Edenic and Noahic covenants. The Adamic covenant was the decree of judgment for disobeying the Edenic decree and the implied victory in the perpetual conflict

between the descendants of the tempter and man. (The promise of this ultimate victory is addressed to the tempter rather than the woman.) The Abrahamic covenant was in the form of a promise which was later ratified by a solemn sacrifice and sealed by God's oath. It served to establish peace, faith, and trust. The post-Abrahamic covenant with Israel was a solemn decree which was confirmed with each succeeding generation. The Palestinian covenant is no doubt the reaffirmation of the Sinai decree. The covenant with Phinehas was a solemn promise establishing the priesthood. The covenant of the Monarchy period was solemn promises establishing the Davidic dynasty and the New Covenant.

The man with God relationships were solemn and conditional pledges to God by Jacob and Hannah and solemn negotiations with God on the part of Abraham and Moses. The former were for selfish interests; the latter were for altruistic reasons.

In the New Testament definite man with man, God with man, and man with God relationships were found. The first was a solemn promise which was referred to as an oath. The second were solemn promises to Joseph and Mary and Zachariah to announce a specific event. The third was the struggle of love between the Father and the Son in the presence of Satanic opposition.

The covenants between man and with God are integral

parts of God's plan to restore man. They play a subordinate role in the fulfillment of God's Covenant with man.

The Hebrew word berith is not associated with the Edenic Covenant because of its basic meaning and significance "peace." Peace had already been established; love was overflowing. This word is not found in the Adamic Covenant because the judgment had not become effective, and God had furnished his own substitutionary means of establishing peace in clothing the first parents. The word is used in Genesis chapter six in connection with the salvation of Noah, and in chapter nine with the established peace with the world.

The comparison between the Edenic and Noahic decrees shows that they are identical except for the added promise and the presence of the substitutionary sacrifice. The sacrifice was the means of promoting peace Godward and the accepted offering of peace by God. God's symbol or sign of the established everlasting peace was and is the rainbow.

The word berith is not mentioned in Genesis 12:1-3 because peace had already been established through Noah. The covenant with Abraham in chapter fifteen was to establish peace within the heart of Abraham. The Covenant recorded in chapter seventeen was to establish peace with all people who carried the sign of the Covenant or God's everlasting peace.

TABLE II

## PRE-MOSAIC COVENANTS

Basic Features	Universal				International	
	Edenic	Adamic	Noahic	Abrahamic	Abraham Isaac	Jacob
Initiator	<u>Jahweh-Elohim</u>	<u>Jahweh-Elohim</u>	<u>Elohim Jahweh</u>	<u>Jahweh Elohim</u>	Tribal leaders	Tribal leader
Stipulations	God's decree	Solemn promise	Decree <sup>1</sup> promise <sup>1</sup>	Promise <sup>1</sup>	Mutual oaths	Mutual oath
History	Friendship	Unfaithfulness	Mercy	Mercy(?) Friendship	Respect	Unfaithfulness
Remembrance	Forbidden fruit	Clothing	Rainbow	Circumcision	Possession	Boundary
Witness	God, man	Tempter, God, man	God, Noah, family	God, Abraham, family	God, leaders	God, leaders
Blessing	Life*	Hope	Peace	Life	Peace	Peace
Cursing	Death	Death	Death	Death*	War	War
Ceremony	None	Sacrifices*	Animal sacrifice	Animal sacrifice	None, Feast	Animal sacrifice
Condition	Faithfulness	None	Faithfulness	Faithfulness	Faithfulness	Faithfulness
Purpose	Eternal life	Salvation	Salvation Peace	Faith	Security	Peace

\* Implied.

<sup>1</sup> Everlasting covenant.

TABLE III

## MOSAIC AND MONARCHY COVENANT

Features	Mosaic			Monarchy	
	Initial	Decalogue	Palestinian	Phinehas	Davidic
Initiator	<u>Elohim</u> <u>Jahweh</u>	<u>Elchim</u> <u>Jahweh</u>	<u>Jahweh</u> thy <u>Elohim</u>	<u>Jahweh</u>	<u>Jahweh</u>
Stipulations	Solemn promise	God's decree	God's decree	Solemn promise	Solemn promise
History	Provision	Deliverance	Deliverance	Holy Service	Mercy
Remembrance	Miracle	Holy law	Inheritance	Priesthood*	Dynasty* New heart
Witness	Moses, Israel	Moses, Israel	Moses, Israel	God, Moses	God, Nathan Jeremiah
Blessing Cursing	Life Death	Life Death	Life Death	Remembrance	Authority, Punishment None
Ceremony	None	Purifying	Purifying	Purifying	Worship None
Condition	Faith in obedience	Faith in obedience	Faith in choice	Faith in believing	Faith in believing
Purpose	Faith	Holiness	Faith	Gratitude	Gratitude Forgiveness

\* Everlasting



## CHAPTER V

### THE "NEW" COVENANT

Closely connected with the Old Testament is the New Testament and the mediatorial work that Christ came to accomplish. This Covenant is actually the pinnacle of all that preceeded and the impetus of all that followed. The importance of this part of the investigation cannot be over emphasized. It is not only the focal point of this study, it is the ultimate victory that has been promised and is to be consummated some glorious day. The validity of the Christian faith stands upon the certainty of this atoning work or falls with the error of it. The early Christians were convinced that it was valid and leave their inspired testimony in the pages of history. They were so positive that they rejoiced in persecution for their belief.

This chapter will present a Scriptural account of the "new" covenant noting particularly the atoning work of Christ from its beginning until its final consummation, the ultimate purpose for the covenant, and the ultimate result it is expected to accomplish in and for man.

#### I. THE MEDIATOR

Origin. Before "the foundation of the world" the Scriptures indicate that there was a planning counsel with-

in the Godhead which precluded the Christ until "the fulness of time" when Christ was revealed as the Mediator and Surety of the one final Covenant. The nature of this counsel is not known, but it was "according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will" (Ephesians 1:11), an immutable counsel confirmed by an oath (Hebrews 6:17); what may be called a "deliberative counsel" between the Father and the Son in which the Son volunteered to give Himself to establish the covenant in behalf of man who failed to keep his side of the covenant between God and himself (John 10:17,18; I Peter 1:20); from which the Father sent His Son into the world (John 10:36).

From "the foundation of the world" Christ was not only prepared to redeem man (Revelation 13:8<sup>1</sup> cf. Genesis 3:21), but the Kingdom was also prepared and ready for man (Matthew 13:35; Hebrews 4:3) and hidden from man by his sin (Matthew 13:35; Luke 11:50). The Lukian reference declares, "the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world ... the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zechariah ... shall be required of this generation."<sup>2</sup> The phrase "from the foundation of the world" is apparently a reference to the fall of man which began in Eden and became

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<sup>1</sup> Note footnote: "slain from the foundation of the world."

<sup>2</sup> Luke 11:50, 51.

effective through Cain. Hammond says, "The Covenants with Adam, Noah and Abraham are illuminative of, and lead up to, the one Supreme Covenant ... When Christ was revealed to become its Mediator and Surety."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, we can say that the Old Testament Covenant was Jehovah's method to prepare the world for His personal sacrifice and eternal confirmation of His faithfulness and love.

Mediation. The mediatorial work of Christ is generally divided into three phases: Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King. This three fold administration began historically with the incarnation and was carried through by Christ as both the servant and King of man in the flesh. Since a mediator intervenes between two parties, Christ as mediator between God and man would have to be both God and man. Thus, the Logos (Word) was not actually the Mediator until He became man. Commenting upon this Wiley says,

In the Old Testament Christ was Mediator by anticipation, and men were saved through His mediatorial work in view of His future Advent. In the New Testament the types and shadows through which the Word manifested Himself are done away being superseded by the fuller revelation of the incarnate Word.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> T. C. Hammond, In Understanding Be Men (London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1954), p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1952, II, p. 211.

Through the incarnation Christ assumed His "Mediatorship" as a voluntary and eternal means of drawing man to Him. It is temporary in the sense that the time will come when the work of redemption will be superceded by the final judgment (Hebrew 9:27,28). Since He volunteered to be the Mediator (Philippians 2:5-8), as the reward for fulfilling His commission, Jesus Christ was exalted above all.

God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

Furthermore, through the incarnation Christ was the Mediator of the everlasting Covenant which was established in the Old Testament as the first covenant (Hebrews 8:6-13) and confirmed in the New as the "new" or "better" covenant (Hebrews 8:6-8). In comparing the "first" and "new" covenant, Wiley states,

The first was more external, and was administered through animal sacrifices and visible types and symbols. It was therefore ceremonial and national. The second is an internal covenant of life, and therefore spiritual and universal. In the first covenant the words were spoken to the people in the form of external law; in the new covenant the law is written within, upon the hearts and minds of the people.<sup>5</sup>

And Murray declares,

In the Old Covenant man had the opportunity given him to prove what he could do, with the aid of all the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

means of grace God could bestow. That covenant ended in man proving his own unfaithfulness and failure. In the New Covenant God is to prove what he can do with man, all unfaithful and feeble as he is, when He is allowed and trusted to do all the work.<sup>6</sup>

These two statements emphasize the necessity for Christ's mediatorial Covenant and the importance of His role as Prophet, Priest, and King.

Prophet. As the prophet, Jehovah's Christ was both the messenger and servant of the Covenant.<sup>7</sup> The prophet Isaiah foreseeing Christ's day declared in the Spirit, "Behold my servant ... my chosen ... I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles ..." Matthew applied this passage to Christ (12:18-21). As the messenger the Lord (Adon) came first to proclaim His covenant. But another messenger was to prepare the way. Notice the sequence in Malachi three: "Behold I" (Jehovah) "send my messenger" (Elijah) "and he shall prepare the way before me:" (Jehovah) "... saith Jehovah of hosts." The prophet Malachi declares Elijah as Jehovah's messenger was to be sent to prepare the way for Jehovah's entrance as the "messenger of the covenant. (Compare Malachi 4:5 with 3:1 and Joel 2:31 also Acts 2:20). Christ declared Elijah had come and the disci-

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<sup>6</sup> Andrew Murray, The Two Covenants (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1899), p. 21.

<sup>7</sup> Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 42:1-5.

ples understood that John the Baptist was Elijah (Matthew 17:13). Malachi proclaimed that Elijah was to come "before the great and terrible day of Jehovah" (4:5) which Joel forecasted (2:31) and Peter filled with the Spirit interpreted as fulfilled by Christ (Acts 2:20). It was a "great and terrible day" for the contemporaries of Christ (Joel 1:11; Malachi 3:2-5; 4:1; Matthew 3:12; Luke 3:17; 11:50,51; 12:49-53; Matthew 20:18,19; 23:37), but a "great and notable day" for the saved (Acts 2:20; Malachi 4:2,3; Acts 2:38-47).

After Elijah prepares the way Malachi declares, "the Lord" (Adon, the name ascribed to Jehovah)<sup>8</sup> "whom ye seek"<sup>9</sup> "will suddenly come to his temple. Note the connection: "The Lord ... and" (even) "the messenger of the covenant whom ye desire ... saith Jehovah of hosts." Malachi is saying in effect the "Lord (Adon) of all the earth"<sup>10</sup> whom ye seek and "desire" will suddenly come to His Temple" as "the Messenger of His Covenant."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Deuteronomy 10:17 cf. Exodus 23:17; 34:23; Joshua 3:11,13.

<sup>9</sup> Deuteronomy 4:29.

<sup>10</sup> Joshua 3:13; Isaiah 1:24; 10:16; 19:4; 15:22; Micah 4:13; Nehemiah 8:9,10; 10:29; Psalms 8:1; 97:5; 136:1-3. These verses declare that Yahweh and Adon are synonymous.

<sup>11</sup> Here the prophet describes the coming Messiah, not only as the messenger of the covenant, but also as the Lord and Owner of the Jewish Temple; and consequently, as a divine prince or governor--he shall "come to his temple." The Lord

As the "Messenger of the Covenant," Jehovah's Christ proclaimed the stipulations of His Covenant. His word (stipulations) demanded complete reliance upon God. In Matthew chapter five Christ revealed the absolute necessity of fulfilling the Old Testament Law through the familiar words, 'Ye have heard' (by the religious leaders today) "that it was said to them of old time" (your forefathers) ... "but I say unto you ..." (5:21-22, 27-28, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44, 48). At the same time He revealed the absolute impossibility of humans to fulfill it (5:20). The Scribes and Pharisees were the most righteous people on all the earth, yet they fell far short of the requirements to enter the Kingdom ruled by God. The rich young ruler came the closest to fulfilling the Mosaic Law which Christ knew yet he lacked one thing -- absolute trust in God. He was commanded to sell all that he had and give to the poor. This would have left him poor and entirely dependent upon God (Matthew 19: 23,24). Nicodemus, a righteous man, found it impossible to accept the truth (John 3:1-11). He could not understand it; therefore he would not receive it. Neither the righteous

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of any temple is the divinity to whose worship it is consecrated. The temple at Jerusalem of which the prophet here speaks, was consecrated to the true and living God; and we have therefore the express testimony of Malachi that the Christ, the Deliverer, whose coming he announced as no other than the Jehovah of the Old Testament. (Minor Raymond, Christian Theology, p. 194, cited by Wiley, op. cit., p. 175). cf. Matt. 12:6,7.

nor the rich could fulfill the Law. The Apostle Paul declared he had kept the law more than anyone, yet he could not fulfill the Law (Romans 7:7-25).

The Law not only demanded complete reliance and absolute obedience, it also demanded absolute love. Christ said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind ... Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets (Matthew 22:37-40; Mark 12:29-34; Luke 10:27-28; cf. Deuteronomy 6:4-9). He also said, "All things ... whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets " (Matthew 7:12). This required turning the other cheek (Matthew 5:39), going the second mile (Matthew 5:41), sharing with others (Matthew 5:42), and loving one's personal enemies (Matthew 5:44).

Of His relation to the Law Christ said, "think not that I came to destroy" (do away with) "the law or the prophets: (Old Testament) 'I came not to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). Since the most righteous men could not fulfill the demands of the Law, someone Divine needed to do it. For that end Christ came and worked.

As the Servant of the Covenant Christ revealed His identity through super human authority and power. As Hammond says, "He spoke with immediate prophetic authority,



replacing 'Thus saith the Lord' by 'I say unto you.'<sup>8</sup> The people were "astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:28,29). Men of authority recognized His superior authority (Matthew 8:8,9). The righteous men questioned his apparent supernatural authority (Matthew 21:23,24). The people were "amazed" at the extent of His authority for "with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits and they obey him" (Mark 1:27); "with authority and power he commandeth . . ." (Luke 4:36). He gave authority and power to His disciples (Luke 9:1). Christ was given authority to judge man (John 5:27). He had authority to forgive sins (Matthew 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12).

His authority was further exerted through miracles. Christ exercised power over the devil (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12,13; Luke 4:1-13), unclean spirits (Mark 1:27; Luke 4:36), leprosy (Matthew 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-44; Luke 17:11-19), palsy (Matthew 8:6-13; 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26), infirmity (John 5:1f), deformity (Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11), fever (Mark 1:30,31), insanity (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20), severe illness (Mark 5; John 4:46-54), death (Luke 7:11-17; Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; John 11:1-46) wind (Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41), blindness (Matthew 9:27-34; Mark 8:22-26; John 9:1f.; Matthew 20:29-34;

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<sup>8</sup> Hammond, op. cit., p. 118.

Mark 10:46-52), dumbness (Matthew 9:27-34; Mark 9:17-27), gravity (Matthew 14:24-36; Mark 6:47-56), hunger (Matthew 14:13-23; 15:32-38; Mark 8:1-9), growth (Mark 11:20-25), agony (Matthew 26:36-46; Luke 22:39-46), and within His Temple (John 2:13-22; Matthew 21:12-17). This supernatural authority and power were His credentials which John the Baptist (Matthew 11:2-6), Nicodemus (John 3:1f), and the disciples recognized (Matthew 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21; John 6:68,69). It is summed up in His own Words of assurance to John the Baptist:

Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me (Matthew 11:4-6).

Christ was and is the Almighty Provider, Redeemer and Law-giver. He is also the Almighty Judge.

As the Servant of the Covenant Christ, Himself, fulfilled the absolute demands of the holy Law. He did what no man had the power to do -- exercised complete reliance upon God in perfect obedience and perfect love. He repulsed the devil's temptations to use His authority and power for selfish ends -- self-satisfaction (Matthew 4:3-4), self-esteem (Matthew 4:5-7), and self-glory (Matthew 4:8-10) -- being fully dependent upon the written Word of God. Whenever the social pressures of the day threatened to engulf Him, He

retired to seek counsel from the Father in prayer (Matthew 14:23; 26:36-44; Mark 1:35; 6:46; 14:32-39; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18,28,29; 11:1; 22:41-46). He said, "I can of myself do nothing: as I hear I judge: and my judgment is righteous; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 5:30). Again, he said, "the words I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his work" (John 14:10). He declared, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not ... (John 5:43). In the garden He cried, "nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt ... thy will be done." (Matthew 26:39-42). He learned obedience and was made perfect through suffering (Hebrews 5:8).

His perfect love was manifested by His compassion and love for others. He had compassion for the hungry (Matthew 15:32; Mark 8:2), the blind (Matthew 20:34), and the bereaved (Luke 7:13). He loved the bereaved (John 11:5), the rich (Mark 10:21), and His own (John 13:1). He was kind to the social outcasts (women: John 4:4-26; Mark 14:39; Luke 7:36-50; John 7:53-8:11; lepers: Luke 17:11-19; Mark 1:40-45; the insane: Mark 5:1-20); the proud (Luke 10:25-37; Mark 12:28-34); the children (Mark 10:13-16; Matthew 19:13-15); and all classes and nations (the noble: John 4:46-54; Matthew 8:5-13; Matthew 9:18-26; the poor: Mark 7:24-30; 9:14-29). Christ was patient in suffering mental anguish (Matt-

new 26:36-46), social injustice (Matthew 26:47-56), prejudice (Matthew 26:57; 27:10), mockery (Matthew 27:11-31), and physical torture (Matthew 27:32-50). Thus, toward His enemies Christ turned the other cheek and manifested the supreme love required by the holy Law (Luke 6:27-35). He was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:13).

In fulfilling the holy Law Christ revealed the sinful and helpless nature of man. Christ said, "If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin" (John 15:22). He declared that man is corrupt in his heart (Matthew 5:28; 15:19; Mark 7:21-23; Luke 6:45) in thought (Matthew 9:4), in attitude (Matthew 13:15; 15:8; Mark 3:5; 6:52; 7:6), and in understanding (John 12:40); therefore man is selfish (Mark 7:8-13), deceitful (Matthew 22:18,19; Matthew 23:13-22), hypocritical (Matthew 22:18; 23:13,15,23,25,29), vain (Matthew 23:5-7), a murderer (Matthew 23:29-35), and prejudiced (John 4:9). What a contrast is pictured between the most righteous of men and the absolute sinless Christ.

Therefore, as the Judge of men Christ said, "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom" (Matthew 5:20); "... Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven ..."

(Matthew 7:21). He called them, "an evil and adulterous generation" (Matthew 12:39). In his interpretation of the parable of the tares Christ reveals the contrast between the holy and unholy people of the world. The "end of the world" is going to bring separation and agony for the unholy, but bliss for the holy ones (Matthew 13:37-43). The "Son of man" is man's present and future Judge.

As the Servant of the Covenant Christ also revealed His mission. After establishing His true identity, Christ proceeded to reveal His holy suffering. He "must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up" (Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22). This He repeated on His way from the transfiguration (Matthew 22, 23; Mark 9:30-32; Luke 9:43-45) and on His way to Jerusalem (Matthew 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34). This was part of the holy plan to save man. His holy conception was hailed as God's salvation (Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:11,30,38). John proclaimed Him as the "Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Jesus declared, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matthew 9:13; "The Son of man came to seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10) and "to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45). He also said, as "the good shepherd" he lays "down his life. He further said, "I

lay down my life, that I may take it again and I have power to take it again." (John 10:11,18). Christ's prophecy concerning His holy suffering shows that He voluntarily suffered to save man from his sin.

Priest. In fulfilling the demands of the holy Law and taking man's "infirmities" and "diseases"<sup>9</sup> with Him to the Cross, Christ became both man's eternal sin offering and his eternal means of salvation. Man's sinful nature prohibited him from fulfilling the holy demands of God's Law. The eternal light of the holy Law and man's unholy nature were in perpetual contrast and conflict with one another (Romans 7:7-23). Saul, the most righteous man of all righteous men, cried out in his despair and frustration, "Wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death" (Romans 7:24). The deep chasm between unholy man and the holy God was unpassable. The continual indictment of man by the holy Law was an unbearable burden of despair. The unholy nature and subsequent actions of man were insufferable (Matthew 23). The holy nature and the word of Jesus Christ widened the gulf and emphasized the absolute unworthiness and helplessness of man. Man stood uncovered, condemned, and guilty before the judgment of Christ. The next move

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<sup>9</sup> Matthew 8:17.

was the holy Judge's decision -- death or life.

In the days before Christ, man bridged the chasm between his holy God and his sin by periodic and ceremonious substitutionary offerings by which the sin of man was transferred to the animal sacrifice through the laying on of hands and was eradicated by the burning of the sacrifice (Leviticus 1:3-9). By this method the people were purified from their sins, but the root of sin remained intact. Thus, the sin offering was a perpetual one in many and varied forms (Hebrews 10:3-4,11). The blood and the fire were the symbols of purity and the means of atonement.

Before this elaborate ceremonial system was instituted by Jehovah, the lamb of Jehovah's passover was slain and his blood was sprinkled upon the door posts and houses in which the passover feast was observed. The lamb's blood was the symbol of and the means of salvation from the judgment of Jehovah. This passover feast was to be kept as an everlasting memorial to Jehovah the Almighty Deliverer (Exodus 12:1-20). Through the proceeding generations the passover feast was faithfully observed as an ordinance from Jehovah (Exodus 12:14,17). On the day the devout Jews were to celebrate the passover feast, Christ and his disciples prepared to celebrate the same feast in a separate place (Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:1, 12-16). When the evening came, after revealing His betrayer, Christ instituted a new passover feast

as the memorial of His eternal forgiveness (Matthew 26:21-25; 26-28; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20). The newly instituted Lord's Supper was consecrated by His high priestly prayer (John 17:1-26). Thus, the passover feast was superceded by the Lord's Supper as the eternal memorial and symbol of the Almighty and holy Sacrifice of Christ and His atoning work for the salvation of man.

The Cross was the climax of Christ's sacrificial role and the genesis of his intercessory mediation. In the Garden of Gethsemane Christ faced the reality of the Cross alone. The moment in history for which He had been sent into the world had arrived. On the one hand, the redemptive work of centuries, the everlasting promises, and the salvation of all mankind focused upon Christ. The completion of His Covenant with His Father depended upon His faithful obedience to the bitter end. On the other hand, the terrible reality and horror of sin and the coming separation from His Father was too much to bear. The responsibility that rested upon Him was overwhelming; His great compassion for every man was overflowing. The Cross before Him signified for many eternal separation from God and eternal damnation. It also meant the eternal means of salvation for countless billions. The Cross was an eternal medium of blessing or cursing, salvation or condemnation, union or separation for all mankind. It was not the fear of the Cross that caused Christ to cry, "My



Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me ...", but His great compassion for man. He was not willing that any should perish (John 3:16; II Peter 3:9). He "loved his own that were in the world, he loved them to the end" (John 13:1). His love for His Father was even greater for He immediately said, "nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Later He said, "My Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done" Matthew 26:39,42).

The two sides of the Cross are vividly portrayed through the attitudes of the two thieves crucified on the right and left of Christ. The one cursed and mocked Christ, but the other rebuked him, admitted his guilt, and verified Christ's innocence, and then asked for mercy. Jesus said to him, "Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). The cursing and the blessing are also portrayed in the attitudes of the two groups at the foot of the cross. The rulers scoffed and the soldiers mocked Him, but after His death the multitudes smote their breasts (Luke 23:35-37,48), and the centurion glorified God (Luke 23:47). Although the Cross stood as a barrier to the haven of rest for the unrepentant as the "flame of a sword" kept the first parents from the "tree of life" (Genesis 3:24), it also stood as the way to eternal life for the repentant.

While suffering the agony of the Cross, Christ asked His Father to forgive his crucifiers because they were unaware

of what they were doing (Luke 23:34). This was the beginning of Christ's intercession for man and the supreme evidence of his love for his enemies. So the primary purpose of the Cross was to reveal the eternal forgiveness and love of God. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Having vicariously paid the supreme penalty for man's sin, Christ not only established the medium for his salvation, He also eternally sealed His Covenant with His Father. As the incarnate Word, Christ spoke of Himself as the "Son of man," but He was also known as the "Son of God. These two names signify the dual relationship Christ sustained between His Father and man. As the mediator of God, He was known as the "Son of God;" as the mediator of man, He was the "Son of man. As the "Son of man" He was the supreme representative of all men; therefore the supreme leader of all men. As such He was the master of all men and the supreme example for all men. It was as the "Son of man" that Christ fulfilled the holy demands of God. Although He, Himself, had fulfilled the holy Law, and therefore did not deserve the punishment, Christ voluntarily offered Himself as the atonement for the sin of all men. Thereby, He provided the way for reconciliation between all men and their God.

As the "Son of God" Christ was sent into the world not only to interpret and fulfill the holy demands of the law, and present the terms and conditions for entering into the Covenant of God, but also to provide the way for reconciliation and seal it with His own blood. Thus, the Covenant of His Father was established for man.

If the Cross were the ultimate end, then man would be without hope and helpless before the Way of the Cross and the medium of reconciliation. The chasm between God and man was certainly bridged by the Cross, but man needed something else to cross over the bridge, the power to appropriate the atoning work of Christ. In order to effect a reconciliation, both sides must accept the mediator's work and abide by the terms thereof. God not only demanded, provided, and accepted the mediator's work, He also applied His work to the hearts of men through the resurrected Christ.

The resurrection of Christ was essential to provide the power to accept the mediatorial work of Christ and keep His commandments of love. Before the Cross, Jesus foretold and declared his resurrection on the third day in word (Matthew 16:21; Luke 9:22; Matthew 17:23; 20:19; Luke 18:34) and sign (Matthew 12:39,40). After the Cross and His burial, Christ arose from the grave on the third day and appeared to His disciples and up to 500 people over a period of forty days.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Matthew 28:1-10,16-20; Mark 16:1-8,9-11,14-18; Luke 23:56b - 24:49; John 20:1-21:23; I Corinthians 15:5-9.

Then He ascended into heaven (Mark 16:19,20; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11) where He stands and sits upon the right hand of God (Acts 7:55,56, Mark 16:19) as Christ foretold He would before the crucifixion (Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69), David proclaimed (Psalms 110:1), and Peter announced after Pentecost (Acts 2:33,34). It was believed by Paul (Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 8:11; 10:12; 12:2) and Peter (I Peter 3:22).

It is this fact that establishes the eternal Priesthood and intercession of Christ. In the contrast made between the Levitical and the eternal priesthood in the "epistle to the Hebrews" the Melchizedek priesthood is shown to be superior to the former having existed before the Levitical priesthood was established. In the exchange between Abram (Abraham) and the High Priest Melchizedek, the latter blessed the former and the former gave tithes to the latter. In giving homage to Melchizedek, Abraham represented all his descendants which were unborn. Thus, Abraham and his descendants recognized the superiority of the Melchizedek order before the Mosaic law had been established (Genesis 14:18-20; Hebrews 7:1-10).

By God's oath the eternal priesthood of Christ was established after the order of Melchizedek (Psalms 110:4). Like Melchizedek, Christ was not a priest of the Levitical order, but a priest of the tribe of Judah (Hebrews 7:11-14).

Since a more perfect priesthood needed to be established, the Levitical priesthood was inadequate and a change in priesthood meant a change in the Law (Hebrews 7:11-21). Thus, the Mosaic Law and the subsequent Levitical priesthood was superceded by the more perfect Law and priesthood of Christ. Therefore, Christ is the everlasting security of the more perfect Covenant. Unlike the Levitical priests whose office ceased at death, Christ's priesthood "abides forever" and "is able to save to the uttermost" (completely) all that "draw near" to God through Christ "seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

Having superceded the Mosaic Law and Levitical priesthood, Christ, as the great and holy high Priest, entered the more perfect Tabernacle in the heavens and through His own blood into the "Holy of holies" of the Tabernacle "once for all" as the supreme and eternal offering for the redemption of all men (Hebrews 8:1-9:12). Through His shed blood, the final atonement has been made for the sin of men. "For Christ entered ... into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us: ... now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:24,26).

As the everlasting Priest in heaven Christ sanctified every believer through His own blood and offered the more perfect Covenant as His gift to him. Every believer has been

"sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all ...." when "he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God ... for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:10-14). His blood cleanses away the sin and guilt of the believer and enables him to "serve the living God" (Hebrews 9:14). For this reason he is the mediator of the more perfect Covenant that every believer may "receive the promise of the eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15). His death effected His will or Covenant and His eternal life assures the believer of eternal forgiveness (Hebrews 9:16,17) and victory in the end (Hebrews 9:28). Thus, Christ through the medium of the Cross entered heaven as our High Priest and Redeemer.

King. As King, Christ reigns both on earth and in heaven. Before His crucifixion, Christ was assumed to be the forthcoming King of Israel by other kings (Matthew 2:1,4), the chief priests and scribes (Matthew 2:5,6 cf. Micah 4:2f), Jesus Himself (Matthew 27:11; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:2,3; John 18:36,37), and by Pilate (Mark 15:9; John 18:17, 19:14,15). His epitaph read "King of the Jews" (Matthew 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19). He was proclaimed to be the King by Nathaniel (John 1:49) and by His disciples (John 12:13,15). The multitudes wanted to make Him their

King (John 6:15). Christ declared He was greater than Solomon (Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31). He was hailed as the son of David (Matthew 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30,31; 21:9,15); Christ is David's son (Mark 12:35; Luke 20:41) and his Lord (Matthew 22:43,45; Mark 12:37; Luke 20:44). In fact, He is "greater than the Temple" (Matthew 11:6).

After His ascension Christ "sat down at the right hand of God" to rule His people on earth through the Holy Spirit until His enemies are conquered (Hebrews 10:12,13; Acts 2:32-36). At His ascension Christ declared,

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth ..., Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28:18-20).

But before they were to become Christ's ambassadors, the disciples were to "tarry in Jerusalem until they received the power from on high" which Christ was to send as His Father promised (Luke 24:49). This power they would receive "when the Holy Spirit came" upon them. Then, they would be Christ's witnesses both in "Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This power was bestowed by the Father through Christ to all that believe:

according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the

heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body the fulness of him that filleth all in all. (Ephesians 1:19-23).

On the throne Christ shall reign until the judgment when His mediatorial power will cease; the time of salvation shall be at an end. Paul says, 'Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet (I Corinthians 15:24,25). However, this does not mean that Christ shall cease to reign; as Wiley says, "He shall forever reign as the God-man, and shall forever exercise His power for the benefit of the redeemed and the glory of His Kingdom."<sup>11</sup> John gives us a glimpse of what it will be like after the judgment. He says,

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple thereof. And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof. ... and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean ... only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21:22-27).

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<sup>11</sup> H. Orton Wiley, op. cit., p. 215.



## II. PURPOSE OF THE "NEW" COVENANT

As the threefold mediation of Christ reveals, the Covenant was established before Christ and confirmed by Christ to provide (1) a medium of peace with God (This means a changed relationship with Him.), (2) a medium to reveal His vicarious love and concern for every man, (3) a medium to break the power of sin, (4) a medium to provide power to do the will of God, (5) a medium to establish fellowship with God, and (6) a medium to provide eternal life.

The by-product of the covenant is the curse upon all men who refuse to enter into the Covenant relationship. They are exposed, pronounced guilty, and condemned by the Great Judge; they are in danger of eternal damnation in hell where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth," and eternal torment, every moment they refuse to repent and believe.

The "way of the Cross leads home" is as true today as it has ever been. There is no other way to be reconciled with God than to accept His will for us. Peter rightly said, "to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). The writer to the Hebrews rightly warned "how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?" Jesus correctly declared, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6). Jesus correctly stated, "Greater love hath no

man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend" (John 15:13).

Everlasting Covenant. Christ's mediatorial work served to establish a permanent covenant between man and God. Christ as incarnate man accepted the terms and conditions of God's will for man and eternally sealed the everlasting Covenant in His own blood for man. This covenant can never be broken as the first Covenant was continually breached. Christ as the God-Man has established complete and everlasting peace, harmony, and fellowship between God and man. Man has been eternally reconciled to His God, permanently united with His God, eternally identified with His God, and permanently glorified with His God through the permanent incarnation of the God-Man and His shed blood. Christ has done all this for all men that God might be their Holy God and all men might be His holy people as one big, happy, holy and glorious family.

This was his purpose from the beginning. Before the fall, the relationship between God and man was on a friendly basis closely related to a father and son relationship. The first Covenant established between the Father and Son was to reveal the Father's will for His Son. The first hint of punishment was implied in the word "die. After the fall, the punishment was revealed as a loss of the close personal

fellowship between the Father and His son. The eternal life so freely provided and partaken of before was then denied. The son was driven from the security of his home. His changed nature had brought about the ostracism. From that time God has been working to restore His lost son to his rightful place. Each subsequent covenant was a progressive step toward the more perfect Covenant ratified and sealed by Christ's blood. From the Adamic Covenant to the Cross, God was preparing the way for reconciliation between Himself and His wayward son. The only permanent way was for God Himself to enter history and fulfill His own demands as perfect man and seal the fact in His own blood. With Adam, God established hope for reconciliation. With Noah, He established His everlasting peace. With Abraham, He began his personal redemptive program completed by the Cross.

The ultimate purpose for the Covenant with Abraham was to be his personal God and the God of his descendants (Genesis 17:7). To Moses God said, "I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know I am Jehovah your God" (Exodus 6:7). He commanded Moses to say to Israel, "if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be my possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a Kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5). In the book of Leviticus God says, "I am Jehovah that brought

you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy (Leviticus 11:45 cf. 25:38). To Jeremiah God said, 'Ye shall be my people and I will be their God (Jeremiah 32:38). To Ezekiel He said the same thing (Ezekiel 11:20; 14:11; 36:28). Hosea wrote, 'I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them that were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say Thou art my God' (Hosea 2:23). Zechariah wrote, 'they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness (Zechariah 8:8). He also wrote, 'They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, Jehovah is my God' (Zechariah 13:9).

Restoration. Since Christ as the God-Man has permanently reconciled and restored man with His Father through His own blood, what is every man's part in the atonement? After the Holy Spirit had descended upon the disciples, Peter filled with the Holy Spirit declared the truth about Christ. This truth convicted the hearts of the people present, and they cried, 'What shall we do?' Then Peter said, 'Repent ye and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:37,38). Thus, the Holy Spirit, Himself, sent by the Father through the God-Man says that every man must first accept the truth that Jesus is the Son

of God and the Lord of all men (2:22-36). Upon being convicted of this truth by the Holy Spirit he is to repent of his sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; then he shall receive the "gift of the Holy Spirit. In other words every man must accept the atoning work of Christ for himself before he is in position to receive the power of the Holy Spirit which is bestowed to every man who repents.

Repentance. "Repent ye" was a part of the first message of both John the Baptist and Christ (Matthew 3:2; 4:17). As the people gathered around him John rebuked them for their evil ways and exhorted them to bring "fruits worthy of repentance" (Luke 3:8). In answer to their inquiry "What ... must we do?", John exhorted them to share their personal items, be honest in their dealings, and be content with their share. Then, he proceeded to baptize them with water. John admitted that water was inadequate, but One was to come who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and in fire" (Luke 3:16; Matthew 3:11).

When the Holy Spirit had come, Peter exhorted the people, in answer to their inquiry "what shall we do?" to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; then, they would receive the "gift." Before and after the Cross repentance and the cleansing by water was necessary. The difference between the two scenes is the name of Jesus Christ. Before the Cross, "fruits worthy of repentance" were needed,

but after Pentecost conviction and repentance were necessary. Now it is apparent that repentance and water baptism go hand in hand. The water baptism is an outward sign of confession and subsequent cleansing (Matthew 3:6). Christ Himself never baptized with water (John 4:2). Christ made a notable distinction between water and Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 1:5) which Peter remembered (Acts 11:16). The contrast is quite clear in Paul's exchange with John's disciples (Acts 19:2-6). They were pointing to Christ, but had not received Christ. So repentance of sins is first necessary to believe on Christ.

Faith. Repentance is not enough, however, every man must receive Christ as his own personal Saviour. The name Jesus Christ is the key that unlocks the door to Salvation. The difference, as we noted above, between the two scenes is the name Jesus Christ and the "gift of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit through Peter applied the spoken Word, awakened the sleeping conscience of men to their personal guilt, and convicted them of the need to do something. Then, the Holy Spirit calls them to repent and be baptized in the "name of Jesus Christ." In response to the call, "They ... that received his word were baptized: ..." that is; those that accepted the call were "baptized" and the implication is, received the "gift of the Holy

Spirit" (Acts 2:38-41). The implication is also suggested that the call can be resisted (Acts 2:41), and man must do something to save himself; "save yourselves from this crooked generation" (Acts 2:40). So faith must be exercised to receive the call and obey the word before the gift can be received. This fact is obvious in the healing of the blind man (A second application was needed because his faith was weak, Mark 8:24), and the father's intercessory prayer for his son when he cried "I believe, help thou mine unbelief" (He needed added faith for his weak faith, Mark 9:24). This additional faith that most men need is now imparted to all men through the atoning work of Christ. Thus, exercised human faith and imparted "saving faith" result in victorious faith.

Power. Along with the call to repent, the power is supplied by the Holy Spirit to enable every man to repent. If this power is not resisted, this power is received and activated in the act of repentance. Then, "saving faith" is imparted by the Holy Spirit, received, and exercised by the penitent man, and new life is imparted to the soul. With the "birth of the Spirit" in the soul, power to obey additional commands and to witness is bestowed which leads to sanctification. Upon being "born again" the power within the new man constrains him to be obedient to the commands of

the Holy Spirit and witness for His Lord (Acts 1:8; John 15:27) as the apostles themselves were witnesses (Acts 5:32; 10:39; I Corinthians 15:3-11) in accordance with the special gift bestowed within him (I Corinthians 12:8-10) and the graces imparted to him (Galatians 5:22,23). This operational work issues both in vocation and character. Thus, man becomes a living witness for His Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in act and state through the impartation of Divine faith and the exercise of human faith. As "children of God" we receive the Spirit of adoption by which we are considered "heirs of God" and "joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:15-17). This inheritance is the blessing of Abraham which God gave to him by the promise of the Spirit through faith (Galatians 3:14-18), but we do not receive the full inheritance until inbred sin is cleansed from the heart. This cleansing is done by the Holy Spirit and is known as the "baptism with the Spirit." The result of this baptism is known as "entire sanctification." With the cleansing of the heart from inbred sin, the new born son is "inducted into the full privileges of the New Covenant."<sup>12</sup> This is

the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws on their heart, and upon their mind will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering of sin (Hebrews 10:16-18).

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<sup>12</sup> H. Orton Wiley, op. cit., p. 323.



Thus, the words of the Covenant and the inner grace of the Covenant are received and activated within and without in conjunction with and in proportion to the exercise of our awakened faith which results in new life, blood relationship, and mutual identity in aims, interests, agreement, and sympathy similar to Siamese twins; until all are perfected in the second advent of Christ.

#### IV. SUMMARY

In this chapter the New Covenant has been discussed from its origin to the end of time. We have seen that the Alpha and Omega of existence entered into history to become man and associate with all men to fully understand the temptations of all men. As the God-Man, Jesus Christ was able to perfectly fulfill the holy demands of the holy "Mosaic" Law and experience agony and death for man, to overcome death and arise to take His place as the Priest-King of all men in the heavenly Tabernacle of God; thereby establishing the everlasting Covenant with His Father for man.

Through the holy blood of the God-Man, man has the medium whereby he can be cleansed from all sins and the root of sin by receiving and appropriating the imparted words and grace of the Covenant.

The "new" or better Covenant is a more perfect Covenant that supercedes the Mosaic Covenant and lifts man up to

a higher level of life; the next step is absolute perfection and glorification.

The Covenant of the New Testament is both a covenant and a will -- a covenant in relation to the Father; a will in relation to man. Both the words and benefits of the will are bestowed to every repentant man as Christ's personal gift and blessing.

TABLE IV

## THE MORE PERFECT COVENANT

Features	Old Testament Beginning		New Testament Fulfillment
	Abrahamic	Mosaic	
Initiator	<u>Jahweh Elohim</u>	<u>Elohim Jahweh</u>	God the Father by Christ
Stipulations	Perfection	Holy law	Christ
History	Mercy	Mercy	Love
Provision	Circumcision of flesh	Law	Circumcision of heart
Witness	Patriarchs	Israel	Gentiles and Israel
Blessing	Life	Life	Life
Cursing	Death	Death	Death
Occasion	Animal sacrifice	Fire, law	Cross
Oath	God's promise	God's decree	God's Son
Condition	Faith in obedience	Faith in obedience	Faith in obedience
Purpose	Instill faith	Reveal nature of man	Instill faith, love, and holiness
Kind	Everlasting		Everlasting
Results	Restriction Indictment	Restriction Indictment	Restoration, Eternal Life, Indictment

TABLE V

## GOD'S COVENANT WITH MAN

Covenant	Motive	Form	Condition	Restriction	Penalty	Sign
Edenic	Love	Decree	Faith in obedience*	Knowledge	Death	Security
Adamic	Justice, Mercy	Command, Promise	Victory*	Life	Conflict, Banishment	Sacrifice, Insecurity
Noahic	Mercy	Decree, Promise	Faith in obedience	Blood, Murder	Death	Sacrifice, Rainbow
Abrahamic	Holiness	Command, Promise	Faith in obedience	None	Judgment	Sacrifice, Circumcision
Phinehasic	Gratitude	Promise	Faith in believing	None	None	Priesthood
Mosaic	Holiness	Decree	Faith in obedience	Unholy as-sociation, acts	Death	Stone tablets
Palestinian	Holiness	Command, Promise	Faith in obedience	Unholy as-sociation	Death	Palestinian inheritance
Davidic	Gratitude	Command, Promise	Faith in believing	None	Punishment	Throne
Jeremaic	Mercy	Promise	Faith in believing	None	None	New heart
Christian	Love	Christ	Faith in obedience	Ungodli-ness	Torment	Love, Holiness

\* Implied.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### I. SUMMARY

This investigation has now come to the final summary and conclusions. From the second chapter to the present the nature and purpose of the Biblical Covenant has been carefully analyzed, and the progress of the study described so that the reader can follow the course of the investigation. In the introductory chapter the nature and limitations of the investigations were described. This was followed by chapter two in which the "meaning of covenant" was analyzed both from the etymology of the Hebrew and Greek words and their use in the Scriptures. It was found that both words convey the meaning of sacrifice with the latter signifying a personal rather than the ceremonial sacrifice. In their use the Hebrew word berith suggests a bilateral concept, and the Greek word diatheke suggests a unilateral idea which constrains man to faith and obedience.

In chapter three the ancient non-biblical covenants were discussed with particular emphasis on the basic features of the Hittite Covenant and Mendenhall's thought concerning the origin and influence of the covenant. The origin of the covenant idea is not known, but it has been traced

to the Mesopotamian area beyond Abraham. This leaves room for the Biblical concept that the Covenant was initiated by God in the Garden of Eden. The covenant is believed to be the source of the policy under which the various tribes and communities were molded together for a specific purpose and a common goal. The later "codes" are believed to be collections of specific punitive action that occurred for particular crimes. As tribes, communities, and towns blossomed into large cities the codes were revised from time to time. The Hittite treaties are believed to be international forms well known before Moses' day. The "Decalogue" and especially Joshua chapter twenty-four are similar in form; this fact helps to date them more accurately. The other ancient covenants emphasize the importance of blood to appease the gods, invoke the blessing and curse, change relationship and create unity in thought and purpose. The rites either invoke a personal or substitutionary sacrifice.

Chapter four shows that the Biblical covenants are similar in form and purpose. The man with man relationships are generally bilateral treaties or leagues entered into to bring peace, and thereby indicate a changed relationship for a specific purpose. The God and man relationships are primarily unilateral in nature and bilateral in function being initiated and stipulated by God which stipulations constrain man to faith and obedience. The Man to God relationships

are unilateral in nature and bilateral in function. Man is constrained to initiate the pledge or oath, and God responds by fulfilling man's desire. All the Biblical covenants were found to be an integral part of God's plan to restore man. Each succeeding covenant owed its very existence to the reality of its predecessor.

Chapter five reveals the nature and purpose of the 'new' Covenant and the threefold role of Christ as the Mediator of the more perfect Covenant. The "new" Covenant was found to be essentially a unilateral "will" in nature and both a "covenant" and "will" in function. Essentially, it is a covenant between the Father and His Son and a "will" in relation to man. As a covenant it was established before the incarnation; as a "will" it was initiated after the ascension. The "will" constrains man to exercise faith, receive the gift and work in the Kingdom of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

## II. CONCLUSIONS

The Biblical Covenant is essentially one in nature and two in function. The initial Covenant was established in the Garden of Eden before the fall of man and reestablished after the fall. It was confirmed through Noah, initiated in Abraham, actuated through the holy 'Mosaic' Law, consecrated through Phinehas, glorified through David, revealed

through Jeremiah, and eternally perpetuated by Jesus Christ as our holy and victorious Mediator and eternal Priest-King.

The "old" Covenant was inadequate because man was unable to continually uphold His part of the Covenant due to his ungodly and fickle nature and erroneous reasoning. The ritual established by God as means of atoning for personal and inbred sin became the ultimate concern of the priests and people alike. Circumcision of the flesh was religiously observed as eternal security. The blood of animals was inadequate to change the sinful nature of man. Man was so busy deceiving himself that he forgot the true purpose for the ceremonies. Thus, the ceremony became a burden to bear, and man became careless in the endless rituals. Blemished sacrifices were offered as appeasement to the Holy and Almighty God.

In the "fulness of time" God spoke in His Son and Christ the God-Man came to show man the error of his ways and correctly interpret and fulfill the Law. When He seated Himself upon the "right hand of God," the Covenant was perpetuated both Godward and manward. As the Son of Man, Christ sits upon the Throne as David's son; as the Son of God He sits upon the same Throne as "Lord of all the earth." From His heavenly Throne, Christ imparts the inheritance and benefits of His own will. Through the mediatorial work of the Holy Spirit working within His own people, Christ mediates



His will as Prophet, Priest, and King.

Within the Trinity God the Father is the initiator of the Covenant, the God-Man Christ is the Mediator and power of the Covenant, and the Holy Spirit is the mediator of the words and grace of the Covenant. The God-Man Christ as the Mediator is both the initiator and the recipient of the Covenant. The Holy Spirit as Mediator of the words and grace of the covenant is the sign of the Covenant. The living blood of Christ is the seal of the Covenant.

The living blood not only seals the more perfect Covenant that superceded the earthly in the Person of Christ, it also purifies the repentant man from overt and inbred sin. The blood is essential and plays the central role in man's initial salvation. The blood, even in the non-Biblical covenants, was the means of appeasement, invoking the curse, changing natures and creating new identities. However, the only true appeasement, curse, impartation of a new nature, and union is obtained through the blood of Christ.

Like the coin there are two sides of the propitiation. Those that repent and receive the "will" of Christ and the subsequent inheritance are blessed. But those who refuse to repent and resist the Holy Spirit are in danger of the curse and abide in the shadow of the ever present wrath of God.

The Biblical Covenant is the will of God expressed in the form of solemn promises, decrees and Christ the living

Word: to communicate faith, confidence and love to man and instill faith, confidence and love in man to accomplish a specific purpose through the awakened and exercised faith of man. The seven-fold purpose of the Covenant after the fall of man was (1) to reveal the will of God, (2) to instill confidence in man, (3) to reveal the unholy nature of man, (4) to provide the final atonement for man's sin, and (5) to change the ungodly nature of man, (6) to restore man to his rightful place as the son of God, and (7) to give man Christ's eternal life that He might reign over and within him. Christ offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice to end all bloody sacrifices and lift man from the carnal up into the Spiritual realm that all men in the end might have eternal life. Christ was and is (1) the 'source of policy in law,' (2) the interpreter of the holy Law, and (3) the victor over His Father's own law. Christ is the final decree of God.

The atonement work of Christ is received only by faith. Christ has completed all the work and imparts His Spirit of Grace as a gift. The Love of Christ constrains the true Christian to work in and for His Kingdom. We are saved (1) by exercising our faith to respond to the magnetic Love of the Holy Spirit drawing us to the Cross through the Love of Christ revealed therein, (2) by exercising our faith to receive the 'saving faith' being imparted to us through

the Cross by the Holy Spirit, (3) by exercising our faith to activate the imparted "saving faith" in witnessing to the love of God, and (4) by exercising our faith to be living witnesses for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus, the Love of Christ constrains us to appropriate the atoning work of Christ and witness to His love. This is known as initial salvation or "conversion." In time the Holiness of Christ constrains us to be living witnesses of His Holiness in being holy in thought, word, and deed. This is known as the baptism of the Holy Spirit or entire sanctification. Thus, love is the initial step to holy character and living. Christ said to His disciples, "If ye love me ye will keep my commandments" "... If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love (John 14:15; 15:10). Peter in later years said, "be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15,16). Therefore, the seed of faith blossoms into love, and love blooms in the fragrance of Holiness (Romans 6:1-23). The Holy Spirit plants the seed within us, nurtures it to full maturity, and fills our souls full with His holy, abiding Presence. The ultimate end is glorification at the consumation or second advent of Christ. From the beginning the Holy Spirit empowers us to exercise our faith to receive and obey the will of Christ.

The Biblical Covenant relationship is a union of faith or at-one-ment expressed in a new nature, mutual aims, interests, and goals. The Old Testament covenant relationship was in the nature of a husband wife relationship in which unfaithfulness and broken relationship was easier; the New Covenant is in the nature of a father and son relationship which can not be as easily broken once man enters within the Kingdom of God. "If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). In fact as Barclay observed, "the very word diatheke has in it the inescapable truth that 'all is of God'"<sup>1</sup>

The Biblical Covenant was established by the Word of God before the incarnation; the Covenant was literally fulfilled through the incarnation during the earthly life and death of Christ. The Covenant has been spiritually fulfilled in the resurrection, ascension, and reign of Christ which is to be literally fulfilled by the second advent of Christ. Pentecost was the spiritual coming of the Kingdom of God. Everyone that is baptized by the Holy Spirit is now in the Spiritual Kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit is now our spiritual inheritance. Our literal inheritance will be received

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<sup>1</sup> William Barclay, A New Testament Wordbook (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1956), p. 32.

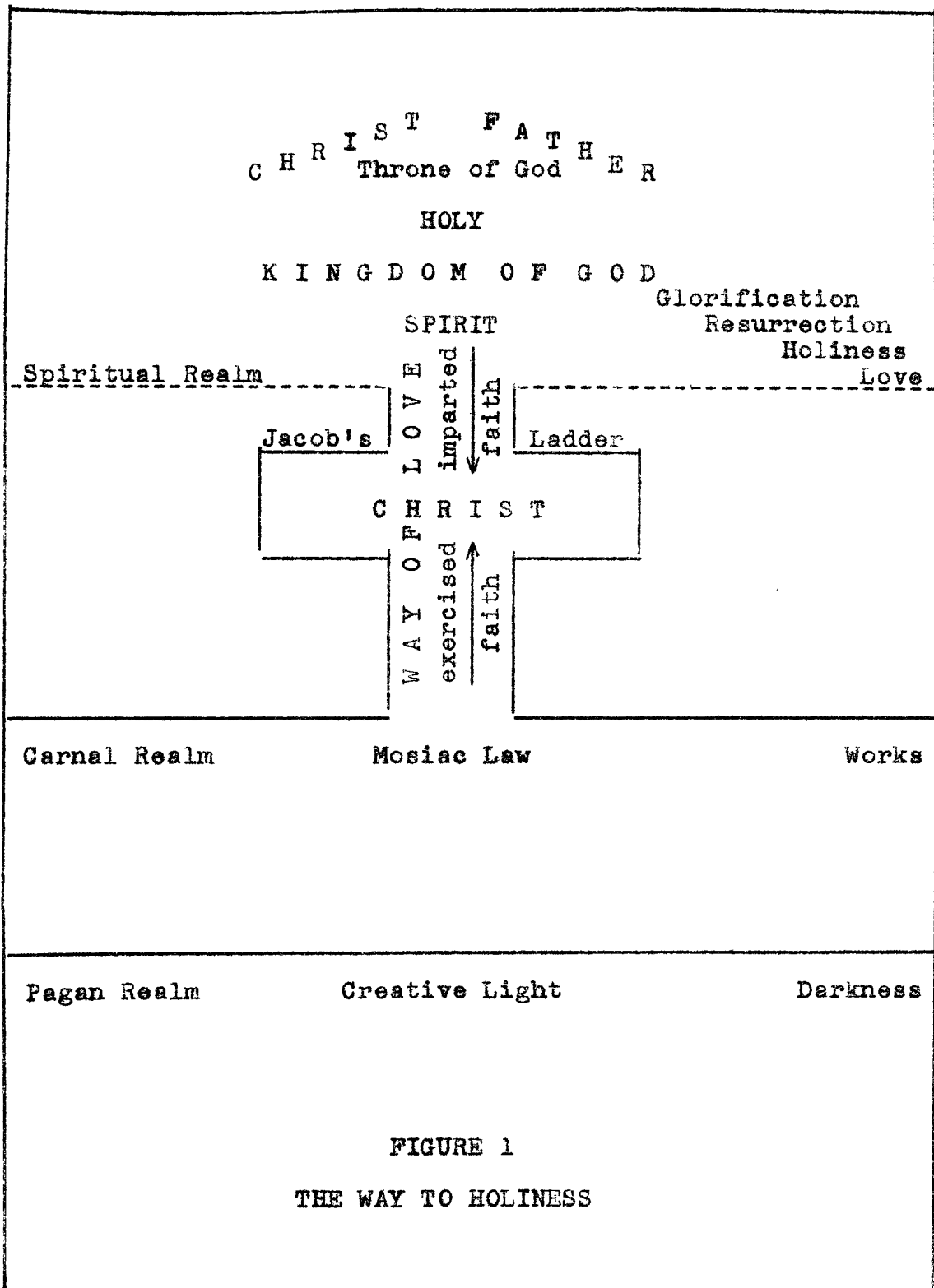
in the second coming of Christ.

A Nobel prize-winning biologist, in his most recent book, offers a most remarkable insight into the Spiritual realm when he wrote:

What admits no doubt in my mind is that the Creator must have known a great deal of wave mechanics and solid state physics, and must have applied them. Certainly, He did not limit himself to the molecular level when shaping life just to make it simpler for the biochemist.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, Introduction to Submolecular Biology (London: 17 Academic Press, Inc., 1959, p. 15.



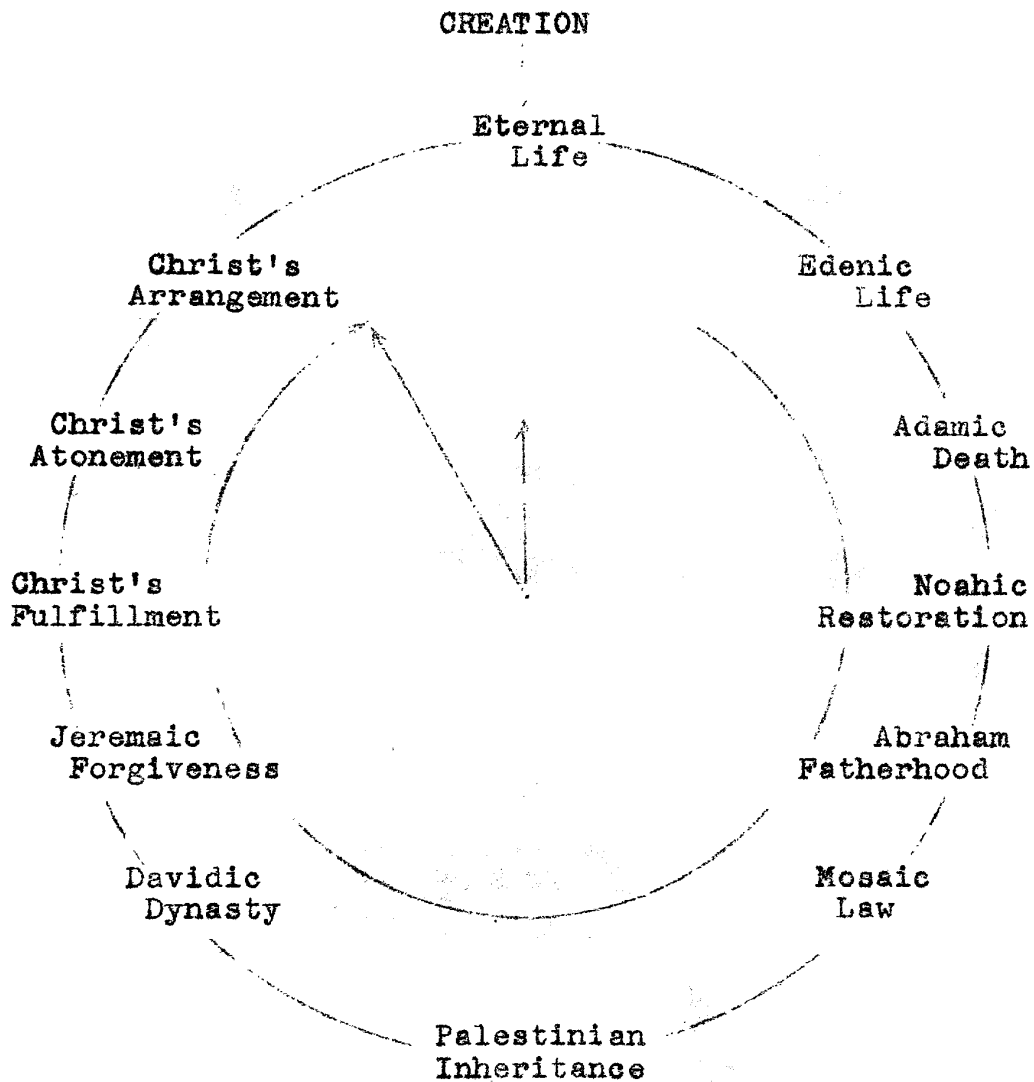


FIGURE 2

## THE COVENANT CHAIN

From Edenic to Eternal Life

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