

# A GUIDE TO COVENANTS

## The Words for Covenant - from the original Biblical Languages

בְּרִית = “berith”

This Hebrew word means, “to cut” or “covenant.”

διαθήκη = “diatheke”

This Greek word means, “contract,” “covenant,” or “testament.”

### Understanding the Word “Covenant”

#### A. In Everyday Life

It means an agreement between people or groups. This is a historically verifiable custom of the Middle Eastern cultures found in Biblical references.

#### B. In Biblical Terms, regarding God

It means a declaration by God to bring individuals, nations or universal mankind into a specific relationship with Him. In granting covenant, God brings to pass certain works or blessings upon those with whom He covenants.

| Examples of Biblical Covenants<br>(We will examine others later.) |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Covenant                                                          | Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Stipulations and Duration of the Covenant                                                                                                                             |
| 1. <b>Shoe Covenant</b><br>(Ruth 4:1-8)                           | <i>(Ruth 4:7 NKJV) “Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: <b>one man took off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was a confirmation in Israel.</b>”</i> | Conditional on agreement between two individuals concerning some legal or business related issue. It would be binding until something mutually agreeable replaced it. |
| 2. <b>Salt Covenant</b>                                           | There is no specific Biblical example.                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Two individuals exchange salt from each person’s pouch or container to the other’s. This was more binding than the shoe covenant.                                     |
| 3. <b>Blood Covenant</b>                                          | <i>(Genesis 15:9-10 NKJV) “So He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young</i>                                                                       | This was the most binding covenant. Blood covenants signify importance and permanence. Animals are                                                                    |

|  |                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p><b>Blood Covenant (continued)</b></p> | <p><i>pigeon.” {10} Then he brought all these to Him <b>and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two.</b></i></p> <p><i>(Genesis 15:17-18 NKJV) “And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, <b>there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. {18} On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates;”</b></i></p> | <p>slain and the parties to the covenant walk between the parts of the animals. (It is impossible to put the butchered animals back together, thus signifying permanence.).</p> <p>The example in Genesis 15 reveals how God spoke His promises to Abram and in response to Abram’s request for assurance, God had Abram kill and cut in half a heifer, a female goat, and a ram. He also killed a turtledove and a young pigeon. Then, God used these butchered animals to confirm His covenant with Abram.</p> <p>The blood covenant establishes a precedent which God uses to confirm His Word and His people use to confirm their loyalty and respect toward Him. The ultimate blood covenant is the cross of Christ.</p> |
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## **The Divine Covenant of Redemption**

(Implied by the Scriptural Record)

### **The Time of this Covenant: Eternity Past**

This covenant can be viewed as an implied, extra-Biblical covenant because it was established in the counsels of eternity past, between the three Persons of the Trinity, before the foundations of the world were spoken into being - before the history of humankind began.

### **The Purpose of this Covenant: Provision for Future Salvation**

It was formulated by covenant agreement of the three Persons of the Trinity as a plan of redemption for the future of humankind. The Father was the Architect, the Son the Provider, and the Holy Spirit the Executor.

## EIGHT BIBLICAL COVENANTS

The time of the Biblical covenants stretches between Adam and eternity future. Here is a list of all eight.

- |                                                  |                            |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. <b>Covenant of Works</b><br>(Edenic Covenant) | GENESIS 2:15-17            |
| 2. <b>Adamic Covenant</b>                        | GENESIS 3:14-21            |
| 3. <b>Noahic Covenant</b>                        | GENESIS 9:1-9              |
| 4. <b>Abrahamic Covenant</b>                     | GENESIS 12:1-3             |
| 5. <b>Mosaic Covenant</b>                        | EXODUS 19:5-8              |
| 6. <b>Palestinian Covenant</b>                   | DEUTERONOMY 29:9-30, 31-34 |
| 7. <b>Davidic Covenant</b>                       | SECOND SAMUEL 7:4-17       |
| 8. <b>New Covenant</b>                           | JEREMIAH 31:31-34          |

### There are Two Categories of Biblical Covenants.

#### First Category: **GENERAL OR UNIVERSAL COVENANTS**

These deal with the entire human race. They represent three of the eight covenants, above.

#### 1. **Covenant of Works (Edenic Covenant)**

- ☑ It was created when God gave Adam stewardship over the earth. It ended when Adam disobeyed God at the tree of knowledge of good and evil. His disobedience caused the curse of sin and death to enter the world.
- ☑ The purposes of the Edenic Covenant were as follows.
  1. Adam was charged with populating the earth. (GENESIS 1:28)
  2. He was charged with subduing the earth. (GENESIS 1:28)
  3. He was to exercise dominion over every living thing on the earth. (GENESIS 1:28)
  4. He was to care for the garden. (GENESIS 1:28)
  5. He was to refrain from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (GENESIS 2:16-17)

#### 2. **Adamic Covenant**

- ☑ It was administered by Adam. (The Federal Head) It was established at the time of Adam's fall into sin and will be in place until the time of the Millennium.

3.

- ☑ Its purpose is to set the conditions of life until the curse is finally and fully lifted, and the earth is restored to the conditions that existed in the Edenic Covenant.
- ☑ The provisions of the Adamic Covenant are as follows.
  - a. The serpent was cursed (**GENESIS 3:14**)
  - b. Satan was judged.  
(**GENESIS 3:15 - "...you shall bruise his heel."**)
  - c. The first prophecy of the coming Messiah was given.  
(**GENESIS 3:15 - This is often referred to as the "protoevangel."**)
  - d. The sorrows and pains of childbirth were introduced and multiplied. The woman was made subject to her husband.  
(**GENESIS 3:16**)
  - e. The woman's desire for the man was increased. (**GENESIS 3:16**)
  - f. The ground was cursed. Death was introduced. Man was required to toil in sweat until he died and returned to dust. (**GENESIS 3:19**)
  - g. Man would die both physically and spiritually! (**GENESIS 3:19**)

### **3. Noahic Covenant**

- ☑ It was administered by Noah (the Federal Head). It was established following the Flood and will be in place until the time of the Millennium.
- ☑ Its purpose is to reaffirm and keep in place the provisions of the Adamic Covenant. Additionally, human government was declared responsible for keeping sin and violence in check.
- ☑ The provisions of the Noahic Covenant are as follows.
  - a. God established and defined the seasons. (**GENESIS 8:22**)
  - b. The earth would be repopulated. (**GENESIS 9:1**)
  - c. The subjection of animals to humankind was reaffirmed. (**GENESIS 9:2**)
  - d. Man would eat meat but must refrain from eating the blood of animals. (**GENESIS 9:3-4**)
  - e. Life would be sacred. Killing would require the life of the killer. (**GENESIS 9:5-6**)
  - f. God declared He would establish His covenant with humankind, including future generations and with every living creature. (**GENESIS 9:9-10**)
  - g. God would never again destroy the earth by flood. (**GENESIS 9:11**)
  - h. God instituted the rainbow as a testimony to the covenant. (**GENESIS 9:11-16**)

## Second Category: **THEOLOGICAL COVENANTS**

These establish and declare God's theological plan and purposes in the world. Everyone falls under these covenants. There are two categories of Theological Covenants, Minor and Major.

| <b>Minor Theological Covenants</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Types                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Examples                                |
| Individuals with Individuals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Jacob and Laban<br>David and Jonathan   |
| Individuals with Groups                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Isaac and Abimelech                     |
| Nations with Nations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>EXODUS 23:31-33 &amp; EXODUS 34</b>  |
| The Marriage Covenant                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>PROVERBS 2:17 &amp; MALACHI 2:14</b> |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                         |
| <b>Major Theological Covenants</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                         |
| These deal with God's program of redemption; with Israel; and with His reign of righteousness in the earth. They are God's proposal to a His people.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                         |
| <b>Major Covenants may be conditional.</b><br>God promises that <b>IF</b> they will abide by certain conditions, <b>THEN</b> He will provide special blessings. <b>IF</b> they will not, <b>THEN</b> He will provide punishment for their rebellion.                                                                                                  |                                         |
| <b>Major Covenants may be unconditional.</b><br><b>God</b> gives His promise freely and without conditions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                         |
| <b>Characteristics of Major Covenants</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                         |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. They have clear Scriptural declaration that a covenant is being made.</li><li>2. They clearly say to whom the covenant is being applied.</li><li>3. They have consistent covenant words, phrases and language.</li><li>4. They are clearly seen. There are no hidden Major Covenants in Scripture.</li></ol> |                                         |

### **Major Theological Covenants**

(Numbering will continue according to the eight Biblical covenants, listed on Page 3.)

#### **4. Abrahamic Covenant**

- It was established when God appeared to Abram. (**GENESIS 12:1-3**) It was unconditional. Abram responded and obeyed.
- It is in effect from the time of **GENESIS 12** until the end of the Millennium.
- Its purpose is to guarantee Israel would be a nation forever.
- The provisions of the Abrahamic covenant are both personal for Abraham and universal, as it concerns his descendants. God would

make Abraham's name great and in Abraham, all the families of the earth would be blessed.

*(Genesis 15:1-6 NKJV) "After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." {2} But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" {3} Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" {4} And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." {5} Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." {6} And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."*

### 5. Mosaic Covenant

- ☑ It was established when God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai. (EXODUS 19:5-20:26) It was terminated at the crucifixion of Christ.
- ☑ Its purpose was to guarantee Israel would be a nation forever. **It was a conditional covenant.** Its provisions depended upon obedience to the Law God established for His people. It gave the nation instruction in how to live. It formulated and provided blessings for obedience and punishment for disobedience. Its Provisions: commandments (2) judgments and (3) ordinances

| The Ten Commandments |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |              |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| I.                   | You shall have no other Gods before Me.                                                                                                                                                              | EXODUS 20:3  |
| II.                  | You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.                       | EXODUS 20:4  |
| III.                 | You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.                                                                                                                                            | EXODUS 20:7  |
| IV.                  | Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.                                                                                                                                                           | EXODUS 20:8  |
| V.                   | Honor your father and your mother...                                                                                                                                                                 | EXODUS 20:12 |
| VI.                  | You shall not murder.                                                                                                                                                                                | EXODUS 20:13 |
| VII.                 | You shall not commit adultery.                                                                                                                                                                       | EXODUS 20:14 |
| VIII.                | You shall not steal.                                                                                                                                                                                 | EXODUS 20:15 |
| IX.                  | You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor                                                                                                                                               | EXODUS 20:16 |
| X.                   | You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's. | EXODUS 20:17 |

## 6. Palestinian Covenant

### DEUTERONOMY, CHAPTERS 27-30

- ☑ The Palestinian Covenant was established during the days of Moses and will terminate at the end of the Millennium. Prominent in this covenant was the emphasis on blessings and curses (found in the twenty-eighth chapter); the renewal of the Mosaic Covenant (found in the twenty-ninth chapter); and the choice given of life or death depending on Israel's behavior toward God and His covenant.
- ☑ This covenant's purpose was to guarantee Israel a land forever.
- ☑ Its provisions are found in two aspects.
  - Legal Aspects: **DEUTERONOMY, CHAPTERS 27-29**  
These provisions were immediate and conditional. (IF... Then)
  - Aspects of Grace: **DEUTERONOMY, CHAPTER 30**  
These provisions are unconditional.

## 7. Davidic Covenant

### SECOND SAMUEL 7:4-17

*(2 Samuel 7:16 NKJV) "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever."*

- ☑ The Davidic Covenant was established in the days of King David. It will terminate at the end of the Millennium. It was given to David through the Prophet Nathan. (**SECOND SAMUEL 7:8 ff**)
- ☑ This covenant's purpose was to guarantee Israel a king forever. Much of what God says through Nathan speaks of David's son and his lineage in times to come.
- ☑ Its provisions are fourfold.
  1. A land forever (**SECOND SAMUEL 7:10**)
  2. An unending dynasty (**SECOND SAMUEL 7:12-13, 16**)
  3. An everlasting kingdom (**SECOND SAMUEL 7:12-13, 16**)
  4. A throne forever (**SECOND SAMUEL 7:16**)

## 8. The New Covenant

*(Jeremiah 31:31-34 NKJV) "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; {32} not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which*

*they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. {33} But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. {34} No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.'"*

- ☑ The New Covenant was prophetically established in the days of the prophets. It will terminate at the end of the Millennium.
- ☑ This covenant's purpose was to guarantee Israel a national regeneration - an opportunity for a place with God forever. It was originally established with Israel, not the church (which at the time, did not exist). When Christ came, He gave clarity and fuller meaning to the New Covenant. He declared it a blood covenant - sealed with His own blood. It then became understood in its fullness. Through Christ it applies to whoever calls on His name and turns from sin to a life of obedience to Christ.

Looking back to the Prophet Jeremiah's words, we see the New Covenant foretold of Christ's propitiatory work of forgiveness. God said through the prophet that He would forgive their iniquity and forget their sins. We now understand it is a word of hope and assurance for us today.

The establishment of the New Covenant in Christ's blood stems from the first covenant in our study, the Divine Covenant of Redemption. Jeremiah's writings in Chapter 31 speak of what the Triune Godhead planned in eternity past, and what Christ accomplished at His advent.

- ☑ The provisions of the New Covenant are found today in salvation through the shed blood of Christ. We are (1) restored to relationship with God, (2) sanctified and (3) justified.

(See **JEREMIAH 31:33-34** and the body of work in the New Testament).

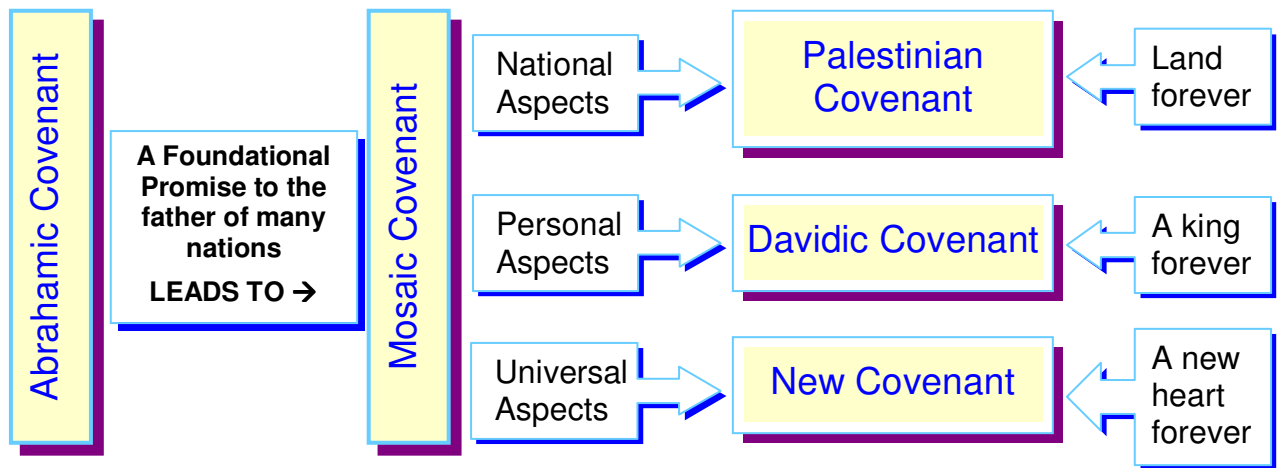
*(2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV) "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*

*(1 Corinthians 11:25 NKJV) "In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.'"*

*(1 Corinthians 15:45 NKJV) "And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit." (Speaks of Christ)*

*(Galatians 3:13 NKJV) "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),"*

**LET US PUT THE COVENANTS TOGETHER.**



**The Promise** → **The Law** → **Grace**

**The Promise has been fulfilled: Eternity in Relationship with God!  
Receive it by faith. Walk in it by obedience and grace!**