

# Covenant

## Lesson Two

**Foundation Scriptures:** *“<sup>22</sup> By so much was Jesus made a surety (guarantee) of a better testament (**covenant**).” (Hebrews 7:22) “<sup>6</sup> But now hath He (Jesus) obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He (Jesus) is the Mediator of a better **covenant**, which was established upon better promises.” (Hebrews 8:6)*

### I. What Is A Covenant?

- A. Hebrew ***bĕriyth or berith*** (ber-ĕth' or berîth) means an ordinance, alliance, agreement, contract, or pledge between two parties. The act of how the arrangement or promises were sealed is “to cut” (Hebrew ***karath*** (kă-rath')) where blood flows or is shed. The Hebrew custom of “*cutting covenant*” consisted of cutting up a sacrificial animal and those who were making the covenant would walk between the pieces. (Genesis 15:7-21; Jeremiah 34:8-22)
- B. Greek ***diathēkē*** (dē-ä-thā'-kā) means a testament, compact, a covenant, a will (as in a last will and testament). (Hebrews 9:16,17)
- C. Covenant is a disposition, arrangement which one wishes to be valid; the last disposition one makes of his possessions after his death; a testament or will.

### II. Why Does God Require A Covenant?

- A. The wages (pay, price) for sin entering the world (through Adam) was separation from God (resulting in spiritual and physical death). (Romans 6:23)
- B. God’s plan for salvation and plan of redemption had to be carried out through the fulfillment of **the ultimate sacrifice and offering for our sins** (Jesus Christ). (Hebrews 10:1-18)
- C. God desires to be our God and for us to be His people. God desires to put His laws into the hearts and minds of men. (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:7-13)

### III. Most Notable Covenants In Scripture

- A. God’s first covenant was with the first man Adam. (Genesis 2:15-17) This “**Edenic Covenant**” God was an arrangement with Adam to have dominion over His creations (earth and every living thing). This covenant was broken by man’s disobedience. (Genesis 3:6,7) The result was God’s making a second covenant, “**Adamic Covenant**”, with Adam setting forth the conditions of mankind until the curse of sin was lifted through Jesus Christ. (Genesis 3:14-24; Romans 5:17-19)

- B. The “**Marriage Covenant**” was established by God in the beginning between man (Adam) and woman (Eve) that was symbolic of the marriage covenant between God and His bride (His people Israel – the modern day church (believers)). (Genesis 2:18-25; Ezekiel 16:8; Jeremiah 3:1; Hosea 3:1; II Corinthians 11:2,3; Ephesians 5:22-32)
- C. The “**Noahic Covenant**” was to be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth. It also instituted the origins of human government, and the promise to never destroy the earth again by a flood. The sign of or testament of this covenant is the rainbow. (Genesis 9:1-19)
- D. The “**Abrahamic Covenant**” was an **unconditional** covenant between Abraham and God in which God promised to make Abraham a great nation, bless Him (make his name great) and make him be a blessing, and to bless and multiply his descendants (seed; land). (Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:13-21) This covenant was one of faith and grace. It was a precursor to the New Covenant that would also be by faith. (Hebrews 11:8-10) The sign of this covenant was sealed in the flesh by way of circumcision. (Genesis 17:1-13; Romans 4:1-22)
- E. The “**Mosaic Covenant**” was a **conditional** of “**if you obey My voice...then you shall be a special treasure**”. This covenant was added alongside the Abrahamic covenant instructing the children of Israel on how to conduct themselves (**The Law; The Ten Commandments**) until the Christ, the Messiah was revealed. (Exodus 19:3-8, 20:1-17; Galatians 3:17-19)
- F. The “**Davidic Covenant**” (II Samuel 7:4-17; I Chronicles 17:3-15) was similar to the Abrahamic Covenant; however, it required no faith. It only required that one be in the lineage of David to have it apply. God promised to never turn from the lineage of David and his throne. This Covenant was a predictor of the Kingdom of God being unveiled on earth and the King who would lead it. Jesus was the fulfillment of God’s dream for David’s line.

#### IV. **The New Covenant Through Jesus Christ**

The **New Covenant** is called “new” in contrast to the covenant with Moses which is called “old”, because it actually accomplishes what the Mosaic Covenant could only point toward. **The New Covenant is made sure by the blood that Jesus shed on Calvary’s Cross.** Jesus’ blood guarantees the forgiveness of sins for all who would believe in Him.

God promised that those in the New Covenant will be **changed from the inside out**, and “they will be His people and He will be their God.” (Isaiah 42:1-4) **He promised to put His Law in the minds and write them on the hearts (inward parts).** (Jeremiah 24:4-7; 31:33; 32:38-41; Ezekiel 36:26; Hebrews 8:7-13, 10:15-18)

## Elements Of The New Covenant

- A. Born again believers, of Jesus Christ, are under a new and better covenant than any of the former covenants. (Hebrews 8)
- B. **The New Covenant's sacrifice is Jesus Christ** – the Mediator of the New Covenant. (Hebrews 9:12-15)
- C. The sign of the New Covenant is **“circumcision of the heart”**, produced by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 2:25-29)
- D. The  **blessings and promises** of the New Covenant  **come through faith in** the Seed (**Jesus Christ**) of Abraham; which include the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. (Romans 4:13-25; Galatians 3:6-18)
- E. **A personal ministry (relationship)** provided by the Holy Spirit that will teach believers the precepts of God through an **intimate knowledge of Him**. (Jeremiah 31:34; Isaiah 54:13; Ezekiel 36:26,27; John 6:45)

### **Better Covenant Established On Better Promises** (Hebrews 8:1-13)

Jesus obtained a more excellent ministry than His priestly predecessors. He brought in a **“better covenant**, which was established upon **better promises”**. (Hebrews 8:6)

- A. The purpose for establishing a better covenant was because **the first covenant was found to have fault**. (Hebrews 8:7) The fault was not within the law itself, for it was holy, just and good. (Romans 7:12) Instead, the fault was in the people on the other end of the covenant, “For finding fault with them (Israel and Judah) ...” (Hebrews 8:8)

The Old Covenant was faulty because it demanded perfection from a people that could never live perfect. Either they did things that were contrary to The Law, or they failed to do the many things that The Law demanded. **The Law provided no privacy and no personal relationship**.

Jesus came to live the Old Covenant to perfection; **fulfilling all of its many requirements**. When He died at Calvary, He cut a New Covenant with His Father, taking the faultiness out of the way. We were at fault under the Old Covenant for we could not keep The Law. **Jesus has no fault, thus He stepped into our place and cut a (New) Covenant between His Father and His perfect life**.

The Old Covenant held man's sins against him, while the New Covenant says, “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more”. (Hebrews 8:12) The author of Hebrews goes on and says, “A New Covenant, He has made the first one obsolete and what is obsolete is

outdated and will soon disappear.” (Hebrews 8:13) Therefore, to return to it (the Old Covenant) for guidance or instruction is to go back to a system found faulty by God. Besides, we couldn’t follow the Old Covenant even if we wanted to; no one could – only Jesus!

B. **We have a better covenant and a better promise because we have a better sacrifice.** Jesus did what no lamb or bull or goat could ever do; **He removed the sin problem.** (John 1:29; Hebrews 10:4) If we are still dealing with sin it is because we are doing it and not resting in what Jesus has already done. When we fail now, we are covered by the better covenant and the better promise and the knowledge of that causes us to live as we should.

C. This **New Covenant is personal.** Its core is **a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.** “I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” (Hebrews 8:10)

The better promises of the New Covenant are summed up by Jesus in **Matthew 26:28, “For this is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission (forgiveness) of sins.”** That is the only promise totally unique to the New Covenant. It provides forgiveness so the believer can be reconciled to God and releases them from the continual temptations of sin so they can remain in that condition – **“reconciled”!**

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