

## WHAT IS A COVENANT?

### **Oxford Complete Word Finder –**

The word 'Covenant' is an agreement, a contract, a contract drawn up under a Seal, Agreement between God and the Israelites (Ark of the Covenant).

### **Fausset's Bible Dictionary –**

Heb. – Berith, Gr. – diatheke

From barah – to divide or cut in two a victim, between the parts of which the covenanting parties passed (Gen. 15:9-10) (Jer. 34:18-19).

Covenant in the strict sense, as requiring two independent contracting parties, cannot apply to a Covenant between God and man. His covenant is one of gratuitous promise, an act of pure Grace on His part (Gal. 3:15) and requires man's acceptance of and obedience to it, as the consequence of His Grace experienced.

By death Christ chose to lose all the glory and blessings which are His, that we, who were under death's bondage, might inherit all. Thus He fulfils God's Covenant of promise and graciously gives to us all that is His.

Matt. 26:27 – This My Blood of the new Covenant. Ex. 24:8 – The blood sprinkled.

Jesus Blood was the Seal of the Covenant.

The Lord's Supper, the sign of His Blood wherewith the covenant is sealed. Jesus is now His people's inheritance because He is alive and in His being heir, we are heirs. (Heb. 1:2, Psa. 2:8).

Genesis 17 talks about the covenant God made with Abram. He did not have to accept God's deal. He did it of his own free will. This covenant gave God access to the earth and gave man access to God. This was an absolute agreement between God and Abram sealed on both sides. God swore by Himself (Gen. 22:16) because there was no one higher. Man's part of the covenant was sealed in the circumcision of his flesh. (Gen. 17:10-14). It was made official, spiritually and physically, by the shedding of man's blood. The Hebrew word for Covenant, barah, means to cut where blood flows. A Covenant then is a contract or agreement between two parties and sealed by the shedding of their blood. Once done this Covenant can never be broken. Abram's name was changed to Abraham (father of many nations). Then in Gen. 18 we find God consulting with His Covenant man about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. See the strength of this covenant? In Ex. 2:23-25 God remembered His Covenant with His people and raised up a man named Moses to lead them out of cruel slavery in Egypt.

In Ex. 32:9-10 God wanted to destroy Israel and start a new race with Moses just as He did with Noah, but Moses reminded Him of His Covenant and God; did not destroy them. In Deut. 28:15 – curses are listed for those stepping out from under the protections of the covenant with God.

The blessing of Abraham comes on the Gentile people through Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:13-14). Jesus fulfilled the terms of the Old Covenant and brought a new, better covenant based on better promises. This new covenant between God and Jesus is incapable of failure.

The cut of the Old Covenant was the shedding of man's blood through circumcision. The cut of the New Covenant was the shedding of God's blood on the cross. There is no curse under the New Covenant because Jesus became the curse for us, a much better covenant.

The marriage between a man and woman, a covenant, is an agreement drawn up between two independent contracting parties, witnessed by Almighty God. This agreement becomes a legal document as it is made before God and man.

God makes it very clear how we are to carry out and keep that covenant of marriage.

When we keep that marriage contract to the best of our ability, we bring to experience a bit of God's glory – children, joy, prosperity, health, etc. Of course, we need to live according to God's Word in every part of our life in order for God to really manifest His Glory. God cannot look on sin and when His Glory manifests, it will destroy all sin around it.

### **Zondervan.**

The Bible presents marriage as a divine institution, ordained and regulated by God's Word. The Old Testament views marriage as a natural state for the adult human.

Marriage, a Covenant between a man and a woman, was the first institution established by God and the only one established before Adam and Eve fell into sin.

When married, two people become one flesh and are also united in their life on earth, sharing all experiences that may come. They actually become **one**. This bond of marriage is to be maintained as each couple shares the experiences of their common life together. (Matt. 19:1-9).

## **THE NEW COVENANT**

The New Covenant, though prophesied by Jeremiah about 600 years before Christ, was not made at that time. The Covenant was made and confirmed at the cross.

At the Last Supper, Jesus explained the symbolism of the communion cup. He said, "This is the blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28). This time the offerer and the sacrifice were one and the blood that sealed God's commitment was that of His own Son. The covenanted promise of forgiveness is assured. Although, only at history's end will we realize the full meaning of what Jesus has done, we can today experience the promised forgiveness and transformation made available in the New Covenant.

All of God's promises are appropriated by faith. Today, to us who, like Abraham, are "fully persuaded that God has power to do what He promises" (Rom. 4:21) comes the promised salvation and with it comes forgiveness and inner transformation. Such are the benefits of Covenant relationship with the Lord.

In Rom. 4 and Gal. 3, Paul states that the essence of Covenant is promise. What can we do to respond to the Promise of God? Only one thin – believe the promise and trust in it to the point we are willing to act on what He says. This is called Faith – faith in Jesus, the seal of God's new Covenant that saves us today. We find our faith expressing itself in loving obedience to Jesus, through obedience to the Word and the Holy Spirit.

### **To Summarize:**

Bible Covenants are clear statements of God's purposes and intentions, expressed in terms that bind God by solemn oath to perform what He has promised.

There are Four basic Covenants in the Word:

**The Abrahamic Covenant:** God gave Abraham promises. The sign of that covenant was circumcision of all males. God spoke to Abraham and Israel inherited the Covenant promises through his sons Isaac and Jacob. The covenant promises through his sons Isaac and Jacob.

**The Mosaic Covenant:** The Law, 1450 BC. This Covenant was never intended to be permanent. “The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the House of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers. When I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt.” (Jer. 31:31-32).

This covenant is not in force today.

**The Davidic Covenant:** “...I have made a covenant with My chosen one, I have sworn to David, My servant, I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.” (Ps. 89:3-4)

Because of this Covenant promise, the Jewish people of Jesus’ day believed firmly that the Messiah was to be a Davidic ruler who would establish the long promised kingdom.

**The New Covenant:** was made and confirmed at the cross. Today we can experience the blessings of God’s New Covenant; the forgiveness of our sins and the Holy Spirit’s work of engraving righteousness on our hearts.

This New Covenant plan was a perfect plan. Through Jesus Christ God was able to establish His blood covenant with man without the curse. In so doing God gained access to the earth again and man gained access to God, forever.