

# Difference between a Promise and a Covenant

## Promise definition

prom·ise (prām'is)

noun

1. an oral or written agreement to do or not to do something; vow
2. indication, as of a successful prospect or future; basis for expectation
3. something promised

intransitive verb promised -ised, promising -is·ing

1. to make a promise
2. to give a basis for expectation

## Covenant definition

cov·enant (kuv'ə nənt)

noun

1. a binding and solemn agreement to do or keep from doing a specified thing; compact
2. an agreement among members of a church to defend and maintain its doctrines, polity, and faith
3. an agreement of Presbyterians in Scotland in 1638 to oppose episcopacy also called National Covenant
4. an agreement between the parliaments of Scotland and England in 1643 to extend and preserve Presbyterianism also called Solemn League and Covenant
5. LAW
  - a. a formal, sealed contract
  - b. a clause of such a contract
  - c. a suit for damages for violation of such a contract
6. THEOL. the promise made by God to humanity and the relationship it established, as described in the Bible

**Covenant** as defined by the Scriptures is a solemn and binding relationship which is

meant to last a life time.

**Covenant**, meaning a solemn contract, oath, or bond, is the customary word used to translate the Hebrew word berith (Tiberian Hebrew bərîṭ, Standard Hebrew bərit) as it is used in the Hebrew Bible.

## **THE BIBLICAL COVENANT**

Covenants are contracts between individuals that are given in order to define a relationship. The covenants of the Bible between man and God are completely unique to Christianity. Nowhere in the religions of the world does one find another god relating to man through covenant. In Scripture, the personal relationship between God and man is based upon and mediated through means of covenants. The purpose of the covenants is to reveal God's earthly agreements, spiritual promises, earthly redemption, and only hope for mankind. God wants to bind Himself to His people to keep His promises so that He can demonstrate through history His character.

All of the biblical covenants contain two types of promises: physical and spiritual. The physical promises are, and will continue to be, fulfilled by and limited to Israel. Nevertheless, some of the spiritual blessings of the covenants will extend to the Gentiles. Since the death of Christ is the basis of salvation for all people, for all time, the church has become a partaker of the Jewish spiritual blessings. The church is not a taker-over of the Jewish covenants. Only Israel will fulfill the New Covenant as promised in the Old Testament. The New Covenant was given and will be fulfilled by Israel. The church participates in the promises but she will in no way fulfill the covenants given to Israel. One's ability to understand the Bible and particular in God's dealings with humanity in general depends on how well we understand the biblical covenants.

Marriage is referred to as "the covenant of God" A covenant is an agreement that involves promises and commitments. The Bible describes the marriage as a spiritual covenant that is just as binding, and just as sacred, as the covenant that God has made with His people. In fact, we find that when God describes the relationship between Himself and His people as the husband wife relationship **Jeremiah 31:31-32**. In the New Testament the blessed relationship between Christ and the church is described by the covenant relationship of the husband and the wife **Ephesians 5:22**. Marriage is a holy union before God.

The nature of a biblical covenant is of two types: conditional and unconditional. A conditional covenant is that God makes a promise to man conditioned by "if you will"

whereby He then promises to bring about the covenantal promises. An unconditional covenant is a sovereign act of God whereby He fulfills the covenantal promises made with an individual regardless of man's obedience or disobedience. This type of covenant is characterized by "I will" which declares that God alone will bring about the promises.

An unconditional covenant can be defined as a sovereign act of God whereby God unconditionally obligates Himself to bring to pass definite promises, blessings, and conditions for the covenanted people. It is a unilateral covenant. This type of covenant is characterized by the formula *I will* which declares God's determination to do exactly as He promised. The blessings are secured by the grace of God.

The Bible uses just two words for "covenant" that occur 316 times in 295 verses. In the Old Testament (*berith*) means literally a covenant, alliance, pledge, treaty, league, constitution, and an agreement. In the New Testament (*diatheke*) means a disposition, arrangement, covenant, testament or will. In fact, the Old and New "Testaments" are really the Old and New "Covenants" - the new covenant being of course that which was established by Christ through His shed blood for the remission of sins **Matthew 26:28**.

The Hebrew word above (*berith*) derives from a root which means "to cut" and hence a covenant is a "cutting" with reference to the cutting or dividing of animals into two parts and the contracting parties passing between them, in making a covenant. **Genesis 15**.

Of the five covenants that were made with Israel only one of those is conditional: the Mosaic Covenant. Three things are to be noted regarding the covenants with Israel.

**(1)** The covenants are literal. This means that the contents of those covenants must be interpreted literally.

**(2)** The covenants God made with Israel are eternal, that is, they are not restricted by time.

**(3)** The covenants (except for the Mosaic Covenant) are all unconditional. It is because the covenants are dependent upon God for fulfillment, that their literal fulfillment can be expected.

The Biblical picture of God's relationship with Israel. It is always made clear that the

initiative is God's that He makes covenants with His people and not vice versa, and that He is the superior party in the covenant.

In the Old Testament, God promises His protection and His commitment to Israel, in return for which Israel must pledge to worship and serve Him alone, living in conformity with His moral and social standards.

There are certainly obligations laid upon Israel. Israel must worship the Lord alone and be loyal to Him in every sphere of life. Israel must be God's witness to all the nations. However, at heart the covenants are not *based* on Israel's response to God, although this is not only expected but also demanded. The covenants of God are based completely on God's gracious and sovereign choice of Israel.

They are always based on God's grace and will, and it always makes demands on the people involved in terms of how they must live their lives now that they are in a relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

This does not apply just to Israel, but to the Church also. The New Testament contains many obligations on Christians, and many passages like the following,

If you love me, you will obey what I command **John 14:15**.

You are my friends if you do what I command **John 15:14**.

Faith without deeds is dead **James 2:26**.

This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands **1 John 5:2**.

God's covenants are never, strictly speaking, conditional. God makes it clear that He will remove His blessings if Israel is disobedient **Deuteronomy 28:15-19** but He will never reject Israel or withdraw His loving commitment **Isaiah 49:15**, **Hosea 11:8-9**. God will certainly punish, but only as a result of His love for Israel, not because of any abandonment. The correct understanding of Biblical punishment is given in **Proverbs 2:11**

My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent His rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those He loves, as a father the son he delights in.

When God removes His blessings to Israel, it is not a sign of his rejection but in fact of the opposite!

Let us consider five principal covenants in the Bible.

1. **The covenant with Noah.** The first time the Bible speaks of a covenant is with Noah. In spite of the terrible way in which people had corrupted their lives and societies **Genesis 6:5-6**, God renewed His commitment to humanity through the choice of Noah and his family -

But I will establish my covenant with you ... **Genesis 6:18.**

The obligation which came to Noah, and which followed on from God's election of Noah, was to be obedient in building the ark. This obedience was in turn dependent on his trusting relationship with God. After the flood, God's pledge was renewed

I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you - the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you - every living creature on earth. I establish my covenant with you: Never again will the waters of a flood cut off all life; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.

And God said this is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. **Genesis 9:9-13.**

(note the pre and post-flood comments in **Genesis 6:5** Then the LORD<sup>1</sup> saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually and **Genesis 8:21** And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his

youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done).

The very sign of the covenant, the rainbow, symbolizes it as God's transcendent commitment and responsibility as regards to all of humanity **Genesis 9:12-17**. Just as the rainbow is independent of humanity's efforts and behavior, so too is the gracious act of God in initiating and continuing the covenant.

God's mission to the nations did not begin with the Great Commission of **Mathew 28:18-20** but in Genesis. Through Noah God gave mankind a fresh start, but mankind rebelled against God at Babel when independence from Him was asserted. God consequently scattered the people into nations and languages. The first eleven chapters of Genesis record God's dealings with the human race as a whole. From this time onward however, He planned to reach mankind family by family and nation by nation. It is this relationship of God to dispersed ethnic groups which acts as the background for the next covenant

2. **The covenant with Abraham** is grounded in God's gracious choice of Abraham (then Abram) involving him in a future which was not of his own choosing.

The Abrahamic Covenant is the greatest of redemptive covenants. All of God's blessings for both Jew and Gentile spring forth from this covenant **Genesis 12:1-3-7, 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-21; 22:15-18**.

Regarding the unconditional covenants, the participants of the Abrahamic Covenant are God and Abraham. In this covenant, Abraham represented the whole Jewish nation, and not all humanity.

1 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.

7 Then He said to him, “I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.” **Genesis 15:1-7**

### **The 14 provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant.**

(1) from Abraham would come a great nation, Israel **Genesis 12:2; 13:16; 15:5; 17:1, 2, 7; 22:17**

(2) Abraham was promised a land, Canaan **Genesis 12:1, 7; 13:14, 15, 17; 15:17-21; 17:18**

(3) Abraham would be greatly blessed **Genesis 12:2; 15:6; 22:15-17**

(4) Abraham’s name would be great **Genesis 12:2**

(5) Abraham will be a blessing to others **Genesis 12:2**

(6) those who bless the nation of Israel will themselves be blessed **Genesis 12:3**

(7) those who curse the nation of Israel will themselves be cursed **Genesis 12:3**

(8) through Abraham all humanity will be blessed, including Gentiles **Genesis 12:3; 22:18**

(9) Abraham will receive a son of promise by his wife Sarah **Genesis 15:1-4; 17:16-21**

(10) Abraham's descendants would undergo the Egyptian bondage **Genesis 15:13, 14**

(11) there will be other nations that will spring forth from Abraham **Genesis 17:3, 4, 6**

(12) Abraham's name would be changed **Genesis 17:5**

(13) the name of Abraham's wife would be changed. Fourteenth, circumcision would be the token of the covenant **Genesis 17:9-14**

(14) provisions will be fulfilled to Abraham, Israel, and Gentiles.

The Abrahamic Covenant involves a promise of a land to Abraham and Israel, a nation (seed), and a worldwide blessing. The implication is that the Abrahamic Covenant will be fulfilled in the form of three sub-covenants: (1) the Palestinian Covenant; (2) the Davidic Covenant; and (3) the New Covenant. This covenant is literal **Genesis 13:15, 17**, eternal **Genesis 13:15; 17:7, 8, 13, 19**, and unconditional **Genesis 15:1-18**.

The confirmation of the covenant would be through Isaac **Genesis 26:2-5, 24**. From Isaac's two sons, the promise of the covenant would be through Jacob. Concerning the sons of Jacob, the covenant was confirmed through his twelve sons, who would father the twelve tribes of Israel.

Concerning the promise of a land, or Palestinian Covenant, God promised that Israel would return to their land after being scattered throughout the world. The content of the covenant is found in **Deuteronomy 29:1-30:10**. The Land Covenant is distinct from the Mosaic Covenant **Deuteronomy 29:1**. The covenant was made between God and the nation of Israel.

### **The eight provisions of the Land Covenant.**

(1) the disobedience of Israel to the Mosaic Law and subsequent worldwide scattering was prophesied **Deuteronomy 29:2-30:2**.

(1) after her disobedience, Israel will eventually repent **Deuteronomy 30:2**.

(3) the Messiah will return **Deuteronomy 30:3**.

(4) after being dispersed, Israel will be gathered back to her land **Deuteronomy 30:3, 4**.

(5) Israel will possess the land promised to her **Deuteronomy 30:5**.

(6) Israel will be regenerated **Deuteronomy 30:6**.

(7) Israel's enemies will be judged.

(8) Israel will receive the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom **Deuteronomy 30:8-10**.

The Land Covenant was given to reaffirm the title deed of Israel to her promised land as was originally given in the Abrahamic Covenant. Since the Land Covenant is unconditional, despite Israel's disobedience, the covenant will not be disannulled. Disobedience does, however, affect Israel's enjoyment of the land.

The Land Covenant enlarges upon the original Abrahamic Covenant. This covenant was still in effect centuries after Israel's continued disobedience **Ezekiel 16:1-63**. The Land Covenant is yet to be fulfilled in the Messianic Kingdom.

The Lord has said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.

"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. **Genesis 12:1-3**.

The significance of this text cannot be fully appreciated until it is realized that there are three promises of blessing where God promises

- I will make you a great nation
- I will bless you, and
- I will make your name great.

Not one of these three promises of blessing was to be for Abraham's own self-aggrandizement. Indeed, he and his nation were to be blessed so that they might be a blessing. But to whom? How? Let us consider further...

There were to be two whole classes of people: the blessers of Abraham, and the cursers of Abraham. The next two promises were

- I will bless those who bless you, and
- I will curse those who curse you.

This explains why there was so much blessing - Abraham and his descendants were to be missionaries and channels of the truth from the beginning. Again, God's intention was to bless all His people in His creation.

I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. **Genesis 12:3.**

Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. **Genesis 18:18.**

Abraham, a changed man because of this new covenant relationship - a change symbolized by his change of name - was chosen to be the channel of God's redemptive purposes for all of humanity. This channel continued through the line of Isaac and Jacob.

Paul referred to this as the Gospel in **Galatians 3:8**

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the Gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying 'In you all the nations shall be blessed'.

Abraham was obliged to keep the covenant which God had made with him **Genesis 17:9**, although only the sign of circumcision was given as an actual demand upon the people of the covenant **Genesis 17:10**. Christians are used to interpreting this in light of Paul's teaching in **Romans 2:25-29** where he stresses that true circumcision involves the willing and joyful surrender of the heart to God, and not just a physical ritual. However, the people of Israel appreciated this also, as seen in passages like **Deuteronomy 10:12-**

**16.** Being in a covenant relationship with God brings its responsibilities, but always in response to God's prior initiatives.

It cannot be emphasized enough that this covenant is the foundational one in the life of Israel. This is the call of Abraham and thus the call of Isaac and Jacob also, and therefore the call of the Jewish people as a whole.

1. **The covenant at Sinai.** Moses was the next Israelite leader chosen by God to mediate a covenant with Israel.

"I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation of the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the LORD, will do for you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles. Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God. **Exodus 34:10-14.**

The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob.

Israel was already referred to as God's people **Exodus 4:22, Deuteronomy 8:5** the call remaining the one which had come through Abraham. The two covenants did not conflict with each other; rather through Abraham God formed a people and through Moses He created a national constitution for those people. A great deal of stress was placed on Israel's obligations concerning spiritual and ethical principles and ritual laws, because the people of God must live in accordance with God's own holy nature **Leviticus 11:44.**

It is important to realize that this distinctive lifestyle was not simply an end in itself. Israel was intended to be a witness to all the nations

See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them

carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." **Deuteronomy 4:5-6.**

From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly; before those who fear you will I fulfill my vows. The poor will eat and be satisfied; they who seek the LORD will praise Him, may your hearts live forever! All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all families of the nations will bow down before Him, for dominion belongs to the LORD and He rules over the nations. **Psalms 22:25-28.**

Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name; make known among the nations what He has done. **1 Chronicles 16:8.**

Hence, the overall perspective was maintained that God had made plain from the beginning. This is summed up by the notion of Israel, within this covenant, as a 'priestly nation'.

You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation ... **Exodus 19:6.**

(**Priests**) serving to mediate between God and people, so that Israel as a nation of priests - become the mediator between God and all the other nations. The prophets continued to remind Israel of this in every generation, **Jeremiah 4:1**

"If you will return, O Israel, return to me," declares the LORD. "If you put your detestable idols out of my sight and no longer go astray, and if in a truthful, just and righteous way you swear, 'As surely as the LORD lives,' then the nations will be blessed by Him and in Him they will glory.

Israel was to portray God's holiness to the nations around them. They were commanded to separate themselves from the heathen nations and not to worship their gods **Exodus 9:13-16, 34:10-16, Deuteronomy 7:6-9, 26:16-19, Isaiah 63:11-14.**

As a reflection of God's holiness, Israel was to be pure, totally separated from the moral pollution of neighboring nations. Israel established an identity of separateness and God sanctified His name, setting it apart from the names of the gods that the Gentile nations worshipped.

The Sinai covenant, then, is a covenant of grace just like the others. The mass of laws given were not evidence of a legalistic relationship with God, but rather the necessary code of practice for people who now belong to God and want to know how to live lives which will please Him, in just the same way that Christians live in accordance with strict moral rules, because their relationship with God is based on love and joy and who are grateful to know how to behave in the right ways to please God.

Throughout the time of the Old Testament, Israel was to proclaim God's salvation to the nations **Deuteronomy 28:9-10, Psalm 67, 96, 105:1-11, Isaiah 49:6**. Israel's prophets expected that all nations on earth one day would acknowledge God **1 Chronicles 16, Psalm 47, 96, 99, 100, 117, Isaiah 2:2-4, 40:5, 42:6, 49:6, Micah 4:1-3, Habakkuk 2:14, 20, Zechariah 8:20-23**.

God blessed Israel so that all nations may come to recognize His sovereignty.

**The covenant with David.** Israel had demanded a human king as well as the Lord because the people had seen the advantages that such had brought to the surrounding nations. The perceived benefits were

- protection from enemies **1 Samuel 8:19-20**
- spiritual and moral leadership **1 Samuel 8:1-5**

However, this reflected a turning away from complete trust in God Himself as Israel's King, able and willing to protect and guide His people **1 Samuel 8:6-9; 10:17-19**. A King was granted to Israel, but when Saul proved to be disobedient and unworthy of the trust which the people had put in him, God did not turn to the people to point out this had been inevitable; rather from His grace and commitment to Israel He not only continued to allow a further series of kings, but actually initiated the election of a young shepherd. God made a covenant with David which promised that his descendants would always rule as the rightful kings in Jerusalem **Psalm 89:3-4**.

This covenant is significant as it forms the basis of the Messianic dynasty from which Jesus Himself is a descendant **Isaiah 11:1f, Ezekiel 34:22-24, Matthew 1:17, 9:27-34, 12:22-24**.

The Davidic Covenant is set forth in two passages: **2 Samuel 7:11-17 and 1**

**Chronicles 17:10-15.** Although the passages may appear similar, there are some variations. This covenant was made between God and David. David endures as the representative head of the Davidic house and dynasty. The Davidic Covenant amplifies the seed aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant.

There are seven main provisions that are given in this covenant.

(1) David is promised a house or dynasty that will be eternal **2 Samuel 7:11, 1 Chronicles 17:10.**

(2) David's son would be established on his throne after him **2 Samuel 7:12.**

(3) Solomon would build the temple **2 Samuel 7:13.**

(4) The throne of the Davidic and Solomonic Kingdoms would be established forever **2 Samuel 7:13, 16.**

(5) Though Solomon would be judged for disobedience, God would not remove His loving kindness from him **2 Samuel 7:14, 15.**

(6) The Messiah will come from the seed of David **1 Chronicles 17:11.**

(7) The Messiah's throne, house, and kingdom will be established forever **1 Chronicles 17:12-14.**

The Davidic Covenant is a literal, unconditional, and eternal covenant. It still awaits fulfillment and is confirmed in numerous biblical passages **Psalms 89; Isaiah 9:6-, 11:1, Jeremiah 23:5-6, Jeremiah 30:8-9; Jeremiah 33:14-17, 19-26, Ezekiel 37:24-25, Hosea 3:4-5, Amos 9:11, Luke 1:30-35, 68-70, Acts 15:14-18.**

The eternal promises of the Davidic Covenant will be mediated through the Messiah. These eternal promises are of a house, dynasty, throne, and 7seed.

It is from the house of David, that the line of kings will come. The kingdom promised to

David would be a people possessing a land that God promised. The throne is used to indicate authority. It is only as David's seed that one will have the right to rule. The seed of David who will reign is the Messiah.

The emphasis in **2 Samuel** is on Solomon, whereas the emphasis in **1 Chronicles** is on the Messiah. God is not speaking of one of David's sons who will be established on his throne forever, but the seed of one of sons from many years later. The one who reigns upon the throne will be established forever with authority, and not merely the throne itself. Whereas the **2 Samuel** passage mentioned sin, the **1 Chronicles** passage does not since it is in the latter passage that the emphasis is on the Messiah.

The importance of this covenant is to amplify the seed aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant. According to the Abrahamic Covenant, the seed would be of Abrahamic descent. This meant that the Messiah would be a Jew. It was later revealed to Jacob, that the seed would be limited to the tribe of Judah, the family of David.

As with the previous covenants, this one assumes the context of those that have preceded it. It existed for the benefit of Israel, and not for the glorification of David's family.

**The New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah.** This is the fifth of the major covenants detailed in the Scriptures, and its significance to Christians is clear.

"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, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." **Jeremiah 31:31-34.**

Israel had experienced a great revival of spiritual and moral life under the leadership of King Josiah after 'the Book of the Law' had been found in the Temple **2 Kings 22-23**. However, the people's hearts were not sufficiently changed to make this a true and

lasting reform of the nation's life **Jeremiah 2:5-11**. God desired for a new covenant relationship altogether.

It is the promise of such a new relationship which is seen in the prophecy of chapter 31 where the first thing highlighted is that this covenant will unite Israel and Judah - reconciling the kingdoms which were divided since the death of Solomon.

Secondly, there are no direct concerns about laws in this new relationship or any annulment of the laws or principles of the previous covenants. The problems of the past were due to the people, and not the covenants of God. A new heart was needed and not new laws **Ezekiel 36:25-27**. Paul explains in **Romans 7** that in his conflict with God's Law, it was he himself who was at fault. The Law was good, spiritual and godly.

This new covenant is, of course, that which Jesus has brought about. **Hebrews 8** explains He is the High Priest and mediator of this new covenant. It is founded on better promises. **Hebrews 9** explains Christ has obtained eternal redemption, and has enabled us to serve the living God. He was sacrificed to take away the sins of the people, and He will return a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation for those who are waiting for Him.

In each of these five covenants, spanning the entire time from **Genesis 6** to the end of the Church era, God has used His people to bring the nations of the earth to Himself.

In the Old Testament the nations were to be led to worship God by the visible manifestation of the acts of God among the nation of Israel. Israel was never explicitly commanded to "go" and witness to the nations. While God clearly expressed His intention to draw all the nations to Himself, the nations were drawn to the worship of God because of His acts.

In the New Testament God's methodology is different. The nations are to be drawn toward God as the Church goes to the nations to proclaim His works. God wants to draw all the nations to Himself, the nations will acknowledge that God deserves their worship because the Church goes and proclaims the acts of God among them.

We return to the covenant of Abraham, again, however. After Abraham died, Isaac inherited the promises. Isaac did not see the complete fulfillment of the promise, and nor

did Jacob who inherited them next **Hebrews 11:9**. The promises were inherited by Israel **Romans 9:4-5** and although flourishing under certain kings, Israel did not see the complete fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham. So what happened to them?

Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds', as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed' who is Christ.

It was the Lord Jesus who finally inherited the promises made to Abraham centuries before. However, again, the One who finally inherited the promises died, and so once more, the promises were available.

The New Covenant is recorded in **Jeremiah 31:31-37, Isaiah 55:3; 59:21; 61:8, 9; Jeremiah 32:40; Ezekiel 16:60; 34:25-31; 37:26-28; Romans 11:25-27; Hebrew 8.:7-9:1; 10:16, 17.**

There are eight main provisions of this covenant.

- (1) It is an unconditional covenant between God and Israel **Jeremiah 31:31**.
- (2) It is distinct from the Mosaic Covenant **Jeremiah 31:32**.
- (3) It promises the regeneration of Israel **Jeremiah 32:33; Isaiah 59:21**.
- (4) The regeneration of Israel would be universal among the Jews **Jeremiah 31:34; Isaiah 61:9; Romans 11:25-27**.
- (5) It would provide a provision for permanent forgiveness of sin **Jeremiah 31:34**.
- (6) The provision is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit **Jeremiah 32:41; Isaiah 61:8; Ezekiel 34:25-27**.
- (7) Israel is promised many material blessings **Jeremiah 32:41; Isaiah 61:8; Ezekiel**

**34:25-27.**

(8) It will provide for a new temple **Ezekiel 37:26-28.**

The New Covenant amplifies the blessing aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant, particularly in relation to salvation. This covenant is not an elaboration of the Mosaic Covenant, it ultimately replaced the Law **Jeremiah 31:31, 32; Romans 6:14, 15.** The key aspect of this covenant is the blessing of salvation that will include the national regeneration of Israel **Jeremiah 31:34, Ezekiel 36:29, Romans 6:22, 11:25-27.** The national salvation of Israel will extend to every individual Jewish person. This salvation will be true in succeeding generations from the time that the initial regeneration of Israel begins. Therefore, during the Millennium the only unregenerate people will be Gentiles. In other words, during the entire millennium there will be no unsaved Jews. This is the reason why “they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD” **Jeremiah 31:34.**

The relationship of the church to the New Covenant has caused some confusion, because the prophet Jeremiah specifies that the covenant is with Israel, and not with the church. Nevertheless, there are numerous passages that connect the New Covenant with the church **Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:25, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Hebrew 7:22; 8:6-13; 9:15; 10:16, 29; 12:24; 13:20.** Scripture is clear on the following: Israel, and not the church, will fulfill the New Covenant. However, the church does partake of the spiritual blessings of the Abrahamic and New Covenants **Romans 15:27.**

When someone had died, it is necessary for their testament to be administered - For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. **Hebrews 9:16-17.**

So, Jesus rose from the dead and became the legal administrator of His own testament. And for this reason He is the Mediator of the New Covenant by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. **Hebrews 9:15.**

When Jesus died, those who were of the faith of Abraham inherited the promises - So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. **Genesis 3:9.**

And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. **Galatians 3:29**.

The apostle Paul's understanding of God's covenant with Abraham was the background of the great revelation that the Lord had given to Him, which he summarized in **Romans 4:13-16**:

<sup>13</sup> For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, <sup>15</sup> because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression. <sup>16</sup> Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

Abraham received the promise that he would inherit the world. However, it was the seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ who really inherited the world. This fact was foretold prophetically in **Psalms 2:7-8**

I will declare the decree; the Lord has said to me, you are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will give the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possessions.

When Jesus rose from the dead and was seated at the right hand of the Father, He received His inheritance -

Then Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth". **Matthew 28:18**.

However, in Christ, believers have become joint heirs and have therefore also inherited the world. This is a staggering thought! Even though the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one **1 John 5:19**, according to God the legal owner of the world is Christ and His Church.

When Jesus gave the great commission to go into all the world, He was commanding the Church to go into all the nations and to inherit them as a fulfillment of God's promise

made to Abraham. The great commission was not an after thought but it is the divine way of fulfilling this momentous covenant.

**THE GOSPEL CALL EXTENDS TO EVERY MAN AND WOMAN TODAY, SO AS A CHILD OF GOD AND A SERVANT OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST FIND YOUR CALLING AND LINE UP WITH GOD'S WILL FOR YOU AND BEGIN TO LINE UP WITH THE COVENANTS GIVEN TO US FROM OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, SO WE CAN DO OUR PART AND RELEASE THE BLESSINGS THE COVENANTS WERE DESIGNED TO DO IN OUR LIVES!**