

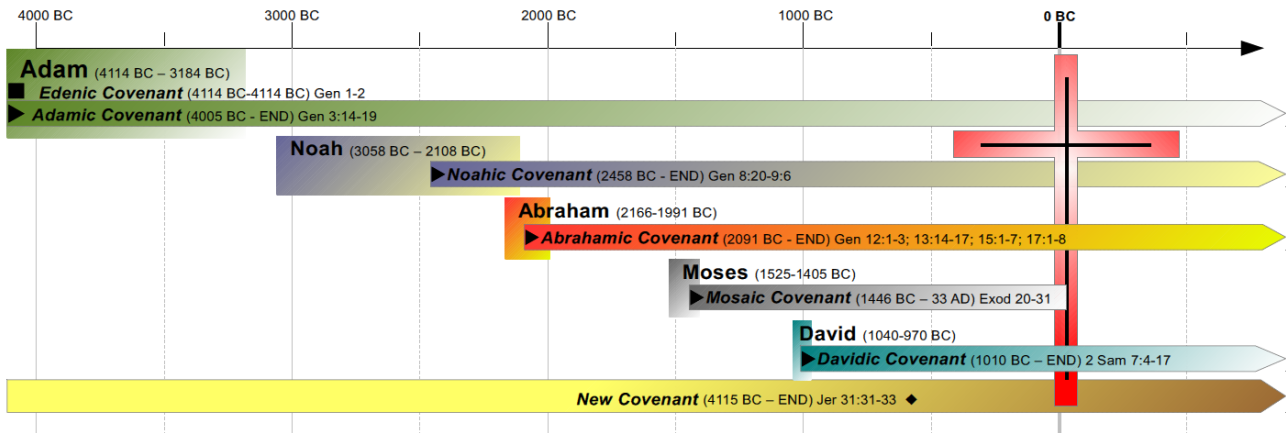
The Eternal Covenant

Introduction

A Biblical Covenant is a “Bond in Blood” sovereignly administered. God’s covenants bind both parties for life; Death does not end it. It contains promises and conditions. It continues eternally. That is the kind of covenant God has established with us. *Ps 105:8-10 states; ⁸ He has remembered His covenant forever, The word which He commanded to a thousand generations, ⁹The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac. ¹⁰Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel as an everlasting covenant. See also Deuteronomy chapters. 7 – 9*

The following time line gives us a picture of the various covenants and a time line.

Bible Timeline: The Covenants of God



There are seven major covenants in the old Testament (or even 8) depending upon where a person begins to define what is a covenant. The reason for that is because God’s covenant with Noah is the first covenant specifically mentioned in the bible. Genesis 6: 17, 18 records the actual Noahic covenant:

¹⁷“Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish. ¹⁸“But I will establish **My covenant** with you; and you shall enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.

However, most Bible Scholars begin with the Adamic Covenant. So, the question is: What is the meaning of the word – Covenant. The word “covenant” in the Old Testament has a precise and consistent meaning. It doesn’t just mean ‘relationship’, as is commonly assumed today. Rather, “covenant” refers to a very specific type of bond between parties, particularly for our purposes – the bond between the parties in the covenant. It is interesting and critical to note that a biblical bond is each party agreeing that “Everything I have is yours”.

The nearest thing we have as an example in this world is the American Indian Covenant of a “blood brother”, where each party binds their agreement by shedding of blood. There are two great examples of this in the Bible. The first one is the establishment of a covenant with

Abraham which is found in Gen 15:9-21 where God commanded Abraham to ⁹... “Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰ Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds.

Here at the beginning of the covenant is the shedding of animal blood. A good example of; the actual “Faith Covenant” God made with Abraham is detailed in *Gen 17:9 – 14 where blood of ABRAHAM was shed on the part of one party to the covenant WHICH WE KNOW AS CIRCUMCISION*. Notice the Sign of the Covenant is circumcision. Shedding of the blood is involved. Not only does the sign have spiritual significance, it also has physical benefits.

Of course, the other party to that covenant known as the Abrahamic or Faith covenant, is Jesus who shed His blood for all mankind. Summing up a covenant is to understand that it is more than a promise. It is a total commitment, an absolute requirement to do something even at the cost of one’s life. *Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13*

One final point about circumcision. Medical studies have proven that male circumcision is not only more sanitary for the individual during his lifetime but also reduces the occurrence of certain types of cancer for his female partner. Thus, it is with many of the covenants. They

have both an eternal spiritual application and meaning as well as a physical benefit in this life!!

A. The Types of Covenants

There are two types of covenants in the Bible: conditional and unconditional. It is important to distinguish between these two types of covenants to have a correct picture of what the Bible teaches.

1. Conditional Covenants

A conditional covenant is a bilateral covenant in which a proposal of God to man is characterized by the formula: if you will, then I will, whereby God promises to grant special blessings to man providing man fulfills certain conditions contained in the covenant. Man's failure to do so often results in punishment. Thus, one's response to the covenant agreement brings either blessings or cursings. The blessings are secured by obedience and man must meet his conditions before God will meet His.

Two of the eight covenants of the Bible are conditional: the Edenic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant.

2. Unconditional Covenants

An unconditional covenant is a unilateral covenant and is a sovereign act of God whereby He unconditionally obligates Himself to bring to pass definite blessings and conditions for the covenanted people. This covenant is characterized by the formula: I will, which declares God's determination to do as He promises. Blessings are secured by the grace of God. There may be conditions in the covenant by which God requests the covenanted one to fulfill out of gratitude, but they are not themselves the basis of God's fulfilling His promises.

B The Covenants with Israel

Five of these eight covenants were made exclusively with Israel while the others were made with mankind in general. Only one of the five covenants made with Israel is conditional: The Mosaic Covenant. The other four covenants with Israel are all unconditional: the Abrahamic Covenant, the Land (Israel) in the Mosaic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant which is Jesus the Messiah.

Four things should be noted concerning the nature of the unconditional covenants made with Israel.

First: they are literal covenants and their contents must be interpreted literally as well.

Second: the covenants that God has made with Israel are eternal and are not in any way restricted or altered by time.

Third: it is necessary to re-emphasize that these are unconditional covenants that were not rescinded because of Israel's disobedience; because the overview of the covenants is unconditional and totally dependent upon God for fulfillment, their ultimate fulfillment is certain.

Fourth: these covenants were made with a specific people: Israel. This point is brought out by Paul in Romans 9:4: *who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.*

Let's begin with a synopsis of the first three: **The Edenic (Adamic) Covenant; the Noahic Covenant and the Abrahamic Covenant.**

The [Adamic Covenant](#) can be thought of in two parts: the Edenic Covenant (innocence) and the Adamic Covenant (grace) ([Genesis 3:16-19](#)).

The Edenic Covenant is found in [Genesis 1:26-30; 2:16-17](#). The Edenic Covenant outlined man's responsibility toward creation and God's directive regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Adamic Covenant included the curses pronounced against mankind for the sin of Adam and Eve, as well as God's provision for that sin ([Genesis 3:15](#)).

The Noahic Covenant was an unconditional covenant between God and Noah (specifically) and humanity (generally). After the Flood, God promised humanity that He would never again destroy all life on earth with a Flood (see Genesis chapter 9). God gave the rainbow as the sign of the covenant, a promise that the entire earth would never again flood and a reminder that God can and will judge sin ([2 Peter 2:5](#)).

Abrahamic Covenant ([Genesis 12:1-3, 6-7; 13:14-17; 15:17:1-14; 22:15-18](#)). In this covenant, God promised many things to Abraham. He personally promised that He would make Abraham's name great ([Genesis 12:2](#)), that Abraham would have numerous physical descendants ([Genesis 13:16](#)), and that he would be the father of a multitude of nations ([Genesis 17:4-5](#)).

God also made promises regarding a nation called Israel. In fact, the geographical boundaries of the Abrahamic Covenant are laid out on more than one occasion in the book of Genesis (12:7; 13:14-15; 15:18-21).

Another provision in the Abrahamic Covenant is that the families of the world will be blessed through the physical line of Abraham ([Genesis 12:3; 22:18](#)). This is a reference to the Messiah, who would come from the line of Abraham.

It is important to know about all the covenants to fully understand God's relationship with us as His relationship with us is based on covenants. This series of Bible Bites cover all the covenants beginning with a synopsis followed up by an in-depth presentation of each of them. This Bible Bite covered an overview of the first three. The next Bible Bite will delve deeper into these same three. May you be blessed in your study of the covenants.

Shalom