THE EIGHT COVENANTS OF THE BIBLE



By Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

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Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get you out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto the land that I will show you: and I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and be you a blessing: and I will bless them that bless you, and him that curses you will I curse: and in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed.
Genesis 12:1-3

INTRODUCTION

Since much of God's relationship to man is based upon covenantal relationships, a study of the eight covenants is a very important aspect of correctly understanding Scripture. The most common way to divide the Bible is by dispensations. The dispensations, however, are based upon specific covenants, and knowledge of these covenants will help Bible readers to "rightly divide the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). Although the dispensations may come to an end, the covenants themselves often continue.

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 in order to have a clear 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.

Six of the eight covenants are unconditional: the Adamic Covenant, the Noahic Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, the Palestinian or Land Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant.

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 Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant.

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 abrogated because of Israel's disobedience; because the covenants are unconditional and totally dependent upon God for fulfillment, their ultimate fulfillment can be expected. 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.*
This passage clearly points out that these covenants were made with the covenanted people and are Israel's possession.

This is brought out again in Ephesians 2:11 12: *Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*
Five of the eight Bible covenants belong to the people of Israel and, as this passage notes, Gentiles were considered *strangers from the covenants.*

C. The Principle of the Timing of the Provisions

A covenant can be signed, sealed, and made a specific point of history, but this does not mean that all the provisions go immediately into effect. In fact, three different things happen once a covenant is sealed: first, some go into effect right away; second, some provisions go into

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effect in the near future, which may be twenty five years away or five hundred years away; and third, some provisions go into effect only in the distant prophetic future, not having been fulfilled to this day.

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I. THE EDENIC COVENANT:

A. Scripture: Genesis 1:28-30:

And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food: and to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creeps upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for food: and it was so.

Genesis 2:15-17:

And Jehovah God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.

Hosea 6:7:

But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.

B. The Participants in the Covenant

The Edenic Covenant was made between God and Adam in which Adam stood as the representative head of the human race. Thus the actions of Adam are attributed to the whole of humanity.

C. The Provisions of the Covenant

All together, there were a total of seven provisions in the Edenic Covenant.

First: man was told: *Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth* (Gen. 1:28a). The earth was created for the purpose of being the habitation of man, and then man was created on the sixth day. Man was told to populate the earth; so the increase in population is part of his commission. The earth was to be filled with humanity.

Second: man was told to *subdue* the earth (Gen. 1:28b). Previously, authority over the earth had been given to Satan (Ezek. 28:11-19). But when Satan fell, he lost his authority over this earth. That is the reason Genesis 1:2 describes the earth as being covered by water and *darkness* being over *the face of the deep*. Hence, God began to form and fashion the earth anew to make it habitable for man, and this time He would give man the authority over the earth. Man was to *subdue* it; he was to use the natural resources and energies of the earth that God had provided for him. However, this did not mean he was allowed to pollute it!

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Third: man was given *dominion* over all living things (Gen.1:28c). The earlier provision gave man authority over the earth as far as non living things were concerned. This provision extended man's authority over all living creatures. The entire animal kingdom on the earth, in the air, and in the sea was put under the authority of man. The first exercise of this authority was man's naming of the animals (Gen. 2:19-20).

The fourth provision concerned man's diet (Gen. 1:29-30; 2:16). At this point man was to be a vegetarian. There is nothing in this covenant that allowed him to eat of the animal kingdom although he was to exercise authority over it. No blood of any kind was to be shed.

A fifth provision directed man *to dress and to keep* the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15). Even in his unfallen state, man was not to lead a life of pure leisure; work was part of the human ethic even before the Fall. However, labor was easy and the land would produce easily; it was not toilsome.

The sixth provision was that man was forbidden to eat of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* (Gen. 2:17a). This was the only negative commandment in the entire Edenic Covenant and was the one point that would test man's obedience. He was free to eat of all the other trees of the garden but was to refrain from eating of that one. This was the one test to see how man would respond to the will of God; it was a test of the recognition of and the submission to the will of God. Man was not to assume that, because he was given authority over the earth and the animal kingdom, he himself was independent of God and exempt from God's law. The question that raises is, "Will man, like Satan before him, reject God's right to rule and declare himself independent of God?"

The seventh provision contained a penalty for disobedience: spiritual death (Gen. 2:17b). This cannot refer to physical death because man did not die on the very day that he disobeyed the commandment. So the death spoken of here must be spiritual death. In the day that he eats of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, he will be separated from God and will die spiritually.

D. The Status of the Covenant

The Edenic Covenant was the basis for the Dispensation of Innocence. The record of the Edenic Covenant's being broken is found in Genesis 3:1-8.

Satan appeared in the Garden of Eden as a fallen creature. This shows that man was not created in a perfect universe, for sin was already in existence. Although it was not yet existent in man, it was already present in Satan. The devil did his work of tempting man in the same three areas as set forth in I John 2:16.

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The first phrase of Genesis 3:6: *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food,* corresponds to the first phrase of I John 2:16: *the lust of the flesh.* The second phrase of Genesis 3:6:*and that it was a delight to the eyes,* corresponds to the second phrase of I John 2:16:*the lust of the eyes.* And the third phrase of Genesis 3:6:*and that it was a delight to the eyes,* corresponds to the second phrase of I John 2:16: *and the vainglory* [pride] *of life*

Eve gave in to the temptation and disobeyed the one negative commandment. Adam recognized what had happened, but he still chose to join his wife in disobedience. Their first reaction was an attempt to hide from the presence of God, which only illustrated the truth of Genesis 2:17. Man at that very moment died spiritually and could no longer share the same communion with God he had experienced before his disobedience. With that act, the Edenic Covenant, being conditional, came to an end.

II. THE ADAMIC COVENANT:

A. Scripture: Genesis 3:14-19

And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life: and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed: he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply your pain and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; and your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you. And unto Adam he said, Because you have hearkened unto the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it: cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil shall you eat of it all the days of your life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you; and you shall eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return unto the ground; for out of it were you taken: for dust you are, and unto dust shall you return.

B. The Participants in the Covenant

God and Adam are involved in this covenant in which Adam again represented the whole human race. Thus the judgment on Adam is the judgment on all humanity.

C. The Provisions of the Covenant

God individually addressed the serpent, Satan, Eve, and Adam.

1. The Serpent: Genesis 3:14

There are three provisions concerning the serpent. First: he is cursed above all other creatures of the animal kingdom. All creatures now fall under a curse, but there is a special curse upon this one member of the animal kingdom. Normally, an animal is not held morally responsible for its actions. However, if it causes any harm to man, then it is held responsible (Gen. 9:5). Animals were created for the benefit

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of man, and when this principle is violated, it then incurs the judgment of God.

Second: the serpent is to crawl on its belly. This shows that originally the serpent moved in an erect position. This led to the debate whether or not the serpent originally had legs, but that question is irrelevant to the issue. The only point is that in place of moving erectly, the serpent now crawls on its belly.

Third: dust shall be the serpent's food. Bible critics have had a field day with this pointing it out as an error of the Bible since reptiles do not eat dust. However, this was simply a Hebrew idiom meaning to be especially cursed (Mic. 7:17). The curse will continue to be there even in the Messianic Kingdom (Is. 65:25).

2. Satan: Genesis 3:15

Four provisions are given in relationship to Satan. First: there would be perpetual hatred between Satan and the woman. Second: this hatred was to culminate between Satan's seed, the Antichrist, and the woman's Seed, the Messiah. Third: the serpent would bruise the heel of the woman's Seed; this happened at the Crucifixion. Fourth: this first prophecy of the Lord's victory over Satan goes on to say that the woman's Seed will crush Satan's head; this occurred initially with the Resurrection (Heb. 2:14-15). But the final crushing of Satan was still future when Paul wrote Romans 16:20; it will come when Satan is cast into the Lake of fire (Rev. 20:10).

The main point of this prophecy is that the Messiah would be of the Seed of woman. This goes against the biblical norm that teaches that genealogy is traced through the male line, not through the female line. The reason for this exception will not be known for centuries until Isaiah 7:14 revealed that the Messiah will be conceived and born of a virgin. The prophecy of Genesis 3:15 led to the events of Genesis 6:1-4 when Satan tried to corrupt the seed of the woman and will lead to the future supernatural conception of the Antichrist.

3. The Woman: Genesis 3:16

Eve and all women were made subject to three provisions. First: there would be multiplication of menstrual *pain* and *conception*. Apparently, the nature of conception before the Fall was quite different than what it was after the Fall. Since the Fall, a woman generally is able to conceive at least once a month. Furthermore, a woman's menstrual periods are accompanied with discomfort and pain. Second: the woman was to give birth in pain. Before the Fall, she would have been able to conceive and give birth without pain, but this was no longer true. However, once birth takes place, there is joy (Jn. 16:21). In this way, the woman is saved (I Tim. 2:15). She is not spiritually saved through childbirth, but she is saved from being in a demeaning position through her ability to produce children, for in this way she guarantees the continuity of the human race not subject to physical

death. Third: the wife was to be in subjection to the husband. This was already true before the Fall, but the new element was that she would now have a desire to rebel against that subjection and choose to try to rule him.

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4. The Man: Genesis 3:17 19

Adam and all men and the entire human race were subjected to five provisions in Genesis 3:17-19. First: since Adam stands as the representative head of the human race, the judgment on Adam is the judgment on the whole human race. It is Adam, not Eve, who is held responsible for the human condition.

Second: the earth was cursed. Working was not something new with the Adamic Covenant, it had already been provided for in the Edenic Covenant. The difference was in the earth's response. Under the Edenic Covenant, the earth was to respond readily to man's working and tilling. But now the earth would not respond so easily; there would be *thorns*, *thistles*, and weeds.

Third: human diet continues to be vegetarian as it was under the Edenic Covenant; it is not clear if the same was true for the animal kingdom. Animals were used for dairy products, wool for clothing, and sacrifices, but not for eating.

Fourth: man's work was to be characterized by hard labor. Working conditions under the Edenic Covenant were easy, simple, and enjoyable. Now, *sweat* was to characterize the work of man and labor was to be hard and toilsome.

Fifth: physical death was introduced. Whereas under the Edenic Covenant man died spiritually, under the Adamic Covenant man would ultimately die physically (Rom. 5:12-21). Thus far there have only been two exceptions to this rule: Enoch and Elijah. There will be others in the future at the time of the Rapture.

D. The Status of the Covenant

The Adamic Covenant became the basis for the Dispensation of Conscience. As an unconditional covenant, it is very much in effect today.

III. THE NOAHIC COVENANT

A. Scripture: Genesis 9:1-17

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the heavens; with all wherewith the ground teems, and all the fishes of the sea, into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; as the green herb have I given you all. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

And surely your blood, the blood of your lives, will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it: and at the hand of man, even at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man. Whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man. And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein. And God spoke unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

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B. The Participants in the Covenant

This covenant was made between God and Noah. Like Adam, Noah stood as the representative for the entire human race. As a result of the flood, not only is all humanity descended from Adam, but also from Noah.

C. The Provisions of the Covenant

First: man was to repopulate the earth (vv. 1, 7). With the exception of eight people, the entire human race was destroyed by the Flood. Man had vastly increased in numbers, but *the wickedness of man was great in the earth* (Gen. 6:5). Thus God brought universal judgment upon the earth. After the Flood, the earth was essentially empty again. Only eight people remained to re-populate the entire earth. Just as with the Edenic Covenant, man was again commissioned to repopulate the earth, but the command to subdue the earth is not repeated. With man's fall, he lost his authority and Satan usurped it. Thus Satan is *the prince of this world* (Jn. 12:31) and the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4). Satan has authority over all the kingdoms of this world and can offer them to whomsoever he will (Lk. 4:6). He made that offer to the Seed of the woman, Yeshua (Jesus), who turned it down. He will offer it some day to the seed of Satan, the Antichrist, who will accept it (Rev. 13:1-3).

Second: the fear of man was put into animals and man was to dominate them (v. 2). While man had lost authority over the earth, he was still to dominate and have authority over the animal kingdom. For this reason, the fear of man was placed in animals. This fear was a

means of self preservation due to the next provision.

Third: man's diet was to consist of both *every moving thing* and *the green herb* (v. 3). Previously, his diet had been vegetarian, but now all animals were included. No limitations whatsoever are given in the passage, thus all animals were fit for food.

Fourth: man was forbidden to eat blood (v. 4). All creature life, both man and animal, is blood sustained. Blood is the symbol of life, and the shedding of blood is the symbol of death. Because blood is the symbol of life, God commanded that it not be eaten or drunk.

Fifth: capital punishment became a part of the human economy for the first time in (vv. 5-6). When Cain killed Abel, Cain was not executed because capital punishment had not yet been instituted. The provision for capital punishment came with the Noahic Covenant and all murderers were to be executed.

Sixth: the promise of the covenant is that humanity would never again be destroyed by a world wide flood (vv. 8-11). While there would be local floods that would destroy portions of humanity, never again would there be a world wide flood. In the future, there will be a passing away and destruction of earth's present system, but it will not be by means of a universal flood. This shows that the Noahic Flood was universal, not local.

Seventh: the token of the covenant was the rainbow (vv. 12-17). Not every covenant came with a sign or token, but this one did. This was the first time in human history that the rainbow ever appeared. Rain did not exist before the world wide flood and the earth was watered by a mist that came daily upon the vegetation. Rainbows come in conjunction with rain. So for the first time in human experience the rainbow appeared, and God's promise that humanity will not be destroyed by a flood again should come to remembrance every time a rainbow is seen.

D. The Status of the Covenant

The Noahic Covenant became the basis for the Dispensation of Human Government. Although this dispensation has been superseded, the unconditional Noahic Covenant is still very much in effect. The judgments of the Tribulation against the Gentiles will come because of violations of the Noahic Covenant. According to Isaiah 24:5-6, the judgment comes because humanity has violated *the everlasting covenant*, a name given to the Noahic Covenant in Genesis 9:16. For that reason, the prophet used the Noahic Flood motif, *the windows on high* and *foundations of the earth* in Isaiah 24:18. But next time, God will destroy the masses of humanity by fire.

IV. THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

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A. Scripture

First: Genesis 12:1-3: *Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get you out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto the land that I will show you: and I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and be you a blessing: and I will bless them that bless you, and him that curses you will I curse: and in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*

Second: Genesis 12:7: *And Jehovah appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto your seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto Jehovah, who appeared unto him.*

Third: Genesis 13:14-17: *And Jehovah said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward: for all the land which you see, to you will I give it, and to your seed for ever. And I will make your seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then may your seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for unto you will I give it.*

The fourth and fifth passages dealing with the Abrahamic Covenant are Genesis 15:1-21 and Genesis 17:1-21. While not quoted in this study, these more lengthy segments of Scripture contain many provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant. The emphasis of Genesis 15 is threefold: first, Abraham would father one nation in particular; second, he would father many nations in general; third, God signs and seals the Abrahamic Covenant and spells out the exact borders of the Abrahamic Covenant as extending from *the river of Egypt* in the south to *the great river*, Euphrates in the north. The signing was done in such a way that it rendered the covenant unconditional. The emphasis of Genesis 17 is on the token of the covenant: physical circumcision on the eighth day of a boy's life. Just as the rainbow was the token of the Noahic Covenant, so circumcision is the token of the Abrahamic Covenant.

A sixth passage is Genesis 22:15-18: *And the angel of Jehovah called unto Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said, By myself have I sworn, says Jehovah, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, that in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed my voice.*

B. The Participants in the Covenant

God and Abraham are involved in this covenant, in which Abraham stood as the representative head of the whole Jewish nation, not for all humanity.

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C. The Provisions of the Covenant

A list gleaned from these passages shows a total of fourteen provisions in this covenant.

First: a *great nation* was to come out of Abraham, namely, the nation of Israel (Gen. 12:2; 13:16; 15:5; 17:1-2, 7; 22:17b).

Second: he was promised a Land; specifically, the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:1, 7; 13:14-15, 17; 15:17-21; 17:8).

Third: Abraham himself was to be greatly blessed (Gen. 12:2b).

Fourth: Abraham's name would be great (Gen. 12:2c).

Fifth: Abraham will be a blessing to others (Gen. 12:2d).

Sixth: those who bless Israel will be blessed (Gen. 12:3a).

Seventh: those who curse Israel will be cursed (Gen.12:3b).

Eighth: in Abraham all will ultimately be blessed (Gen. 12:3c; 22:18).

Ninth: Abraham would receive a son through his wife Sarah (Gen. 15:1-4; 17:16-21).

Tenth: his descendants would undergo the Egyptian bondage (Gen. 15:13-14).

Eleventh: other nations as well as Israel would come forth from Abraham (Gen. 17:3-4, 6); the Arab states are some of these nations.

Twelfth: his name was to be changed from *Abram*, meaning "exalted father," to Abraham, meaning "father of a multitude" (Gen. 17:5).

Thirteenth: *Sarai's* name, meaning "my princess," was to be changed to Sarah, meaning "the princess" (Gen. 17:15).

Fourteenth: circumcision was to be a token of the covenant (Gen. 17:9 14); thus, according to the Abrahamic Covenant, circumcision was to be a sign of one's Jewishness. The practice of circumcision did not begin with Abraham since others in the ancient Near East practiced the ritual either at birth or puberty. The uniqueness of Jewish circumcision is not the act, but the timing of the act: on the eighth day. Circumcision would show this to be a blood covenant and hence emphasized its solemnity. It would also show that this sign of Jewishness is passed on through natural generation.

These provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant can be categorized in three areas: to Abraham; to the Seed, Israel; and to the Gentiles.

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1. To Abraham

Abraham was to be the father of a great nation, Israel. He was to possess all of the Promised Land. Other nations, including the Arab states, were ultimately to descend from Abraham. Many of his descendants would become kings, both Jewish and non Jewish kings. Abraham was to receive personal blessings. Abraham was to be a blessing to others. His name was to become great, and so it is among Jews, Moslems, and in all Christendom.

2. To the Seed: Israel

The nation of Israel was to become great. It was ultimately to become innumerable. It was to possess all of the Promised Land. It was to receive victory over its enemies. The fact that the promises were made to both Abraham and his seed shows that these blessings have not yet received complete fulfillment but await the Messianic Kingdom.

3. To the Gentiles

The Gentiles would be blessed for blessing Israel and cursed for cursing Israel. Also, they were to receive spiritual blessings, but ultimately these were to come through one specific Seed of Abraham, the Messiah. The Abrahamic Covenant contains both physical and spiritual promises. While the physical blessings were limited to the Jews only, the spiritual blessings were to extend to the Gentiles, but only through the Messiah.

D. The Basis for Development of Other Covenants

Reducing the Abrahamic Covenant to its very basics, it can be seen that it contained three aspects: the Land aspect, the Seed aspect, and the Blessing aspect. The Land aspect is developed in the Land Covenant. The Seed aspect is covered in the Davidic Covenant. The Blessing aspect is presented in the New Covenant.

E. The Confirmation of the Covenant

1. Conformation Through Isaac

Abraham had eight sons by three different women, and the question arose: through which son would the Abrahamic Covenant be confirmed? God revealed that it was to be only through Sarah's son, Isaac. God's appearance to Isaac is recorded in Genesis 26:2-5: *And Jehovah appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell you of: sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and will bless you; for unto you, and unto your seed, I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore unto Abraham your father: and I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and will give unto your seed all these lands; and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.*

The covenant was later reconfirmed to Isaac in Genesis 26:24: *And Jehovah appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham*

your father: fear not, for I am with you, and will bless you, and multiply your seed for my servant Abraham's sake.

2. Conformation Through Jacob

Isaac had two sons, and God chose to confirm the covenant with Jacob, as seen in Genesis 28:13-15: *And, behold, Jehovah stood above it, and said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon you lie, to you will I give it, and to your seed; and your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in you and in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with you, and will keep you whithersoever you go, and will bring you again into this land; for I will not leave you, until I have done that which I have spoken to you of.*

3. Confirmation Through the Sons of Jacob

Next, it was confirmed through all of Jacob's twelve sons (Gen. 49), who fathered the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

F. The Status of the Covenant

The Abrahamic Covenant became the basis for the Dispensation of Promise. Because the Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional, it is still very much in effect even though it has remained largely unfulfilled. The ultimate fulfillment will come during the Kingdom Age. Some examples of this include: Exodus 2:23-25; 4:24-26; 6:2-8; 32:11-14; Leviticus 26:46; Deuteronomy 34:4; II Kings 13:22-23; I Chronicles 16:15-19; II Chronicles 20:7-8; Nehemiah 9:7-8; Psalm 105:7-12; Luke 1:54-55, 68-73; Galatians 3:15-18; and Hebrews 6:13-20. These verses note that the Abrahamic Covenant was the basis for the Exodus, for giving them the Land, for Jewish survival in spite of disobedience, for the coming of the Messiah, for the resurrection of the dead, and for Israel's final redemption and restoration.

The Abrahamic Covenant is a good example of what was stated earlier: that a covenant could be signed and sealed at a specific point of time, but not every provision goes immediately into effect, but rather, three different things happen. Some went into effect right away such as the change of names and circumcision. Some went into effect in the near future, for there was a twenty five year wait for the birth of Isaac and a four hundred year wait before the conquest of the Land. Some provisions go into effect in the prophetic distant future such as the settlement of all of the Promised Land, which has not been fulfilled to this day.

V. THE MOSAIC COVENANT

A. Scripture

The Mosaic Covenant contains very extensive detailed information, and the Scriptural account of the covenant extends from Exodus 20:1 to Deuteronomy 28:68.

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B. The Participants in the Covenant

The parties involved in this pact were God and Israel. The covenant was made with Israel and not merely with Moses acting as a representative of Israel. This is clearly brought out in Exodus 19:3-8: *And Moses went up unto God, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which Jehovah commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that Jehovah has spoken we will do. And Moses reported the words of the people unto Jehovah.*

The covenant was not made with the Gentiles or the Church, but with Israel only, a point also made in Deuteronomy 4:7-8; Psalm 147:19-20; and Malachi 4:4.

C. The Provisions of the Covenant

The key provision of the Mosaic Covenant was the Law of Moses, which contained a total of 613 commandments. Involved in these provisions of the Law were blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. It was signed and sealed by the Shechinah Glory in Exodus 24:1-11, but signed in such a way that rendered the covenant conditional. So in essence, there are 613 provision of the covenant, too many to be individually listed here. Instead, seven observations will be made concerning the provisions of the Mosaic Covenant.

1. The Totality of the Law

First: as stated earlier, there were a total of 613 specific commandments, not just ten, a rather common misconception. Of these, 365 were negative commandments, things which were forbidden; 248 were positive commandments, things that should be done.

2. The Blessings and Judgments of the Law

Second: this was a conditional covenant, which meant that there would be blessings for obedience, but judgment for disobedience (Ex. 15:26; 19:3-8).

3. The Blood Sacrifice Added

Third: the key element of the entire Mosaic Law was the blood sacrifice, brought out in Leviticus 17:11: *For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life.*

There were five different offerings detailed in Leviticus 1-7. The Hebrew word for atonement does not mean the removal of sin but

merely the covering of sin. While the blood of animals covered the sins of the Old Testament saints, it never took those sins away; only the blood of the Messiah can remove sin (Heb. 10:1-4). However, the blood sacrifice did provide for the forgiveness of sin and the restoration of fellowship.

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4. The Diet Restrictions Imposed

Fourth: for the Jews, it restricted some of the provisions of the Noahic Covenant. Beasts had to be both cloven hoofed and those that chewed the cud; fish had to have both fins and scales; concerning fowls, no birds of prey were allowed; and concerning insects, only one type of locust was permitted.

5. The Death Penalty Expanded

Fifth: for the Jews, it added the death penalty for other sins such as idolatry, adultery, cursing God, cursing parents, breaking the Sabbath, practicing witchcraft, among others.

6. The Sign of the Covenant

Sixth: it reaffirmed the practice of circumcision (Lev. 12:3), but not for the same reasons. Under the Abrahamic Covenant, circumcision was the sign of the covenant and it was mandatory for Jews only. Under the Mosaic Covenant, circumcision was the means of submission to the Law of Moses and it was mandatory for all Jews, but also for Gentiles who wished to become part of the Commonwealth of Israel. That is why Paul warned the Gentile Galatian believers that, if they submitted to circumcision, they would be obliged to keep the *whole law*, not just this one commandment (Gal. 5:3).

7. The Token of the Covenant

Seventh: the token or sign of the Mosaic Covenant was the Sabbath. Concerning the Sabbath, five specific observations can be made. First: being the token of the Mosaic Covenant, it was a sign between God and Israel; it was a sign that Israel had been set apart by God (Ex. 31:12-17); it was a sign of the Exodus (Deut. 5:12-15; Ezek. 20:10-12); and it was a sign that Jehovah was Israel's God (Ezek. 20:20). Every reason given for the observance of the Sabbath has relevance only to Israel, not to the Gentiles or the Church.

Second: the Sabbath was not a creation ordinance; it began only with Moses. Genesis 2:1-3 states only what God did on that day, but there is no command to observe that day. The word Sabbath is not even used in the Genesis account and that day of the week is just called *the seventh day*. From Adam to Moses, there is no record of anyone's keeping the Sabbath. While God listed a number of obligations upon humanity in the previous covenants, keeping the Sabbath was not one of them. The Book of Job deals with a pre-Mosaic saint and it, too, mentions many obligations man had toward God, but keeping the Sabbath was not one of them. Sabbath observance begins with Moses

in Exodus 16:23-30 and was made part of the Law of Moses in Exodus 20:8-11.

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Third: the Sabbath was a day of rest, not a day of corporate worship, which is another common misconception. As the Sabbath commandment was further developed in other parts of the Law of Moses, what was meant by "resting" on the Sabbath was largely a matter of prohibitions: no gathering of manna (Ex. 16:23-30); no traveling (Ex. 16:29); no kindling of fire (Ex. 35:3); and no gathering of wood (Num. 15:32). Outside the Law, other prohibitions for the Sabbath included: no burden bearing (Jer. 17:21); no trading (Amos 8:5); and no marketing (Neh. 10:31; 13:15, 19). Nothing was said about corporate worship. In the Law of Moses, the Sabbath was a day of rest and cessation of labor, not a day of corporate worship. The Sabbath synagogue services found in the New Testament originated with the Babylonian Captivity, not with the Law of Moses. While it was not a day of total inactivity, it was to be a day of rest and refreshment from the regular work of the other six days. While the rest itself may have been an act of worship, corporate worship on the Sabbath was not a factor in the Old Testament.

In connection with the Sabbath, the phrase a *holy convocation* is often found. This phrase is sometimes used as the basis for teaching that the Sabbath was a day of corporate worship for all. However, it is used only in conjunction with the priesthood and sacrifices. The corporate connotation is for the priests only and the place of this corporate worship is in the Tabernacle or Temple for the purpose of sacrifices. Since only the priesthood could do the work of sacrificing, the holy convocation applied only to them. This phrase is found a total of nineteen times, all in three of the books of Moses: Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Eleven of the nineteen are found in one chapter: Leviticus 23. Six others are found in the two chapters of Numbers 28-29. In all cases, the phrase holy convocation refers to a convocation of priests for the purpose of performing special sacrifices and the Sabbath was one of those occasions. It was not a time of corporate worship for all Israel. So the one passage that is used to try to substantiate corporate worship on the Sabbath, Leviticus 23:3, refers to the Sabbath as a holy convocation and has to do with priestly corporate sacrifices. While it has relevance to family gatherings, these were not acts of corporate worship. As Dr. Louis Goldberg of Moody Bible Institute states: "On the Sabbath there was to be complete rest (physical) and holy convocation (spiritual refreshing) before the Lord."

Even Leviticus 23:3 states concerning the Sabbath it *is a sabbath unto Jehovah in all your dwellings*. Again, the emphasis has to do with staying at home (Ex. 16:29) and resting as a family, rather than getting together in corporate worship. As Dr. Goldberg also points out, the rest "was also to include spiritual renewal." The expression holy

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convocation emphasized that on such occasions the priests were to offer special sacrifices. In reality, the Mosaic Law mandated corporate worship only on three occasions: the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. On these occasions when they were to migrate to wherever the Tabernacle or later the Temple stood, either at Shiloh or Jerusalem. Corporate worship by non Levites was mandated only three times a year, but not on a weekly Sabbath. This would have been physically impossible in light of the time it took to travel during biblical times. The penalty for profaning the Sabbath was death; to profane the Sabbath was to consider it like any other day. Therefore, on the Sabbath, they were to do no labor and they were to stay home and rest.

Fourth: the Sabbath as the token or sign of the Mosaic Covenant is that it was intended only for Israel and not the Church.

Fifth: as a sign of the Mosaic Covenant, it is in force as long as the Mosaic Covenant is in force. If the Mosaic Covenant comes to an end, so would mandatory Sabbath keeping.

D. The Purposes of the Law

It should be stated categorically that the Law of Moses was not a means of salvation. This concept is rejected because that would make salvation by means of works. Salvation was and always is by grace through faith. While the content of faith has changed from age to age depending on progressive revelation, the means of salvation never changes. The Law was not given to serve as a means of salvation (Rom. 3:20, 28; Gal. 2:16; 3:11, 21). It was given to a people already *redeemed* from Egypt, not in order *to redeem* them. However, there were several purposes for the giving of the Law. As found in both testaments, there were at least nine purposes for the Law of Moses.

The first purpose was to reveal the holiness of God and to reveal the standard of righteousness that God demanded for a proper relationship with Him (Lev. 11:44; 19:1-2, 37; I Pet. 1:15-16). The Law itself was *holy, and righteous, and good* (Rom. 7:12).

The second purpose of the Law was to provide the rule of conduct for the Old Testament saints. For example, Romans 3:28 makes it clear that no man was justified by the works of the Law. The Law always had purposes other than being a means of salvation. In this case, it provided the rule of life for the Old Testament believer (Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7-8, 26). For the Old Testament believer, the Law was the center of his spiritual life and his delight, as stated in Psalm 119, especially verses 77, 97, 103, 104, and 159.

The third purpose was to provide occasions for individual and corporate worship for Israel. The seven holy seasons of Israel (Lev. 23)

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is one example of this.

The fourth purpose was to keep the Jews a distinct people (Lev. 11:44-45; Deut. 7:6; 14:1-2). This was the specific reason for many of the laws, such as the dietary laws and the clothing laws. The Jews were to be distinct from all other people in a variety of ways, such as their worship habits (Lev. 1, 7, 16, 23), their eating habits (Lev. 11:1-47), their sexual habits (Lev. 12), their clothing habits (Lev. 19:19), and even the way they cut their beards (Lev. 19:27). Other passages for this point include Exodus 19:5-8 and 31:13.

The fifth purpose is that the Law of Moses served as *the middle wall of partition* as stated in Ephesians 2:11-16. The four unconditional covenants are Jewish covenants and God's blessings, both physical and spiritual, are mediated through the four covenants, the *covenants of the promise* mentioned in verse 12. Because of the Jewish nature of these unconditional covenants, a conditional covenant was also added, the Mosaic Covenant, containing the Law of Moses, *the law of commandments contained in ordinances* of verse 15. The purpose of the Law, then, was to become *the middle wall of partition* to keep Gentiles, as Gentiles, from enjoying the Jewish spiritual blessings of the unconditional covenants. Because of this purpose, Gentiles were both *alienated from the commonwealth of Israel*, and *strangers from the covenants of the promise*. The only way Gentiles could enjoy the spiritual blessings of the Jewish covenants during the period of the Law was to take upon themselves the obligation of the Law, undergo the rite of circumcision, and then live like every Jew had to live. Gentiles, as Gentiles, could not enjoy the Jewish spiritual blessings, only Gentiles, as proselytes to Mosaic Judaism.

The sixth purpose for the Mosaic Law was to reveal sin. Three passages in the Book of Romans point this out. The first passage is Romans 3:19-20, where Paul emphasized that there is no justification through the Law; by means of the Law no Jewish person will be justified. What is the Law then, if not a way of justification, a way of salvation? The Law was given to provide the knowledge of sin, to reveal exactly what sin is. The second passage is Romans 5:20, where the Law was given so that trespasses might be made very clear. How does one know he has sinned? He knows because the Law spelled out in detail what was permitted and what was not permitted. The Law with 613 commandments revealed sin. The third passage is Romans 7:7. Paul again emphasized the fact that the Law was given so that sin might be made known. Paul became aware of his sinful state by looking into the Law and knowing that, on the basis of the Law, he fell short.

The seventh purpose was to make one sin more. Romans 4:15 states: *for the law works wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.* Paul adds in Romans 5:20: *And the law came in besides, that the trespass*

might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly.
The picture Paul gives is that the Law came in to cause more sin, to actually make one sin more.

How this works is explained by Paul in Romans 7:7-13 and I Corinthians 15:56. I Corinthians 15:56 reads: *The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law.*
Basically, what Paul taught is that the sin nature needs a base of operation. Furthermore, the sin nature uses the Law as a base of operation. When Paul said: *where there is no law, neither is there transgression* he did not mean, of course, that there was no sin before the Law was given. The term *transgression* is a specific type of sin: it is the violation of a specific commandment. Men were sinners before the Law was given, but they were not transgressors of the Law until the Law was given. Once the Law was given, the sin nature had a base of operation, causing the individual to violate these commandments and sin all the more.

The eighth purpose was to show the sinner that there was nothing he could do on his own to please God; he had no ability to keep the Law perfectly or to attain the righteousness of the Law (Rom. 7:14-25).

This led to the ninth purpose, which was to drive one to faith according to Romans 8:1-4 and Galatians 3:24-25. The final purpose of the Law was to bring one to saving faith in the Messiah.

The purposes of the Law of Moses can be categorized in four aspects. First, in relation to God, to reveal His holiness and to reveal His righteous standards. Second: in relation to Israel, to keep Israel a distinct people, to provide a rule of life for the Old Testament saint, and to provide for individual and corporate worship. Third: in relation to Gentiles, to serve as a middle wall of partition and thus keep them strangers to the unconditional Jewish covenants so as not to partake of Jewish spiritual blessings as Gentiles, but only as proselytes to Mosaic Judaism. Fourth: in relation to sin, to reveal and show what sin is, to make one sin more, to show that a man cannot attain the righteousness of the Law on his own, and to drive one to faith.

E. The Status of the Covenant

The Mosaic Covenant was the basis for the Dispensation of Law. It was the one Jewish covenant that was conditional and ultimately came to an end with the death of the Messiah (Rom. 10:4; II Cor. 3:3-11; Gal. 3:19-29; Eph. 2:11-18; Heb. 7:11-12, 18). Hence, the Mosaic Law is no longer in effect. Prophetically, it was already considered broken even before the Messiah died to free the Jew from the penalty of the Law (Jer. 31:32). The status of the Mosaic Covenant will be discussed on seven points.

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1. The Unity of the Law of Moses

Two factors have developed in the minds and teachings of many believers which have contributed to the confusion over the Law of Moses. One is the practice of dividing the Law into "ceremonial," "legal," and "moral" commandments. On the basis of this division, many have come to think that the believer is free from the ceremonial and legal commandments, but is still under the moral commandments. The second factor is the belief that the Ten Commandments are still valid today while the other 603 commandments are not. When confronted by a Seventh Day Adventist, the individual taking this approach runs into problems concerning the fourth commandment on keeping the Sabbath. At that point, fudging begins that results in inconsistency. It must be understood that the Mosaic Law is viewed by the Scriptures as a unit. The word *Torah*, meaning "law," is always singular when applied to the Law of Moses, even though it contains 613 commandments. The same is true of the Greek word *nomos* in the New Testament. The division of the Law of Moses into ceremonial, legal, and moral parts is convenient for the study of the different types of commandments contained within it, but it is never divided in this way by the Scriptures themselves. Neither is there any scriptural basis for separating the Ten Commandments from the whole 613 and making only the Ten Commandments perpetual. All 613 commandments are a single unit comprising the Law of Moses.

It is the principle of the unity of the Law of Moses that lies behind the statement found in James 2:10: *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all.*

The point is clear. A person needs only to break one of the 613 commandments to be guilty of breaking all of the Law of Moses. This can only be true if the Mosaic Law is a unit. If it is not, the guilt lies only in the particular commandment violated, not in the whole Law. In other words, if one breaks a legal commandment, he is guilty of breaking the ceremonial and moral laws as well. The same is true of breaking a moral or ceremonial commandment. To bring the point closer to home, if a person eats ham, according to the Law of Moses, he is guilty of breaking the Ten Commandments, although none of them says anything about ham. The Law is a unit, and to break one of the 613 commandments is to break them all.

In order to have a clear understanding of the Law of Moses and its relationship to the believer, Jewish or Gentile, it is necessary to view it as the Scriptures view it: a unit that cannot be divided into parts that have been done away with and parts that have not. Nor can certain commandments be separated in such a way as to give them a different status from other commandments.

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2. The Law of Moses Has Been Rendered Inoperative

The clear cut teaching of the New Testament is that the Law of Moses has been rendered inoperative with the death of the Messiah; in other words, the Law in its totality no longer has authority over any individual. This is evident from a number of passages.

The first passage is Romans 7:5-6: *For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.*

Paul declares that the believer has been discharged from the law. The Greek word used is katargeo, which means "to render inoperative." The Law has been rendered inoperative insofar as being the rule of life over the believer.

The second passage is Romans 10:4: *For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believes.*

The Greek word for end is telos and can mean either "termination" or "goal." However, the evidence clearly favors the meaning of end as "termination." For example, Thayer gives the primary meaning of telos as: "end, i.e. a. termination, the limit at which a thing ceases to be, . . . in the Scriptures also of a temporal end; . . . Christ has brought the law to and end . . ." Not only does Thayer give "termination" as the primary meaning of telos, he also includes Romans 10:4 as belonging to that category of usage. Nor is "goal" listed as secondary meaning or even a third meaning in priority of usage; it is fourth on the list. Arndt and Gringrich give the primary meaning of the verbal form as bring to an end, finish, complete. The nominal *telos* is given the primary meaning of: "end . . . in the sense of termination, cessation." They, too, list Romans 10:4 as being in this category and list the meaning of "goal" as being third on the list. Furthermore, the meaning of cessation is more consistent with the wide context of Romans and in keeping with what he said in Romans 7:5-6. In the final analysis, it does not matter since other Scriptures teach both truths: the Messiah is the goal of the Law, but He is also the termination of the Law. Since the Messiah is the end of the Law, this means that there is no justification through it (Gal. 2:16). This, of course, was always true but, furthermore, there is no sanctification or perfection through the Law (Heb. 7:19). Thus it should be very evident that the Law has come to an end in the Messiah and cannot function in justification or sanctification. For the believer especially, it has be rendered inoperative.

Third: the Law was never meant to be a permanent administration but a temporary one. This is stated in Galatians 3:19: *What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise has been made.*

In this context, Paul stated that the Law of Moses was an addition to

the Abrahamic Covenant (vv. 15-18). It was added for the purpose of making sin very clear so that all will know that they have fallen short of God's standard of righteousness. It was a temporary addition until the seed, the Messiah would come; now that He has come, the Law is finished. The addition has ceased to function with the cross.

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Fourth: with the Messiah, there is a new priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek, not according to the Order of Aaron. The Law of Moses provided the basis for the Levitical Priesthood and there was an inseparable connection between the Law of Moses and the Levitical Priesthood. Thus, a new priesthood required a new Law under which it could operate according to Hebrews 7:11-18. The point made in Hebrews 7:11-12 is that, under the Law, only one type of priesthood was permitted, the Levitical Priesthood. The Levitical Priesthood could not bring perfection. This is explained in Hebrews 9:11 -10:18 that states rather clearly that animal blood could not bring perfection; only the Messiah's blood could do that. The Mosaic Law was the basis for the Levitical Priesthood. For the Levitical Priesthood to be done away with and to be replaced by a new priesthood, the Priesthood of Melchizedek, required a change of the Law. As long as the Law of Moses was in effect, no other priesthood was valid except the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood (Heb. 7:13-17). Was there a change of the Law? Hebrews 7:18 states that the Mosaic Law was "disannulled." Because it is no longer in effect, there is now a new priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek. If the Mosaic Law were still in effect, Jesus could not function as a priest. Because the Mosaic Law is no longer in effect, Jesus can be a priest after the Order of Melchizedek. Consequently, the Law of Moses has been "disannulled" in favor of a new Law, which is the basis for the priest according to the Order of Melchizedek.

Fifth: the writer of Hebrews goes on to say that the above truth was already anticipated by the prophets in 8:8-13. In verses 8-12, he quotes the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 and then concludes in verse 13: *In that he says, A new covenant he has made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxed aged is nigh unto vanishing away.*
Thus the Law of Moses became old with Jeremiah and vanished away with the Messiah's death.

Sixth: the Law was *the middle wall of partition* that was now broken down according to Ephesians 2:14-15: *For he is our peace, who made both one, and broke down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace.*
As noted earlier, God made four unconditional eternal covenants with Israel. All of God's blessings, both material and spiritual, are mediated by means of these four Jewish covenants. God also had a fifth covenant which was temporary and conditional, the Mosaic Covenant

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that contained the Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law served as *the middle wall of partition* to keep Gentiles, as Gentiles, away from enjoying Jewish spiritual blessings. If the Mosaic Law were still in effect, it would still be a wall of partition to keep the Gentiles away; but this wall of partition was broken down with the death of the Messiah. Since the wall of partition was the Mosaic Law, this meant the Law of Moses was done away with. Gentiles, as Gentiles, on the basis of faith can and do enjoy Jewish spiritual blessings by becoming fellow partakers of the promise in the Messiah.

The seventh line of evidence for the annulment of the Mosaic Law is based on Galatians 3:23-4:7. In this passage, the Law is looked upon as a pedagogue or a tutor over a minor to bring him to mature faith in the Messiah (v. 24). Having become a believer, he is no longer under this tutor, which is the Law of Moses (v. 25). As clearly as it could be stated, this passage teaches that with the Messiah's coming, the Law is no longer in effect.

The eighth line of evidence for the annulment of the Mosaic Law is II Corinthians 3:2-11 that zeros right in on the part of the Law that most people want to retain, the Ten Commandments. First of all, one needs to see what Paul is saying concerning the Law of Moses. In verses 3 and 7, the spotlight is on the Ten Commandments, since it is these that were *engraven on stones*. In verse 7, it is called the *ministration of death*. In verse 9, it is called the *ministration of condemnation*. These are negative, but valid, descriptions. The main point, then, is that the Law of Moses, especially represented by the Ten Commandments, is a *ministration of death* and *a ministration of condemnation*. If the Ten Commandments were still in force today, this would still be true. However, they are no longer in force, for it states in verses 7 and 11 that the Law has "passed away." The Greek word used is *katargeo*, which means, "to render inoperative." Since the emphasis in this passage is on the Ten Commandments, this means that the Ten Commandments have passed away. The thrust is very clear. The Law of Moses, and especially the Ten Commandments, is no longer in effect. In fact, the superiority of the Law of the Messiah is seen by the fact that it will never be rendered inoperative. Unlike Covenant Theology, Dispensationalism does not insist that the Ten Commandments are still in force and do exegetical gymnastics to avoid observing the Sabbath, the very way the Ten Commandments actually require.

To summarize this section, the Law is a unit comprised of 613 commandments, and all of it has been rendered inoperative. There is no commandment that has continued beyond the cross of the Messiah. The Law is there and can be used as a teaching tool to show God's standard of righteousness, as well as man's sinfulness and need of a substitutionary atonement. It can be used to teach many spiritual truths about God as a man. It can be used to point one to the Messiah

(Gal. 3:23-25). However, it has completely ceased to function as an authority over the individual. It is no longer the rule of life for believers.

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3. The Moral Law

The third point in the status of the Mosaic Covenant deals with the question, "What about the moral law?" It is this part of the Law of Moses that many generally try to retain and, therefore, conclude that the Law of Moses is still in effect. However, the moral law preceded the Law of Moses. The moral law is not identical to the Law of Moses. Adam and Eve broke the moral law long before Moses. Satan broke the moral law even before Adam. The Law of Moses embodied the moral law, but it did not originate the moral law. Now the moral law is embodied in the Law of the Messiah.

4. Matthew 5:17 18

The fourth point in the status of the Mosaic Covenant concerns a favorite objection to the teaching of the termination of the Law of Moses, which is the Messiah's statement in Matthew 5:17-18: *Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished.*

Those who cite this passage are seldom consistent with it. It is obvious that Yeshua was speaking of the Law of Moses. Yet those who use this passage never accept their own thesis since they must believe in the doing away in some form of many of the commandments of the Law of Moses, if not most. The commandments concerning priesthood and sacrifice are only one example; other examples including the food laws and clothing laws can be cited. Regardless of what semantics such as "supersede," "brought to greater fulfillment," "bringing out its true meaning," among others, may be used to describe this change, it is clear that a great many of the 613 commandments no longer apply as they were written. If, by the Law of Moses, they mean only the moral commandments, then their citation of Matthew 5:17-18 does not prove their point.

Verse 19 adds these least commandments, which includes more than merely the moral commandments and the emphasis is on the entire Law, all 613 commandments. Verse 19 reads: *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

Verse 19 must not be ignored. True, Jesus did come to fulfill the Law, but the Law of Moses did not end with the coming of the Messiah or by His life, but by His death. As long as He was alive, He was under the Mosaic Law and had to fulfill and obey every commandment applicable to Him, not in the way that the rabbis had reinterpreted it. The statement of Matthew 5:17-19 was made while He was living.

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Even while He was living, He already implied the doing away with the Law. One example is Mark 7:19: *This he said, making all meats clean.* Can it be any clearer than this that at least the dietary commandments have been done away with? Again, all must admit that great parts of the Law no longer apply in the manner prescribed by Moses. Have they been done away with or not? To constantly claim that the Law of Moses is still in effect or that it is the same as the Law of the Messiah, while ignoring the details of that same Law, is inconsistent and a theological fallacy.

As for the meaning of the word *fulfil*, the Greek term is consistently used by Matthew in reference to fulfilling prophecy and so bringing it to an end. Matthew 1:22-23 states that the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 was *fulfilled*, that this brought the prophecy to an end and so nothing in the future will fulfill it. To "fulfill" meant to accomplish what prophecy demanded while to "abolish" meant to fail to accomplish it.

5. The Law of Christ

The fifth point in the status of the Mosaic Covenant is that the Law of Moses has been disannulled and believers are now under a new Law. This new Law is called the law of Christ in Galatians 6:2 and the law of the Spirit of life in Romans 8:2. This is a brand new Law, totally separate from the Law of Moses. The Law of the Messiah contains all the individual commandments from the Messiah and the apostles that are applicable to a New Testament believer. The details on this period will be discussed under the New Covenant.

6. The Principle of Freedom

The sixth point in the status of the Mosaic covenant is that the believer in the Messiah is free from the Law of Moses. This means that he is free from the necessity of keeping any commandment of that system. On the other hand, he is also free to keep parts of the Law of Moses if he so desires. The biblical basis for this freedom to keep the Law can be seen in the actions of Paul, who was the greatest exponent of freedom from the Law. His vow in Acts 18:18 is based on Numbers 6:2, 5, 9, and 18. His desire to be in Jerusalem for Pentecost in Acts 20:16 is based on Deuteronomy 16:16. The strongest passage is Acts 21:17-26, where we see Paul himself, the apostle of freedom from the Law, keeping the Law. The believer is free from the Law, but he is also free to keep parts of it. Thus, if a Jewish believer feels the need to refrain from eating pork, he is free to do so. The same is true for all the other commandments.

However, there are two dangers that must be avoided by any believer who volunteers to keep commandments of the Law of Moses. One danger is the idea that by doing so he is contributing to his own justification and sanctification. This is false. The second danger is in one's expecting others to keep the same commandments he has decided to keep. This is equally wrong and borders on legalism. The

one who exercises his freedom to keep the Law must recognize and respect another's freedom not to keep it.

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7. The Sabbath

And the seventh point in the status of the Mosaic Covenant is that the Sabbath was the sign, seal, and token of the Mosaic Covenant. As long as that covenant was in effect, the Sabbath law was mandatory. Since the Law of Moses has been rendered inoperative, then the Sabbath command no longer applies. Those with their inconsistent insistence that the Law of Moses is still in effect, also insist that the Sabbath law applies. However, they totally ignore what Moses wrote about how to keep the Sabbath and they even change the day of the week, something that the Law of Moses does not allow. Many Jewish believers also insist on mandatory Sabbath keeping. Though they inconsistently base it on the Law of Moses, at least they retain it with the seventh day of the week. The apologetics used for mandatory Sabbath keeping are almost exclusively based upon the Old Testament for obvious reasons: there is no New Testament commandment for believers in general or Jewish believers in particular to keep the Sabbath. The claim that Sabbath observance is part of the New Covenant is nowhere supported by the New Covenant Scriptures themselves. In fact, if anything, they would teach the opposite.

VI. THE LAND COVENANT

For the lack of a better name, this covenant is commonly known as the Palestinian Covenant, for it largely concerns the land known for centuries as Palestine. This is now an unfortunate term for two reasons. First: it was a name given to the land by the Roman Emperor Hadrian after the Second Jewish Revolt under Bar Cochba (A.D. 132 135). His purpose was to erase any Jewish remembrance of the Land as part of his policy to "de judiaze" the Land. Second: due to the historical events in the Middle East in the history of modern Israel, the name is associated more with Arabs than with Jews. Perhaps a better title for this covenant would have been the "Land Covenant" since "Palestine" is not a biblical designation anyway. Thus, this study will refer to it as the Land Covenant, but it should be noted that this is the same as that which is called the "Palestinian Covenant" in many books.

A. Deuteronomy 29:1-30:20

Although this covenant is within the fifth book of Moses, Deuteronomy 29:1 clearly shows that the Land Covenant is distinct from the Mosaic Covenant: *These are the words of the covenant which Jehovah commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.*

Deuteronomy 30:1-10 describes some of the provisions of the Land Covenant: *And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you shall call them to*

mind among all the nations, whither Jehovah your God has driven you, and shall return unto Jehovah your God, to all that I command you this day, you and your children, with all your heart, and with all your soul; that then Jehovah your God will turn your captivity, and have compassion upon you, and will return and gather you from all the peoples, whither Jehovah your God has scattered you. If any of your outcasts be in the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will Jehovah your God gather you: and Jehovah your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and he will do you good, and multiply you above your fathers. And Jehovah your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, to love Jehovah your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live. And Jehovah your God will put all these curses upon your enemies, and on them that hate you, that persecuted you. And you shall return and obey the voice of Jehovah, and do all his commandments which I command you this day. And Jehovah your God will make you plenteous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, and in the fruit of your cattle, and in the fruit of your ground, for good: for Jehovah will again rejoice over you for good, as he rejoiced over your fathers; if you shall obey the voice of Jehovah your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law; if you turn unto Jehovah your God with all your heart, and with all your soul.

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B. The Participants in the Covenant

This covenant was made between God and Israel, the same two parties as in the Mosaic Covenant.

C. The Provisions of the Covenant

Eight provisions can be gleaned from this passage. First: Moses spoke prophetically of Israel's coming disobedience to the Mosaic Law and her subsequent scattering over all the world (29:2-30:1). All remaining provisions speak of various facets of Israel's final restoration. Second: Israel will repent (30:2). Third: the Messiah will return (v. 3a). Fourth: Israel will be regathered (vv. 3b-4). Fifth: Israel will possess the Promised Land (v. 5). Sixth: Israel will be regenerated (v. 6). Seventh: the enemies of Israel will be judges (v. 7). Eighth: Israel will receive full blessing; specifically, the blessings of the Messianic Age (vv. 8-20).

D. The Importance of the Covenant

The special importance of the Land Covenant is that it reaffirms the title deed to the Land as belonging to Israel. Although she would prove unfaithful and disobedient, the right to the Land would never be taken from her. Furthermore, it shows that the conditional Mosaic Covenant did not lay aside the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant. It might be taken by some that the Mosaic Covenant displaced the Abrahamic Covenant, but the Land Covenant shows that this is not true. The Land Covenant is an enlargement of the original Abrahamic Covenant. It amplifies the Land aspect and emphasizes the promise of the Land to God's earthly Jewish people in spite of their unbelief. The Abrahamic Covenant teaches that ownership for the Land is unconditional while the Land Covenant teaches that the enjoyment of the Land is conditioned on obedience.

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E. The Confirmation of the Covenant

The Land Covenant received its confirmation centuries later in Ezekiel 16:1-63. In this very important passage concerning God's relationship to Israel, God recounts His love of Israel in her infancy (vv. 1-7). Later, Israel was chosen by God and became related to Jehovah by marriage and hence became the Wife of Jehovah (vv. 8-14). However, Israel played the harlot and was guilty of spiritual adultery by means of idolatry (vv. 15-34); therefore, it was necessary to punish her by means of dispersion (vv. 35-52). However, this dispersion is not final, for there would be a future restoration on the basis of the Land Covenant (vv. 53-63). They were guilty of violating the Mosaic Covenant (vv. 53-59), but God will remember the covenant made with Israel in her youth (v. 60a) and will establish an everlasting covenant, the New Covenant (v. 60b) and this will result in Israel's salvation (vv. 61-63).

F. The Status of the Covenant

The Land Covenant, being an unconditional covenant, is still very much in effect.

VII. THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

A. Scripture

In the first passage, the emphasis is on Solomon in II Samuel 7:11b-16: *Moreover Jehovah tells you that Jehovah will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled, and you shall sleep with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, that shall proceed out of your bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before you: your throne shall be established for ever.*

The second account, where the emphasis is on the Messiah, is found in I Chronicles 17:10b-14: *Moreover I tell you that Jehovah will build you a house. And it shall come to pass, when your days are fulfilled that you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who shall be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me a house, and I will establish his throne for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him that was before you; but I will settle him in my house and in my kingdom for ever; and his throne shall be established for ever.*

B. The Participants in the Covenant

This covenant was made between God and David, who stands as the head of the Davidic House and Dynasty, the only rightful claimant to the Davidic Throne in Jerusalem.

C. The Provisions of the Covenant

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Careful study of both biblical accounts brings out the seven provisions of the Davidic Covenant. First: David is promised an eternal dynasty (II Sam. 7:11b, 16; I Chr. 17:10b). Nothing could ever destroy the House of David; it will always be in existence. Although it is unknown who they are, to this day somewhere in the Jewish world members of the House of David still exist.

Second: one of David's own sons, specifically Solomon, was to be established on the throne after David (II Sam. 7:12). Absalom and Adonijah, two of David's other sons, tried to usurp the throne; but Solomon, and Solomon alone, was to be established on David's throne.

Third: Solomon would build the Temple (II Sam. 7:13a). Although David had greatly desired to build God's Temple, his hands had shed much blood and he was guilty of murder at one point. Thus, he was forbidden to build the Temple, and the job would rest with his son, Solomon.

Fourth: the throne of David's kingdom was to be established for ever (II Sam. 7:13b, 16). It was not Solomon himself who was promised to be established for ever, but rather, the throne upon which he would sit.

Fifth: Solomon would be disciplined for disobedience, but God would not remove His *lovingkindness* (II Sam. 7:14-15). Earlier God did remove His *lovingkindness* from King Saul because of disobedience. But the promise is made that although Solomon may disobey and require God's discipline, God's *lovingkindness* will never depart from him. The word *lovingkindness* emphasized covenant loyalty. Solomon did fall into idolatry, the worst sin possible in Scripture. The sin of Saul was not as great as the sin of Solomon. Yet the kingdom was taken away from the House of Saul, but not the House of David. This shows the nature of an unconditional covenant. Solomon was under such a covenant, but Saul was not.

Sixth: the Messiah will come from the Seed of David (I Chr. 17:11). The emphasis in the II Samuel passage is on Solomon, but in the I Chronicles passage, it is on the Messiah. In the I Chronicles passage, God is not speaking of one of David's own sons to be established upon the throne *for ever*, but the Seed of one of his sons coming many years later.

Seventh: the Messiah and His *throne*, *house*, and *kingdom* will be established *for ever* (I Chr. 17:12-15). In this passage, it is the Person Himself that is established upon David's throne for ever, not merely the throne. Clearly, the emphasis in the I Chronicles passage is not on Solomon, but on the Messiah. That is why this passage does not mention the possibility of sin as the II Samuel passage does, for in the

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case of the Messiah no sin would be possible. The Messiah, as well as His *throne*, His *house*, and His *kingdom* are to be established *for ever*.
To summarize the Davidic Covenant, God promised David four eternal things: an eternal House or dynasty, an eternal Throne, an eternal Kingdom, and an eternal Descendant. The eternality of the House, Throne, and Kingdom is guaranteed because the Seed of David culminates in One who is Himself eternal: the Messianic God Man.

D. The Importance of the Covenant

The unique importance of the Davidic Covenant is that it amplifies the Seed aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant. According to the Abrahamic Covenant, the Messiah was to be of the Seed of Abraham. This merely stated that He was to be a Jew and could be of any of the Twelve Tribes. Later, in the time of Jacob, the Seed aspect was limited to a member of the Tribe of Judah only (Gen. 49:10). Now the Messianic Seed aspect is further narrowed to one family within the Tribe of Judah, the family of David.

Thus there has been a gradual narrowing of the Seed. According to the Edenic Covenant, the Messiah must be of the Seed of the woman, but this meant He could come from any part of humanity. According to the Abrahamic Covenant, He had to come out of Jewish humanity, which meant He could come out of any tribe of Israel. With the confirmation of this covenant, through Jacob's twelve sons, He now had to come out of the Tribe of Judah, but this permits Him to come from any family of Judah. With the Davidic Covenant, the Messiah had to come from the seed of David. It will be narrowed one step further in Jeremiah 22:24-30, which shows the Messiah had to come from the House of David, but apart from Jeconiah.

E. The Confirmation of the Covenant

In a number of other passages, the Davidic Covenant received further confirmation: II Samuel 23:1-5; Psalm 89:1-52; Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 30:8-9; 33:14-17, 19-26; Ezekiel 37:24-25; Hosea 3:4- 5; Amos 9:11; Luke 1:30-35, 68-70; and Acts 15:14-18.

F. The Status of the Covenant

The Davidic Covenant is also an unconditional covenant and is still very much in effect as an eternal covenant.

VIII. THE NEW COVENANT

A. Scripture

A number of passages speak of or relate to the New Covenant and many of these will be referenced below. But the foundational passage is Jeremiah 31:31 34: *Behold, the days come, says Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according*

to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke, although I was a husband unto them, says Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.

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B. The Participants in the Covenant

This covenant is made between God and Israel, and it receives further confirmation in other passages including: Isaiah 55:3; 59:21; 61:8-9; Jeremiah 32:40; Ezekiel 16:60; 34:25-31; 37:26-28; and Romans 11:26-27.

C. The Provisions of the Covenant

From the original covenant, its various confirmations, and its inauguration in the New Testament, a total of nine provisions can be listed.

First: it is an unconditional covenant involving God and both Houses of Israel (Jer. 31:31). It is not made merely between Judah and God or between Israel and God, but included both Houses of Israel; hence, it includes the entire Jewish nation: the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It should be noted that it is not made with the Church.

Second: it is clearly distinct from the Mosaic Covenant (Jer. 31:32). It is not merely a further elaboration of the Mosaic Covenant, but it is distinct from it. It is ultimately to replace the Mosaic Covenant that was now considered broken.

Third: it promises the regeneration of Israel (Jer. 31:33; Is. 59:21). The key aspect of this entire covenant is the blessing of salvation, which included Israel's national regeneration.

Fourth: the regeneration of Israel is to be universal among all Jews (Jer. 31:34a; Is.61:9). The national salvation is to extend to every individual Jewish person, and it is to be true through succeeding generations from the time that the initial regeneration of Israel occurs. Thus, during the Kingdom, the unregenerate people will all be Gentiles; in the entire period of the Kingdom, there will be no unsaved Jews. That is the reason there will be no need for one Jew to say to another *know the Lord*, for they shall all know Him.

Fifth: there is provision for the forgiveness of sin (Jer. 31:34b). The New Covenant will do the very thing that the Mosaic Covenant was unable to do. The Mosaic Covenant was able only to cover the sins of Israel, but the New Covenant will take them away. This is a corollary blessing to the blessing of salvation.

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Sixth: there is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:27). The reason Israel failed to keep the Law under the Mosaic Covenant was that the people lacked the power to comply with the righteous standards of God. The Mosaic Law did not provide the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; that was not its purpose. But the New Covenant will do just that, and every Jew will be enabled to do the righteous work of God. This is a blessing resulting from the blessing of salvation.

Seventh: Israel will be showered with material blessings (Is. 61:8; Jer. 32:41; Ezek. 34:25-27). The Mosaic Law did provide material blessings for obedience, but for the most part, Israel was in disobedience because of her failure to keep the Law. However, such failure will not exist under the New Covenant. Along with Israel's regeneration and empowerment to keep the Law, material blessings will be given by the Lord.

Eighth: the Sanctuary will be rebuilt (Ezek. 37:26-28). The Mosaic Covenant provided for the building of the Tabernacle. The Davidic Covenant provided for the building of the First Temple by Solomon. The New Covenant will provide for the building of the Messianic or Millennial Temple. This Temple will be a continual reminder to Israel of all that God has done.

Ninth: just as the Mosaic Covenant contained the Law of Moses, the New Covenant contains the Law of the Messiah (Rom. 8:2; Gal. 6:2). Like the Law of Moses, the Law of the Messiah contains many individual commandments that are applicable to the New Testament believer. These commandments were given either by Yeshua directly or by the apostles. A simple comparison of the details will show that it is not and cannot be the same as the Law of Moses. Four observations are worth noting. First, many commandments are the same as those of the Law of Moses. For example, nine of the Ten Commandments are also in the Law of the Messiah. But, second, many are different from the Law of Moses. For example, there is no Sabbath law now (Rom. 14:5; Col. 2:16) and no dietary code (Mk. 7:19; Rom. 14:20). Third, some commandments in the Law of Moses are intensified by the Law of the Messiah. For example, the Law of Moses said: *love your neighbor as yourself* (Lev. 19:18); this made man the standard. The Law of the Messiah said: *love one another, even as I have loved you* (Jn. 15:12); this makes the Messiah the standard and He loved man enough to die for him. Fourth, the Law of the Messiah provides a new motivation. For example, the Law of Moses was based on the conditional Mosaic Covenant and so the motivation was: Do, in order to be blessed. The Law of the Messiah is based on the unconditional New Covenant and so the motivation is: You have been and are blessed, therefore, do. The reason there is so much confusion over the relationship of the Law of Moses and the Law of the Messiah is that many commandments are

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similar to those found in the Mosaic Law, and many have concluded that certain sections of the Law have therefore been retained. It has already been shown that this cannot be the case, and the explanation for the sameness of the commandments is to be found elsewhere.

This explanation can best be understood if it is realized that there are a number of codes in the Bible, such as the Edenic Code, Adamic Code, Noahic Code, Mosaic Code, New Code, and Kingdom Code. A new code may contain some of the same commandments of the previous code, but this does not mean that the previous code is still in effect. While certain of the commandments of the Adamic Code were also found in the Edenic Code, it did not mean that the Edenic Code was still partially in force; it ceased to function with the Fall of Man. The same is true when we compare the Law of the Messiah with the Law of Moses. There are many similar commandments. For example, nine of the Ten Commandments are to be found in the Law of the Messiah, but this does not mean that the Law of Moses is still in force. The Law of Moses has been rendered inoperative and we are now under the Law of the Messiah. There are many different commandments. For example, under the Law of Moses, we would not be permitted to eat pork, but under the Law of the Messiah, we may. There are many similar commandments, but they are nonetheless in two separate systems. If we do not kill or steal today, it is not because of the Law of Moses but because of the Law of the Messiah. On the other hand, if someone steals, he is not guilty of breaking the Law of Moses, but of breaking the Law of the Messiah. The present obligation to obey the Law of the Messiah is due to the present outworking of the New Covenant.

D. The Importance of the Covenant

The importance of the New Covenant is that it amplifies the Blessing aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant, especially in relationship to salvation. It finally shows how the spiritual blessings of the Jewish covenants extend to the Gentiles.

E. The Relationship of the Church to the New Covenant

It is at this point that some confusion has arisen as to the relationship of the Church to the New Covenant. According to Jeremiah, the covenant is made, not with the Church, but with Israel. Nevertheless, a number of Scriptures connect the New Covenant with the Church (Mat. 26:28; Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:14-20; I Cor. 11:25; II Cor. 3:6; Heb. 7:22; 8:6-13; 9:15; 10:16, 29; 12:24; 13:20).

The most popular solution in church history has been the theology of replacement or transference, which teaches that the Church has replaced Israel in its covenantal standing. Thus, the covenant promises are now being fulfilled in, by, and through the Church. It is obvious, however, that they are not being fulfilled literally and so they teach

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that the intent was for them to be fulfilled spiritually. But this solution requires an allegorical interpretation of the covenants and requires the ignoring of all the details such as the Land promises.

This view has rightly been rejected by those who accept a literal approach to the covenants and these have offered two other solutions. First: some writers teach that there are two new covenants, one made with the Church and one made with Israel. This view is not supported by the teachings of Scripture. Second: others have said that there is only one covenant but that it has two aspects, one related to Israel and one related to the Church. Yet nothing in the covenant seems to teach that there are two completely different aspects. Furthermore, even those who hold this view are unable to say which aspect relates to the Church and which relates to Israel.

Actually, the solution is not so difficult, for it is clearly explained in two passages. The first is Ephesians 2:11-16: *Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both one, and broke down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:*

The second passages is Ephesians 3:5 6: *which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it has now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*

This could be called the "partaker view." The point of these passages is that God made four unconditional covenants with Israel: the Abrahamic Covenant, the Land Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant. All of God's blessings, both physical and spiritual, are mediated by means of these four covenants. However, there is also a fifth covenant, the conditional Mosaic Covenant. This was the middle wall of partition. Essentially, it kept the Gentiles from enjoying the spiritual blessings of the four unconditional covenants. For a Gentile to begin receiving the blessings of the unconditional covenants, he had to totally submit to the Mosaic Law, undergo circumcision, take upon himself the obligations of the Law, and, for all practical purposes, live as a son of Abraham. Gentiles, as Gentiles, were not able to enjoy the spiritual blessings of the Jewish covenants; hence, they were strangers from the commonwealth of Israel. They

did not receive any of the spiritual benefits contained in the covenants. However, when the Messiah died, the Mosaic Law, the middle wall of partition, was broken down. Now by faith Gentiles, as Gentiles, can enjoy the spiritual blessings of the four unconditional covenants. That is why Gentiles today are partakers of Jewish spiritual blessings, not "takers over."

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The concept of partaking is also found in Romans 11:17: *But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them, and did become partaker with them of the root of the fatness of the olive tree;* The Olive Tree represents the place of spiritual blessings of the Jewish Covenants. The types of branches partaking of the blessings: natural branches, which are the Jewish believers; wild olive branches, which are the Gentile believers.

However, the Olive Tree itself still belongs to Israel according to verse 24: *For if you were cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?*

The relationship of the Church to the New Covenant is the same as the Church's relationship to the Abrahamic Covenant, the Land Covenant, and the Davidic Covenant. The physical promises of the Abrahamic Covenant, as amplified by the Land and Davidic Covenants, were promised exclusively to Israel. However, the Blessing aspect, as amplified by the New Covenant, was to include the Gentiles. The Church is enjoying the spiritual blessings of these covenants, not the material and physical benefits. The physical promises still belong to Israel and will be fulfilled exclusively with Israel, especially those involving the Land. However, all spiritual benefits are now being shared by the Church. This is the Church's relationship to these four unconditional covenants between God and Israel.

The blood of the Messiah is the basis of salvation in the New Covenant and this was shed at the cross. The blood of the Messiah ratified, signed, and sealed the New Covenant (Heb. 8:1-10:18). The provisions of the New Covenant cannot be fulfilled in, by, or through the Church, but have to be filled in, by, and through Israel. It is true that the Covenant is not now being fulfilled with Israel, but this does not mean it is therefore being fulfilled with the Church. Again, not all provisions go immediately into effect. The Church is related to the New covenant only insofar as receiving the spiritual benefits of the Covenant, such as the salvation benefit, but the Church is not fulfilling it. The Church has become a partaker of Jewish spiritual blessings, but the Church is not a taker over of the Jewish covenants. The Church partakes of the spiritual blessings and promises, but not the material or physical blessings.

F. The Gentile Obligation

The fact that Gentile believers have become partakers of Jewish spiritual blessings places an obligation on them according to Romans 15:25-27: *but now, I say. I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints. For it has been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem. Yea, it has been their good pleasure and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them to minister unto them in carnal things.*
As Paul came close to ending his letter to the Romans, he spelled out his immediate plans. In verse 25, he explained why he could not come to them immediately. While he had expressed a long term desire to go to Rome in chapter 1, his desire was subject to his duty, which was to collect an offering and take it to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. This special offering is spoken of elsewhere in I Corinthians 16:1 4 and II Corinthians 8-9. In verse 26, Paul named the contributors and the recipients of the offering. The Gentile believers of Macedonia and Achaia had given the money, which was specifically for the poor Jewish believers of the City of Jerusalem in the Land of Israel. In verse 27, Paul taught Gentile indebtedness to the Jews. He clearly stated that Gentiles are debtors to the Jews and then gave the reason for this: Gentiles have become fellow partakers of Jewish spiritual blessings. Earlier, in Romans 11, Paul taught that the Gentiles have become partakers of spiritual blessings, but these are Jewish spiritual blessings that are mediated through the Jewish covenants. The very fact that Gentiles have been made partakers of Jewish spiritual blessings has put them into debt to the Jews. According to this verse, the way they pay their indebtedness to Jewish believers is to minister to them in material things.

G. The Status of the Covenant

In relationship to the Church, then, the New Covenant is the basis of the Dispensation of Grace. In relationship to Israel, the New Covenant is the basis for the Dispensation of the Kingdom.

The New Covenant itself is an unconditional covenant and therefore eternally in effect.

CONCLUSION

All spiritual blessings are for believers in the Messiah, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. And through His death on the cross for their sins, believers reap spiritual benefits that would never be theirs otherwise. The eight covenants of the Bible are very explicit in their provisions and are valuable for a proper understanding of Scripture.✡

NOTES

IF YOU ENJOYED THIS BIBLE STUDY, DR. FRUCHTENBAUM RECOMMENDS:
MBS30, 034, 037 and 041