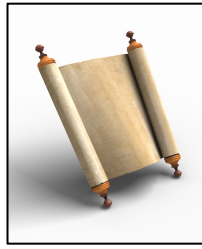


The Covenants: God Is Faithful to His Promises - Part 2



- Do you struggle with trusting God when you are facing difficulty?
- Have you learned to take special note of God's promises in His Word and claim the promises?
- If you were asked to make a list of the promises of God to you, what promises would you be able to list?

The Bible repeatedly reminds us that God is faithful to His promises (Exodus 34:6; Psalm 36:5; 57:10; 71:22; 86:15; 89:1-2, 5, 8, 14; 100:5). God is pleased when we have faith in Him (Heb. 11:6). Sometimes God allows us to experience hardship to test us and to develop our faith in His faithfulness. *Have you learned to claim God's promises and trust in His faithfulness?*

A study of the covenants of God helps us in several ways:

1. It helps us to better understand **GOD'S NATURE**—He is faithful (as well as being holy, loving, merciful, just, all-powerful, all-knowing, etc.). We need to know God's attributes.
2. It teaches us the important lesson about **TRUSTING God's faithfulness** especially when we are facing hard times. When we are tempted to doubt God's concern for us and think He has forgotten about us—we are strengthened when we remind ourselves of God's faithfulness and patiently wait for God's time to intervene in our problems.
3. It helps us see the "**BIG PICTURE**" of God's plan of redemption and the end times. The various covenants form a thread that runs through the story of the Bible. God made unconditional promises to humanity and Israel. To date, these promises have been partially fulfilled. They will be fully and literally fulfilled in the end times. We need to learn to trust God for our present life situations as well as trust Him with the future.

The Central Lesson
God can be trusted because He is faithful to His promises.

What Are Covenants?

Throughout the Bible, we read about God making "covenants" with different individuals. A covenant is a *contract between two or more individuals who agree to abide by specific terms*. Both the Hebrew and Greek words used in the Bible for "covenant" mean "an agreement" or "an arrangement." In the Bible, God binds Himself to His people through covenants to keep specific promises. There are two kinds of covenants: **conditional** and **unconditional**.

- The *conditional* covenant is a covenant where God fulfills His promise only if His people live up to their end of the agreement. The conditional covenants are the **Edenic** and **Mosaic** covenants.
- The *unconditional* covenant is a covenant where God fulfills His promise regardless of the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of His people. This type of covenant is characterized by God saying: "*I will....*" The unconditional covenants are the **Adamic, Noachic, Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New** Covenants.

The Eight Major Covenants of God

REVIEW from Part 1

1. **The Edenic Covenant: PERFECTION.**
2. **The Adamic Covenant: the CURSE & REDEMPTION.**
3. **The Noachic Covenant: the Preservation of HUMANITY.**
4. **The Abrahamic Covenant: God's Blessing on ISRAEL & the WORLD.**

5. **The Mosaic Covenant: Israel's OBEDIENCE to the Law** (God's *conditional promise* to make Israel His representative if they obey Him. Exodus 19:5-6. Also Exodus 20-23; Deuteronomy 28).

Tim LaHaye writes: "This covenant was given exclusively and only to the nation of Israel (Psalm 147:19-20) and was fulfilled through the ministry of Jesus Christ during His first advent (Matthew 5:17). It is a conditional covenant that was designed to teach Israel how to please God as His chosen nation.... The church-age believer is not in any way, shape, or form under the obligations of the Mosaic Law, but under the unconditional law of Christ and the Spirit (Romans 3:21-27; 6:14-15; Galatians 2:16; 3:10, 16-18, 24-26; 4:21-31; Hebrews 10:11-17)." (*Charting the End Times*, p.79).

The Mosaic Covenant did not change the conditions of the Abrahamic Covenant but was an addendum for a limited time only—until Christ came (Read Galatians 3:17-19, 24-25). The Mosaic Covenant was conditional to Israel. They repeatedly violated the covenant and it is no longer operative.

The Mosaic Covenant contained 613 specific commands to govern every area of life in Israel—marriage, sex, hygiene, diet, national finance, welfare, government and political alliances. The sign of the covenant was the Sabbath (which is the only commandment of the 10 commandments that is not carried over to the New Testament Epistles as binding to N.T. Believers). Many have insisted that the N.T. believer is obligated to keep the laws of the Mosaic Covenant (Read Acts 15:5-11, esp. v.5) but the purpose of the N.T. book of Galatians was to combat this mistaken idea (Gal. 3:24-25).

The Mosaic Covenant was impossible for Israel or any human to keep (Read Acts 15:10). God knew this and had a purpose for the Mosaic Covenant:

- To teach Israel that **God is holy**.
- To teach Israel the **seriousness of sin**.
- To teach Israel that **God's standard of righteousness is perfection**.
- To teach Israel that **no one can save themselves** by their good works or efforts. People need a Savior (Galatians 3:24-25).

The formal conditions of the Mosaic Covenant is given in Exodus 19:5-6. "*5 Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me. 6 And you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation.' This is the message you must give to the people of Israel.*" NLT

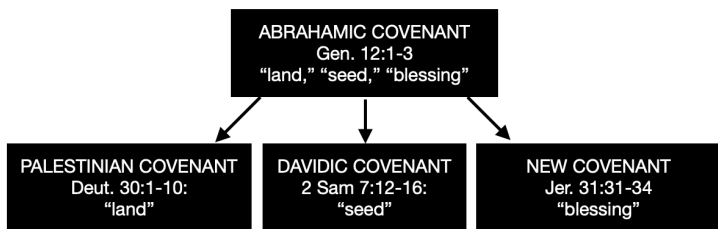
God's condition: *obey me fully, keep my covenant.* **God's promise:**

- God would make Israel His **treasured possession**.
- God would make Israel His **kingdom of priests**.
- God would make Israel His **holy nation**.

The death penalty was to be imposed for: murder, adultery, breaking the Sabbath, rebellion against parents, witchcraft, sorcery, spiritism, kidnapping and sexual perversion (including homosexuality and bestiality). Israel was to learn that the wages of sin is death! **The 10 Commandments is a summation of the Law.** The specific Laws are given throughout the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Even though the Mosaic Covenant was just for Israel, the sins listed under the covenant are still sins today.

Does the O.T. Law Have Relevance Today?

The Mosaic Covenant does not apply today but in some ways the O.T. Law does. The O.T. Law is still **the standard for morality**. It is still God's **basis for determining right from wrong**. The sins listed under the Mosaic Covenant are still sin today. Stealing, lying, murder, adultery, homosexuality, fraud, witchcraft, abuse, etc., are still sin and have destructive consequences. Christians are not under the Mosaic Law, but they still need to avoid the sins mentioned in the Law. Christians can't fulfill the terms of the Mosaic Covenant (not even Israel could do that), but Christians do need to avoid the painful consequences of sin and seek to please God. Don't discard the O.T. Law as having no application for your life today. The sins listed in the O.T. Law are still sin even though the Mosaic Covenant does not apply to you.



6. Palestinian Covenant: Israel's POSSESSION of the Entire Promised LAND (God's unconditional promise that Israel will occupy their Promised Land. Deuteronomy 30:1-10).

The Palestinian Covenant is an expansion of the Abrahamic Covenant concerning Israel's occupation of the Middle East from the **river of Egypt** to the **Euphrates River** (Gen. 15:18), also called "Canaan" (Gen. 17:8). This extensive geographic area has NEVER been fully occupied by the descendants of Abraham. This prophecy has NOT been totally fulfilled. It was interrupted by Israel's disobedience to God and subsequent dispersion into the world nations as predicted in Deuteronomy 30:1-10. This promise began to be fulfilled on May 14, 1948 when the Jews returned to Jerusalem and became a nation once again. This promise will not be completely fulfilled until the Millennium.

7. The Davidic Covenant: the REIGN of the MESSIAH (God's unconditional promise to David—2 Samuel 7:8-16).

This covenant is the foundation upon which the future millennial kingdom of Christ is founded. God promised David three things:

- A **house** (the continuation of David's dynasty or royal family—ultimately pointing to the Messiah—v.11).
- A **throne** (David's family will rule forever—ultimately through the Messiah—v.13).
- A **kingdom** (the nation of Israel will exist eternally—ultimately under the rule of the Messiah—v.16).

These promises to David are all ultimately fulfilled by Jesus Christ during the Millennium. Jesus is a descendant of David as shown by the genealogies recorded by both Matthew (1:1-17, esp. v.6 and 17) and Luke (3:23-38, esp. v.31). The angel Gabriel announced the birth of Jesus and added: *"³³ ...The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"* NLT (Luke 1:26-35, esp. vs.32-33). The prophet Isaiah foretold of the Messiah's endless reign and of sitting on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6-7). The Davidic Covenant proves that the Millennium is a literal time where Christ will rule over the literal, earthly, political kingdom of David's nation—Israel.

The Davidic Covenant is unconditional. David had to do nothing to make its provisions come to pass. It is entirely dependent on God to fulfill it.

8. The New Covenant: Forgiveness, the Holy Spirit's INDWELLING, and a NEW Heart (God's unconditional promise to Israel to forgive their sins, indwell their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and create a new heart in them—Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:24-38).

The purpose of the New Covenant is mainly to prepare Israel for the Millennial Kingdom. The New Covenant was established between God and Israel: *"The day is coming," says the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah.'" NLT (Jeremiah 31:31).* Also, several other O.T. passages confirm that the New Covenant is between God and the nation of Israel: Isaiah 59:20-21; Jeremiah 50:4-5; Ezekiel 34:25-30; 37:21-28.

God's New Covenant promise to Israel had at least four main parts and will ultimately be fulfilled in the Millennium:

- God's law in **their minds** and **on their hearts** (Jer. 31:33-34).
- The **forgiveness** of sins (Jer. 31:34; Eze. 36:25, 33).
- The **indwelling of the Holy Spirit** (Eze. 36:26-27).
- A **new heart** (Eze. 36:26).

The New Covenant is unconditional and God specifically states that He will fulfill it regardless of Israel's disobedience (Ezekiel 36:16-23, 36).

Are N.T. Christians Included in the New Covenant?

The O.T. is silent concerning the Church. The Church is a revelation given to the Apostles and N.T. prophets (Eph. 3:2-9). The N.T. indicates that the Church is tied to the New Covenant: Christians enjoy the benefits of the New Covenant through Christ's blood (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25) and experience the features of the New Covenant through faith in Christ—

- **God's law is in the Christian's mind & heart** (2 Cor. 3:3; Rom. 7:22).
- **Their sins are forgiven** (Eph. 1:7; 4:32; Col. 1:14).
- **They are in-dwelt with the Holy Spirit** (1 Cor. 6:19).
- **They have a new heart & transformed life** (2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 3:5).

Also, the book of Hebrews teaches that the New Covenant is superior to all the old covenants (Heb. 8:6) because it provides a **better priesthood** (compare Lev. 16:6 with Heb. 7:26-28) and provides a **better sacrifice** (Heb. 9:11-14).

Conclusion

God can be trusted because He is faithful to His promises. We need to learn to trust God for our present life situations as well as trust Him with the future. *Have you learned to claim God's promises and trust in His faithfulness?*