

Covenant Relationships

Defined: Cov-e-nant

1. A solemn agreement that is binding on all parties
2. LAW - legally **binding agreement**: a formal and legally binding agreement or contract such as a lease, or one of the clauses in an agreement of this kind. A covenant is often used to require an owner or user of a parcel of land to do, or refrain from doing, something.
3. LAW - **lawsuit for breach of agreement**: a lawsuit for damages that is brought because of the breaking of a legal covenant
4. BIBLE - **Mutual promises of God and Israelites**: Promises made in the Bible between God and the Israelites, who agreed to worship no other gods
5. **To agree in covenant**: to promise something in a covenant [13th century. From Old French, the present participle of *convenir* "to agree"]

Divine-Human Covenants The same basic characteristics of a strictly human covenant are present in a divine covenant: (1) a relationship between two parties (God and a human being or nation), and (2) mutual obligations between the covenant partners. To the OT believer, "religion" meant "covenant". OT religion was faithfulness to the covenant relationship between God and his chosen people; religious responsibilities for both the faith and practice of Israel were covenant responsibilities.

The concept of a divine-human covenant in the OT was not static. Although the fundamental character of covenant remains the same throughout the Bible, the specific nature and form of the covenant changed and developed in the course of ancient Israel's history. A brief survey of covenant history will further clarify its dimensions:

1. **God's covenant with all repenting sinners to save them through Christ.** This covenant is unconditional (no strings attached). See Titus 1:1–2; Heb. 13:20
2. **The covenant with Adam** - Gen. 1:28; 2:15–16; 3:15–19
 - a. Before the Fall — that he could remain in Eden as long as he obeyed. This was conditional.
 - b. After the Fall — that God would someday send a Savior. This was unconditional.
3. **The covenant with Noah** - Gen. 8:21–22
 - a. That the earth would not be destroyed by water again.
 - b. That the seasons would continue until the end. This was unconditional.
4. **God made a personal covenant with Abraham** – and as a result, made one with us through Christ - Gen. 15:7-18; 17:2-14; Luke 1:72-75; Act 3:25; Gal. 3:16
5. **The covenant with Isaac.** Ge 17:19,21; 26:3,4.
6. **The covenant with Jacob.** Ge 28:13,14; 1Ch 16:16,17.
7. **The covenant with Israel.** Ex 6:4; Ac 3:25.
8. **The covenant with David.** 2Sa 23:5; Ps 89:3,4.

The two key-words in the Bible for covenant or alliance are Heb. *b^ori* and Gk. *diathēkē*. *b^ori* usually refers to the act or rite of the making of a covenant and also to the standing contract between two partners.

Blood Covenant - Involves Blood sacrifice - - between God and man (OT – Animals--NT – Christ) between friends and/or brothers (to "cut" covenant), between a husband and wife. We sacrifice for one another as well – though not through literal blood, but by His blood as children of the King – by our word as our bond.

Exodus 24:8 And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words."

Hebrews 9:20-22 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you."

21 Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry.

22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

Hebrews 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

New Covenant — the new agreement God has made with mankind, based on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The concept of a new covenant originated with the promise of the prophet Jeremiah that God would accomplish for His people what the old covenant had failed to do (Jer. 31:31–34). Under this new covenant, God would write His Law on **human hearts**. *This promised action suggested a new level of obedience, a new knowledge of the Lord, and a new forgiveness of sin.*

Covenant Is About Relationships

1 Samuel 20:16-17 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "Let the Lord require it at the hand of David's enemies." Now Jonathan again caused David to vow, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

1 Samuel 23:18 So the two of them made a covenant before the Lord. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house.

Covenant Of Salt - A Biblical phrase for a **two-way agreement**, the inviolability of which was symbolized by salt. A Middle Eastern saying, "There is bread and salt between us," meant that a relationship had been confirmed by sharing a meal. Salt symbolized the life and enduring nature of the alliance. In the OT salt appears in the relationship between God and Israel (Lev 2:13). As a purifying agent and preservative in the cereal offering, salt symbolized the indissoluble nature of the covenant between God and Israel.

An everlasting "covenant of salt" (Num. 18:19) was made between God and Aaron, who represented the whole priesthood of Israel. Since the Levites received no inheritance in the Promised Land, God himself was to be their special portion forever. God's covenant with King David and his sons was also called a covenant of salt (2 Chr. 13:5).

Human Covenants - *A variety of human relationships, from profoundly personal to distantly political, may be described as covenantal.* The deep brotherly love that David and Jonathan shared led to a formal covenant between them (1 Sam. 18:3). Their covenant of friendship was more than a token of esteem; it bound them to demonstrate mutual loyalty and loving-kindness in certain tangible ways. Jonathan's covenant faithfulness was typified on an occasion when David was out of favor with the king; Jonathan braved his father's wrath to speak favorably for his friend. Subsequently, he warned David secretly to flee into hiding (1 Sam. 19–20).

To appreciate the many OT laws on marriage and divorce, one must understand that marriage itself was a covenant relationship (Mal 2:14). The solemn promises exchanged by a man and woman became their covenant obligations. Faithfulness to those promises brought marital blessing (cf. Ps 128; Prov. 18:22); violation brought a curse.

An individual could, at least figuratively, make a covenant or vow with himself or herself (something like a New Year's resolution). Job, arguing his integrity before God, referred to a covenant he had made with his eyes to keep him from looking at women licentiously (Job 31:1).

Covenants could also have a national or international character. The elders of Israel made a national covenant with King David in Hebron (2 Sam 5:3). Probably it contained explicit promises both from the elders on behalf of the people to submit themselves to the king's authority and from David to rule the nation justly and according to the law of God (Deut 17:15–20). The covenant relationship described mutual obligations between a senior partner (the king) and junior partners (the Israelites). In international relationships, OT covenants were similar to modern treaties or alliances. King Solomon entered into such a covenant with Hiram, king of Tyre; that covenant, like many modern international treaties, was a trade agreement between the two nations (1 Kings 5:12).

Covenant is thus an interpersonal framework of trust, responsibilities, and benefits with broad application to almost every human relationship from personal friendship to international trade agreements. In Scripture covenant is also the most comprehensive concept covering an individual's relationship to God.

Psalms 24:14 – The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant.

Examples Of How God Joins People:

1 Samuel 10:26 And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and **valiant** (brave, courageous, heroic, fearless, noble, gallant, bold) men went with him, whose hearts **God** had touched.

1 Chronicles 12:38 All these men of war, who could keep ranks, came to Hebron with a **loyal heart**, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest of Israel were of **one mind** to make David king.

1 Corinthians 12:18 But now **God** has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as **He** pleased.

Q) Does God move people? Yes

Q) Does God join people to specific pastors? Yes

Q) Are you bound to attend one church or have one pastor the rest of your life? No