

## Chapter One

### The Organizing Principle of the Bible: The Covenants

Since the kingdom of God is one of the major themes of Scripture, it is important to understand as much as we can about it. To understand a nation's government one studies its constitution, and the covenants of the Bible are the constitution of God's kingdom.<sup>1</sup> To study the covenants is to learn the principles by which God administers his kingdom and to trace the covenants throughout the Bible is to follow the course of the re-establishment of God's kingdom.<sup>2</sup> The covenants divide Biblical history into epochs<sup>3</sup> in which the same pattern of events repeats itself and therefore gives the plot of the Bible its structure. In addition, an analysis of the covenants of Scripture provides a theological framework for understanding the Bible and insights into how it all fits together. From the covenants we learn the principles by which God deals with mankind.

#### An Important Discovery

In 1954-55 two scholars, George Mendenhall and Klaus Baltzer, independently made a discovery which has had a profound impact on subsequent Biblical scholarship.<sup>4</sup> Mendenhall, a professor at the University of Michigan, and Baltzer, a doctoral candidate at the University of Heidelberg studying under Gerhard von Rad, both discovered that the Mosaic Covenant found in Exodus 20, what we know as the Ten Commandments<sup>5</sup>, was given in the literary form of contemporary international treaties.<sup>6</sup> From this initial observation have come many additional

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<sup>1</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Foundations for a Covenantal World View* (Overland Park, Kansas, 2000), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Kline, *Kingdom*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Kline, *Kingdom*, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Klaus Baltzer, *The Covenant Formulary: In Old Testament, Jewish, and Early Christian Writings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), xi.

<sup>5</sup> The phrase "Ten Commandments" is never used in the original languages of the Bible (M. J. Selman, "Law," *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, 500). When versions of the Bible use the term "the Ten Commandments" in passages such as Exodus 34:28, the Hebrew is "the ten words," from the Greek translation of which comes the word "decalogue" (J. W. Marshall, "Decalogue," *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, 171).

<sup>6</sup> The very first mention of the similarity between covenant and treaty was made by D. J. Wiseman in a paper he read before the Society for Old Testament Studies in January, 1948 (Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963], 13). This was followed by E. Bickerman's "Coupe une alliance" *Archife d'histoire du droit oriental* 5 (1951) 153f (Philip J. Calderone, *Dynastic Oracle and Suzerainty Treaty: 2 Samuel 7, 8-16* [Manila: Loyola, 1966], 11); George E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East*

insights which can greatly enriched our understanding of the message of the Bible.

### **The Historical Background**

The Near East of Moses' day was very different from what it is today. In almost every era of ancient history there was one empire which dominated the region. At the time of the patriarchs it was the Hittite empire. It was followed by the empires of Assyria, Babylon, Media and Persia, Greece, and Rome. At various times Egypt also extended its sphere of influence into the Middle East and controlled Palestine.

The Near East at this time was filled with city-kingdoms, each with its own king. A typical city-kingdom was by modern standards a small walled town surrounded by unprotected fields and villages which were dependent upon it. The ancient cities of the Near East are still visible today as tells, mounds where a city was rebuilt time after time on its previous ruins. As an example of the tenacity with which the citizens of a city would keep rebuilding their city, the tell of the ancient city of Jericho is sixty feet high with the occupation of the site going back to about 7000 B.C. The political allegiance of the individual citizen was to his city and his religious commitment was to the gods of his city.<sup>7</sup>

It was relatively easy for the all-powerful emperor either to conquer these city-kingdoms or to coerce them without bloodshed to come under his dominion. But once he had them under his control, his challenge was how to control and administer them. Throughout ancient history down to the time of the Romans, the same general method was usually employed. The emperor would make a treaty with each city king. The emperor was called the "suzerain" or "the great king" and the king of the city became his vassal. Thus the treaties are referred to as suzerainty treaties when looked at from the point of view of the suzerain, or as vassal treaties when looked at from the viewpoint of the king of a city. The two terms can be used interchangeably or sometimes the treaties are referred to as suzerain-vassal treaties. (There were other types of treaties as well which will be introduced as we meet them.)<sup>8</sup>

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(Pittsburgh: Biblical Colloquium, 1955), reprinted from *Biblical Archaeologist* 17 (1954) 26-46, 49-76; Klaus Baltzer's book *The Covenant Formulary* is the English translation of his *Das Bundesformular* (Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament, No. 4, ed. Gunther Bornkamm and Gerhard von Rad; 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964) which summarizes his original dissertation.

<sup>7</sup> Delbert R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1969), 25-26.

<sup>8</sup> Treaties were a universal means of creating and regulating relationships between different social groups throughout the ancient Near East (George E. Mendenhall and Gary A. Herion, "Covenant," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 1:1180).

International treaties appeared soon after writing was developed.<sup>9</sup> Over eighty suzerainty treaties have come down to us. Approximately fifty of these were from the Hittite empire in Anatolia, modern day Turkey. The Hittite kingdom was contemporaneous to Moses and it will be demonstrated below that as a result, its treaties are of special importance for understanding the covenants which God made with Moses.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Significance of the Treaties**

The treaties were the suzerain's means of administering his empire. They created relationships which had not previously existed.<sup>11</sup> In a treaty the suzerain declared his lordship over a vassal people, imposing his authority over them.<sup>12</sup> The treaty was not negotiated. The great king simply offered his terms. The king of a city could either accept it or, by refusing to do so, risk war with the all-powerful suzerain.<sup>13</sup> Yet the purpose of the treaty was peace, peace between Suzerain and vassal.<sup>14</sup>

The resulting treaty document became the constitution of the vassal kingdom. As in modern diplomacy, international treaties superseded the authority of all of a nation's existing laws. The treaty was ratified by the oath of the vassal, although on occasion the suzerain added his oath as well.<sup>15</sup> From the viewpoint of the suzerain, the treaty was a declaration of his lordship over the vassal, consecrating a people to himself in a dictated order of life. For the vassal, his oath to the suzerain was a commitment of absolute allegiance and the treaty spelled out the details of how this allegiance was to manifest itself.<sup>16</sup>

In some ways a treaty can be understood as an elaborate oath.<sup>17</sup> The vassal's oath placed him under the sanctions of the blessings and curses spelled out in the treaty. The lordship of the great king would result in protection for the vassal if the latter remained faithful to him but in destruction if he did not. As long as the vassal remained faithful, he would enjoy the blessings of

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<sup>9</sup> Mendenhall and Herion, "Covenant," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 1:1180.

<sup>10</sup> Michael L. Barré, "Treaties in the ANE," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6:654.

<sup>11</sup> Mendenhall and Herion, "Covenant," 1:1180.

<sup>12</sup> Kline, *Oath*, 21.

<sup>13</sup> Hillers, *Covenant*, 49.

<sup>14</sup> Barré, "Treaties," 6:654.

<sup>15</sup> Kline, *Oath*, 21.

<sup>16</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 17.

<sup>17</sup> Hillers, *Covenant*, 28.

peace and friendship with his overlord as well as his protection. However, if he proved unfaithful, asserted his independence, or switched his allegiance to another king, he would receive the curses spelled out in the treaty, curses which he had invoked upon himself in his oath of allegiance.<sup>18</sup>

God, being both the author of the Bible and the author of history, so designed history that, at the time when the Scriptures were written, the contemporary international treaties illustrated the covenantal relationship he wanted to enter into with his people. Since treaties were by definition cross-cultural, knowledge of them was pervasive throughout the ancient Near East.<sup>19</sup> To make absolutely certain that Israel would understand the covenants God made with them, he provided unique training for Moses who would be both the mediator through whom God instituted the old covenant and the author of the first five books of the Bible that record the foundational covenants of the kingdom of God. God prepared Moses for his role by having him adopted by the Pharaoh's daughter and raised as part of the royal family (Exod 2:10). As the grandson of the Pharaoh, Moses would have received the best education available in the ancient world and would have been trained in international diplomacy. Since he would have studied the form and significance of international treaties, Moses would have recognized that the earlier covenants God had made were in fact treaties. When Moses received the Ten Commandments from God on the top of Mount Sinai, he would not have been surprised to see that once again God's covenant was in the form of a treaty. God had thoroughly prepared Moses for his role.

As with treaties between nations, the overall purpose of the covenants of the Bible was to create a relationship of *shalom* between the parties to the covenant (Gen 26:30-31; Num 25:12; Job 5:23-24; I Kgs 5:12; Isa 54:10). The English word "peace" is an inadequate translation of the Hebrew *shalom*. *Shalom* indicates a wholeness, a relationship of communion, a state of harmony and fulfillment.<sup>20</sup> This was the goal of the covenant.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Literary Form of the Treaties as Illustrated by the Old Covenant**

Suzerainty treaties had a fairly uniform literary structure and it is in this form that God

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<sup>18</sup> Kline, *Oath*, 21.

<sup>19</sup> Mendenhall and Herion, "Covenant," 1:1180.

<sup>20</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (New York: Harper, 1962), 1:130; G. Lloyd Carr, "shalem," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2:931.

<sup>21</sup> Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama* (Louisville: Westminster, 2002), 133.

gave Israel the Ten Commandments. God made a treaty with Israel. The parallel between Exodus 20:2-17 and contemporary suzerainty treaties has been recognized by a preponderance of Old Testament Biblical scholars.<sup>22</sup> There were six standard sections in the text of a treaty, as illustrated in Chart 1, although any one treaty might have slight differences in its form. A section might be missing or the order of the elements might vary, but the basic pattern was normally present.<sup>23</sup> We will discuss the significance of each section of this literary form, give examples from international treaties and use Exodus 20:2-17 as an example of how Biblical covenants conform to this pattern.

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<sup>22</sup> E.g. Kenneth L. Barker, "The Scope and Center of Old and New Testament Theology and Hope," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition* (ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 307-8; Albert H. Baylis, *From Creation to the Cross: Understanding the First Half of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 123-24; Craig A. Blaising, "The Structure of the Biblical Covenants: The Covenants Prior to Christ," in *Progressive Dispensationalism* (ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell Bock; Wheaton: BridgePoint, 1993), 142-43; John Bright, *Covenant and Promise: The Prophetic Understanding of the Future in Pre-Exilic Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 36-40; W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of Old Testament Covenants* (Nashville: Nelson, 1984), 94-99; John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1987), 40-41; David Noel Freedman, *The Nine Commandments: Uncovering the Hidden Pattern of Crime and Punishment in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 48; Cyrus H. Gordon and Gary A. Rendsburg, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.; New York: Norton, 1997), 163-64; Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 140-41; R. K. Harrison, *Old Testament Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 140-41; Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 143; Hillers, *Covenant*, 28-42; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age through the Jewish Wars* (Nashville: Broadman, 1998), 117-21; William Sanford La Sor, David Allan Hubbard and Frederic William Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, Background of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 144-46; Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (San Francisco: Harper, 1985), 26-42; Tremper Longman III, *Making Sense of the Old Testament: Three Crucial Questions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 60-71; Eugene H. Merrill, "Exodus: Deliverance to Covenant Privilege," in *The Old Testament Explorer: Discovering the Essence, Background, and Meaning of Every Book in the Old Testament* (ed. Charles R. Swindoll; Nashville: Word, 2001), 59; K. A. Kitchen, *The Bible in its World: The Bible and Archaeology Today* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1977), 79-85; von Rad, *Theology*, 1:132-33.

<sup>23</sup> Hillers, *Covenant*, 29; Bright, *Covenant*, 36-37. The modern idea that all covenants had to be identical in form is a legalistic mentality which was quite foreign to that of the ancient world (Mendenhall and Herion, "Covenant," 1:1180).

## Chart 1

### The Literary Structure of Suzerainty Treaties

#### Written Features

Preamble

Historical Prologue

Stipulations

Major Stipulation

Minor Stipulation

Witnesses

Blessings and Curses

Instructions for the Disposal of the Text

#### Non-written Features

Ratification by Oath

Solemn Ceremony

### The Preamble - Exodus 20:2a

The first section of a treaty is called the preamble and its purpose was for the suzerain to identify himself. He did so typically in terms that would inspire fear and awe in his vassal. One example is the treaty of the Hittite suzerain Mursilis II, who controlled what is today central Turkey and the Syrian coast, with his vassal Duppi-Tessub, king of Amurru, which included the rest of Syria, Palestine, Edom and Moab, whose people the Bible knows as the Amorites.<sup>24</sup> The treaty begins:

“These are the words of the Sun<sup>25</sup> Mursilis, the great king, the king of the Hatti land, the valiant, the favorite of the Storm-god, the son of Suppiluliumas, the great king of the Hatti land, the valiant.”<sup>26</sup>

Exodus 20:2a is the preamble of the Mosaic Covenant where God identifies himself stating:

<sup>24</sup> P. E. Satterthwaite and D. W. Baker, “Nations of Canaan,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, 599.

<sup>25</sup> “Sun” was the term by which the Hittite suzerain was addressed (James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Princeton: Princeton University, 1969), 203.

<sup>26</sup> Pritchard, *Texts*, 203.

“I am the LORD<sup>27</sup> your God.”

### **The Historical Prologue - Exodus 20:2b**

The purpose of the historical prologue was to enumerate the past benefits that the vassal had received from the suzerain. This was to cause the vassal to be thankful and to give him a motive for keeping the provisions of the treaty. For the prologue to have its intended effect, it had to be substantially true.<sup>28</sup> The following is the historical prologue of this same treaty between Mursilis II and Duppi-Tessub:

Azira<sup>29</sup> was the grandfather of you, Duppi-Tessub. He rebelled against my father, but submitted again to my father. When the kings of Nuhasse land<sup>30</sup> and the kings of Kinza<sup>31</sup> rebelled against my father, Aziras did not rebel. As he was bound by treaty, he remained bound by treaty. As my father fought against his enemies, in the same manner fought Aziras. Aziras remained loyal toward my father [as his overlord] and did not incite my father's anger. My father was loyal toward Aziras and his country; he did not undertake any unjust action against him or incite his or his country's anger in any way. 300 (shekels of) refined and first-class gold, the tribute which my father had imposed upon your father, he brought year for year; he never refused it.

When my father became god<sup>32</sup> and I seated myself on the throne of my father, Aziras behaved toward me just as he had behaved toward my father. It happened that the Nuhasse kings and the king of Kinza rebelled a second time against-me. But Aziras, your grandfather, and DU-Tessub,<sup>33</sup> your father, [did not take their side]; they remained loyal to me as their lord. [When he grew too old] and could no longer go to war and fight, DU-Tessub fought against the enemy with the foot soldiers and the charioteers of the Amurru land just as he had fought with foot soldiers and charioteers against the enemy. And the Sun destroyed them.

(Gap in which the reign of DU-Tessub was dealt with)

(DU-Tessub recommends his son as his successor:) “[...When I die, accept my son] Duppi-Tessub as your vassal.”

When your father died, in accordance with your father's word I did not drop you. Since your father had mentioned to me your name with great praise, I sought after you. To be sure, you were sick and ailing, but although you were ailing, I, the Sun, put you in the place of your father and took your brothers (and) sisters and the Amurru land in oath for

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<sup>27</sup> The word LORD with the last three letters written in lower case capital letters is the translation of the Hebrew *Yahweh*, the personal name of God (Exod 3:13-15).

<sup>28</sup> Hillers, *Covenant*, 31.

<sup>29</sup> Aziras is a king of the Amorites who is well known from the Amarna letters (Pritchard, *Texts*, 203).

<sup>30</sup> The region between Aleppo and the Orontes River in what today is northern Syria (Pritchard, *Texts*, 203).

<sup>31</sup> A city on the Orontes River, now tell Nebi Mendo (Pritchard, *Texts*, 203).

<sup>32</sup> I.e. he died (Pritchard, *Texts*, 203).

<sup>33</sup> The pronunciation of the first syllable of the name is unknown (Pritchard, *Texts*, 203).

you.<sup>34</sup>

The historical prologue is thus a summary of the past relations between suzerain and vassal, emphasizing in particular the benefits the great king had previously bestowed upon his vassal.<sup>35</sup> Mursilis II was endeavoring to create a sense of obligation in Duppi-Tessub for placing him on his throne.<sup>36</sup>

Exodus 20:2 follows the preamble, “I am the Lord your God,” with the historical prologue, “who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” referring to the wondrous salvation that God had just wrought for His people in the exodus. The purpose of the covenant’s historical prologue was to be a constant reminder to the Israelites to be thankful for their deliverance from Egypt and, in response, to be faithful to the covenant stipulations which are listed in the following verses.<sup>37</sup>

### **Major Stipulation – Exodus 20:3**

Suzerainty treaties between nations contained one major stipulation and many minor ones.<sup>38</sup> The major stipulation was always a declaration of total allegiance to the suzerain by the vassal to the exclusion of all other alliances.<sup>39</sup> For the vassal to enter into a treaty with any other king made him guilty of treason and deserving of the death penalty.<sup>40</sup> In the treaty between Mursilis II and Duppi-Tessub we read:

“So honor the oath (of loyalty) to the king and the king’s kin! ...But you, Duppi-Tessub, remain loyal toward the king of Hatti land, the Hatti land, my sons (and) my grandsons forever.... Do not turn your eyes to anyone else!”<sup>41</sup>

The Ten Commandments contain an obvious parallel to the stipulation section of the treaties. The major stipulation of the Mosaic Covenant is found in the verse following the historical prologue. There God states, “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exod 20:3). A suzerain demanded absolute allegiance from his vassals and God demands absolute allegiance

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<sup>34</sup> Pritchard, *Texts*, 203-4.

<sup>35</sup> Kline, *Treaty*, 14.

<sup>36</sup> Hillers, *Covenant*, 31; cf. 49-50.

<sup>37</sup> Kline, *Treaty*, 14.

<sup>38</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 196.

<sup>39</sup> Kline, *Treaty*, 14-15.

<sup>40</sup> Mendenhall and Herion, “Covenant,” 1:1180.

<sup>41</sup> Pritchard, *Texts*, 204.



from his people.<sup>42</sup> Israel was to be loyal to Jehovah to the exclusion of all other gods. Since Israel was created by God and set apart for his purposes, their total commitment to him was fundamental to their relationship.<sup>43</sup> God does not tolerate rivals.<sup>44</sup>

The major stipulation's command of sole allegiance to God was the equivalent of the New Testament's command to believe (1 John 3:23) and to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matt 22:37). The "I-Thou" language of the stipulations indicates how personal the relationship was between God and his people. The recipients of his mercy are identified by God as "those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Exod 20:6).<sup>45</sup>

### **Minor Stipulations - Exodus 20:4-17**

The purpose of the minor stipulations was to indicate what allegiance to the suzerain was to look like. These stipulations were typically written as conditional statements, "If the following takes place, you will...." The vassal was required to pay annual tribute, make regular visits to the court of the suzerain and supply troops to the suzerain as needed.<sup>46</sup>

The minor stipulations between Mursilis and Duppi-Tessub include the following:

As I, the Sun, am loyal toward you, do you extend military help to the Sun and the Hatti land....

If anyone should press you hard, Duppi-Tessub, or (if) anyone should revolt against you, (if) you then write to the king of the Hatti land, and the king of the Hatti land dispatches foot soldiers and charioteers to your aid—(if you treat them in an unfair manner<sup>47</sup>), you act in disregard of the gods of the oath.

If anyone of the deportees from the Nuhasse land or of the deportees from the country of Kinza whom my father removed and myself removed escapes and comes to you, (if) you do not seize him and turn him back to the king of the Hatti land, and even tell him as follows: "Go! Where you are going to, I do not want to know," you act in disregard of your oath.

If anyone utters words unfriendly toward the king of the Hatti land before you, Duppi-

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<sup>42</sup> Hillers, *Covenant*, 50.

<sup>43</sup> J. W. Marshall, "Decalogue," *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, 175; Allan M. Harman, "Decalogue (Ten Commandments)," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 4:516.

<sup>44</sup> Margaret Elizabeth Bellefontaine, "A Study of Ancient Israelite Laws and their Function as Covenant Stipulations" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1973), 92.

<sup>45</sup> Kline, *Treaty*, 24.

<sup>46</sup> Baltzer, *Covenant*, 13-14. The Suzerain was primarily just interested in matters affecting his relationship with his vassal (Mendenhall and Herion, "Covenant," 1:1181).

<sup>47</sup> Omitted inadvertently by the scribe (Pritchard, *Texts*, 204).

Tessub, you shall not withhold his name from the king....

If a country or a fugitive takes to the road and while betaking themselves to the Hatti land pass through your territory, put them on the right way, show them the way to the Hatti land and speak friendly words to them! Do not send them to anyone else!

Or if the king of the Hatti land is getting the better of a country and puts them to flight, and they come to your country, if then you desire to take anything from them, ask the king of the Hatti land for it! You shall not take it on your own! If you lay hand on it by yourself or conceal it, (you act in disregard of the oath).

Furthermore, if a fugitive comes to your country, seize him!<sup>48</sup>

The purpose of the minor stipulations was to indicate how Israel's allegiance to God was to manifest itself.<sup>49</sup> The stipulations of the Sinaitic covenant were its torah section. The Hebrew word *torah* is typically translated "law" throughout the Old Testament, but this can give the wrong impression to the English reader of what the word meant. The meaning of the word *torah* is instruction, teaching, guidance or direction for life, rather than law with its modern connotations.<sup>50</sup> This view of law has fundamental differences from our contemporary view of law. In the West common law is not so concerned with what is right and wrong, but rather with what is permitted and not permitted. Law enforces a minimum standard of behavior which, if not met, brings punishment. Law generally provides a floor for acceptable behavior, not an ideal ethical ceiling to be striven for.<sup>51</sup> God's expectations for his people are much higher than their simply not breaking specific laws.<sup>52</sup> In the torah, moral and ethical values undergird everything and in some cases are the very essence of the stipulations.<sup>53</sup> In the Old Testament, fulfillment of the law is not so much obedience to a legal demand as it is demonstrating by one's life that he has entered the sphere of God's blessing.<sup>54</sup> Israel is to love the Lord with all their heart, soul and might (Deut 6:5). Israel's love for God is to mirror his love for them.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Pritchard, *Texts*, 204-5.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Selman, "Law," 509.

<sup>50</sup> Dumbrell, *Covenant*, 91; R. K. Harrison, "Law in the Old Testament," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 2d ed., 3:76; Peter Enns, "Law of God," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 4:893-97.

<sup>51</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 2000), 80.

<sup>52</sup> Wenham, *Story*, 104.

<sup>53</sup> Harrison, "Law," 3:76.

<sup>54</sup> Dumbrell, *Covenant*, 91.

<sup>55</sup> Wenham, *Story*, 81.

Though we refer to them as the Ten Commandments, they are not commands. They are not written as imperatives (“Do not have any other gods before Me”), but rather as future indicatives in the singular (“You shall have no other gods before Me”). They indicate God’s expectations for those who have given him their allegiance (Exod 20:3) in gratitude for the great salvation (Exod 20:2b) that the Lord their God (Exod 20:2a) had just wrought for them.<sup>56</sup> Biblical law offers the outlines for personal conduct. It gives the principles by which life in the covenantal relationship is to be regulated.<sup>57</sup> Torah is relational. God is defining what is good and evil.<sup>58</sup> It expresses God’s will for his people.<sup>59</sup>

Education and understanding were vital aspects of the biblical meaning of torah. Yet understanding was in no sense an end in itself. Once the people understood the torah, they were required to live by it as an expression of their allegiance to God. They were to live under its authority.<sup>60</sup>

Some scholars have characterized the torah as a law code. It has significant differences from other ancient near eastern law codes in that it is in the category of covenantal stipulations. Certainly there are some similarities between the torah and contemporary law codes, but these are a result of addressing a common culture. The difference in intent makes the similarities modest at best.<sup>61</sup>

The minor stipulations of the covenant are found in Exodus 20:4-17:

“You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them... (Exod 20:4-5).

“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain (Exod 20;7).

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle

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<sup>56</sup> Mendenhall and Herion, “Covenant,” 1:1184.

<sup>57</sup> Dumbrell, *Covenant*, 91-92, Selman, “Law,” 501.

<sup>58</sup> Dumbrell, *Covenant*, 91-92; Selman, “Law,” 511. A distinction can be seen between the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20 and the legal material of commandments of Exodus 21-23. In the latter section the commands are termed “judgments,” the Hebrew *mishpat* which is equivalent to a judicial precedent (Dumbrell, *Covenant*, 92).

<sup>59</sup> Selman, “Law,” 509.

<sup>60</sup> Selman, “Law,” 499.

<sup>61</sup> Harrison, “Law,” 3:76-82.

or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy (Exod 20:8-11).

“Honor your father and your mother... (Exod 20:12).

“You shall not murder (Exod 20:13).

“You shall not commit adultery (Exod 20:14).

“You shall not steal (Exod 20:15).

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor (Exod 20:16).

“You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor” (Exod 20:17).

In the last nine commandments God indicated what the allegiance demanded in the major stipulation was to look like. It was to direct Israel's life within the covenant relationship.<sup>62</sup> The minor stipulations were not a means for entering the covenant. Salvation has never been the result of good works. Salvation came through faith, their wholehearted commitment of allegiance to God commanded in the major stipulation. The children of Israel were to be the faithful vassals of Yahweh the great king. The minor stipulations were the guide for citizenship in the kingdom of God.<sup>63</sup>

### **Witnesses**

Just as we require witnesses to many of our legal documents, treaties also required witnesses. The witnesses to international treaties were typically the gods of both the suzerain and the vassal who were often enumerated in long detailed lists.<sup>64</sup> Every known god of both suzerain and vassal was called in as a witness to ensure that there would be no god to which the vassal could resort to for protection should he violate his oath.<sup>65</sup> In addition, mountains, rivers, springs, the sea, heaven, earth, wind and clouds were also summoned as witnesses.<sup>66</sup>

The copies of the treaty itself also served as witnesses to the treaty. The suzerain's copy reminded him of the vassal's oath-bound commitments to the treaties stipulations so that he

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<sup>62</sup> Dumbrell, *Covenant*, 91. According to Sailhamer, the laws of the Pentateuch were not intended to be a basis for legal action but were rather a statement of legal policy (John H. Sailhamer, *An Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995], 256-67).

<sup>63</sup> Kline, *Treaty*, 24.

<sup>64</sup> Baltzer, *Covenant*, 14.

<sup>65</sup> Mendenhall and Herion, “Covenant,” 1:1181.

<sup>66</sup> Baltzer, *Covenant*, 14.

might enforce them and, if necessary, punish the vassal for breaches of the covenant. The document was also a reminder to the suzerain of his commitment to protect his vassal and to fulfill any promises he may have made to him.<sup>67</sup> The vassal's copy not only reminded him of the oath-bound commitments which he had made, but also of the curses that the divine witnesses would visit upon him, were he unfaithful.

The following is a partial list of those called as witnesses to the treaty of Mursilis and Duppi-Tessub:

Kulitta, the Haitian Warrior-god, the Warrior-god of Ellaya, the Warrior-god of Arziya... the gods and goddesses of the Hatti land, the gods and goddesses of Amurru land, all the olden gods... the mountains, the rivers, the springs, the great sea, heaven and earth, the winds (and) the clouds—let these be witnesses to this treaty and to the oath.<sup>68</sup>

Although it is not specifically mentioned in Exodus 20, the Holy Spirit was present as a witness to the covenant in the pillar of cloud (Exod 13:21-22; 19:9, 16). In addition, the covenant documents themselves also served as legal witnesses to the covenant. Israel's copy was a documentary witness (Deut 31:26). It was a divine reminder of the obligations they had sworn to uphold, a declaration of their hope of covenantal beatitude and a pronouncement of the doom of the covenant's curses if Israel proved to be unfaithful.<sup>69</sup>

### **Blessings and Curses - Exodus 20:5, 6, 12**

The gods were not simply witnesses to the treaty. The role of the divine witnesses included their being the guarantors of the blessings and curses that were listed in the treaty.<sup>70</sup> It was their responsibility to ensure that both blessings and curses were faithfully executed.<sup>71</sup> The blessings and curses listed the consequences of obedience and disobedience.<sup>72</sup> If the vassal was obedient to the treaty, he and his descendants would receive the blessings. Treaty blessings typically included peace, joy, protection of the gods, abundant harvests, and an eternal reign for the vassal king.<sup>73</sup> If he was disobedient, he and his descendants would receive the curses. In the

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<sup>67</sup> Kline, *Treaty*, 22.

<sup>68</sup> Pritchard, *Texts*, 205.

<sup>69</sup> Kline, *Treaty*, 21.

<sup>70</sup> Barré, "Treaties," 6:654.

<sup>71</sup> Baltzer, *Covenant*, 14-15, Hillers, *Covenant*, 53.

<sup>72</sup> Mendenhall and Herion, "Covenant," 1:1181.

<sup>73</sup> Baltzer, *Covenant*, 15.

curses, death and destruction were threatened in every conceivable way.<sup>74</sup> The blessings and curses together provided powerful motives for the vassal to be faithful to the covenant.

The following are the curses and blessings of the treaty between Mursilis and Duppi-Tessub:

The words of the treaty and the oath that are inscribed on this tablet—should Duppi-Tessub not honor these words of the treaty and the oath, may these gods of the oath destroy Duppi-Tessub together with his person, his wife, his son, his grandson, his house, his land and together with everything that he owns.

But if Duppi-Tessub honors these words of the treaty and the oath that are inscribed on this tablet, may these gods of the oath protect him together with his person, his wife, his son, his grandson, his house (and) his country.<sup>75</sup>

The blessings and curses were usually in a separate section, but on occasion were interspersed with the stipulations. Although they are in a separate section in Leviticus 26:3-33 and Deuteronomy 28:1-68, they are found among the stipulations in Exodus 20:5-6, 12.

Exodus 20:5 begins with a stipulation regarding idols, “You shall not worship them or serve them.” This is then followed by a curse, “For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,” Jehovah is a jealous God who punishes great-great-grandsons for the sins of their ancestors.<sup>76</sup> The curse is then followed by a blessing, “But showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments” (Exod 20:6).

Exodus 20:7 is a stipulation regarding reverence for God’s name, “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.” This is then followed by a curse, “For the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.”

Exodus 20:12 begins with a stipulation regarding parents, “Honor your father and your mother,” which is followed by a blessing, “That your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.”

In contrast to suzerainty treaties between nations, God’s covenant was one of salvation. It was one of “showing lovingkindness” (Exod 20:6) and not just to the third or fourth generation of those that love him, but, counter to the balanced blessings and curses of secular treaties, “to a

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<sup>74</sup> Baltzer, *Covenant*, 14-15, Hillers, *Covenant*, 53.

<sup>75</sup> Pritchard, *Texts*, 205.

<sup>76</sup> Hillers, *Covenant*, 53.

thousandth generation” (Deut 7:9).<sup>77</sup>

### **Instructions for the Deposit of the Text - Exodus 25:1-22**

In a treaty between nations two identical copies of the treaty were made. One was the suzerain’s copy and the other, the vassal’s. Both were to take their respective copy and place it in their temple under the protection of their chief god.<sup>78</sup> In the ancient Near East, it was the custom to place the document of a covenant with a city’s god in the footstool of the god’s throne in his temple.<sup>79</sup> The specific wording of the Hittite treaties for the specified location of the treaty document can be translated “under (the feet of) the god.” Enshrining the copies with the gods was emblematic of their roles as witnesses to the treaty and avengers of the oath.<sup>80</sup>

We all can visualize pictures from our Sunday school lessons of the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments being held by Moses. However, in light of the treaty analogy, when we read of "the two tablets" (Exod 31:18) of the law, these were undoubtedly duplicate copies: God's copy and Israel's copy. In a treaty between God and Israel, suzerain and vassal shared the same temple, the tabernacle which was about to be built. Thus when the instructions were given for the construction of the tabernacle, the very first plans given were for the ark of the covenant (Exod 25:1-22) and directions were given to place both covenant tablets in it (Exod 25:21). The very next verse describes God’s presence over the ark of the covenant, making the placement of the covenant documents under his feet (Exod 25:22).<sup>81</sup> The lid of the ark with its cherubim was God’s throne, as indicated in the phrases, “the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts who sits *above* the cherubim (1 Sam 4:4) and “the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of the LORD of hosts who is enthroned *above* the cherubim” (2 Sam 6:2; cf. Ps 80:1; 99:1; Isa 37:16). The ark itself was his footstool (1 Chron 28:2; Ps 132:7-8).<sup>82</sup>

### **Treaty Rituals - Exodus 24:1-11**

In addition to the written sections of the suzerainty treaties, there also were typically non-written features: an oath, a sacrifice and a solemn ceremony. One Hittite text contemporary to

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<sup>77</sup> Kline, *Treaty*, 22.

<sup>78</sup> Mendenhall and Herion, “Covenant,” 1:1181; Harman, “Decalogue (Ten Commandments),” 4:516.

<sup>79</sup> A. E. Steinmann, “Cherubim,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, 112.

<sup>80</sup> Kline, *Treaty*, 19-20.

<sup>81</sup> Kline, *Treaty*, 19-20.

<sup>82</sup> Steinmann, “Cherubim,” 112.

Moses shows the relationship between treaty, oath, sacrifice and solemn meal:

They lead in a goat and the master of the house consecrates the goat in front of the table to Sanda<sup>83</sup> with wine. Then he holds out a bronze axe and says: "Come, Sanda, and let the Violent Gods come with you, who are clothed in blood-stained garments and girt with the cords (?) of Lulahhi men, who have a dagger in the belt, draw bows and hold arrows. Come and eat! And we will take the oath." When he has finished speaking he puts the bronze axe down on the table and they slaughter the goat. He takes the blood and smears the drinking tube which is inserted into the tankard with the blood. They bring the raw liver and the heart and the master of the house offers them to the god and takes a bite. They do an imitation (?). Then he puts his lip to the tube and sips and says: "Behold, Sanda and Violent Gods, we have taken oath. Since we have bitten the raw liver and drunk from one (?) tube, therefore Sanda and Violent Ones, do not again approach my gate." Then they cook the liver and the heart with fire and cut up all the -rest of the goat. . . He takes the shoulder and breast. . . Then they surround the table and eat up the shoulder and breast. Then [just as they wish(?) to eat and drink, so he brings, and they eat [up (?) . . . ] and they drink [ . . . ]the tankard.<sup>84</sup>

### **The Oath and Sacrifice – Exodus 24:3-8**

The vassal king's oath of allegiance to his suzerain committed him to the treaty, invoking divine vengeance if he broke his oath.<sup>85</sup> This use of an oath is found very early in ancient near eastern international diplomacy. As early as the twenty-fifth century B. C., the "Vulture Stele," a Sumerian text, records the oath of allegiance of the city of Umma to the great king Eannatum....<sup>86</sup>

Ancient oath ceremonies took many forms.<sup>87</sup> When we think of an oath, we think only of a verbal declaration, but in the ancient Near East an oath usually took the form of a ritual.<sup>88</sup> The most common form of oath ritual involved the cutting up of an animal in some way. The one making the oath was symbolically stating, "May I be cut apart like this animal if I am not faithful to this treaty." An Aramaic treaty of the eighth century B.C. states, "Just as this calf is cut up, so may Matiel be cut up."<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Sanda was a Hittite god.

<sup>84</sup> O. R. Gurney, *Some Aspects of Hittite Religion*, The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy 1976 (Oxford: University Press, 1977), 29-30 quoted in Lundquist, "Temple," 301.

<sup>85</sup> In Akkadian treaties we called "(tablet of the) oath" (Barré, "Treaties," 6:654).

<sup>86</sup> Hillers, *Covenant*, 28-29.

<sup>87</sup> Hillers, *Covenant*, 40.

<sup>88</sup> Gordon P. Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: Biblical Law and Ethics as Developed from Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 194.

<sup>89</sup> Hillers, *Covenant*, 40-41.



In the case of Israel's taking the oath of the Mosaic covenant, they first made a verbal commitment: "Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, 'All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!'" (Exod 24:3). The initial commitment of faith is not a self-maledictory oath; it is a wholehearted giving allegiance to God as he had revealed himself.

Next we read:

Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. He sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD. Moses took half of the blood and put *it* in basins, and the *other* half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the book of the covenant and read *it* in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" So Moses took the blood and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words (Exod 24:4-8).

Here we have a symbolic act in which the people identified with the sacrificed animals so that the fate of the animals was depicted as their fate, should they be unfaithful to the covenant. It was a self-curse in which they pledged their lives as a guarantee of their obedience to the covenant.<sup>90</sup>

At the same time that the sacrifice of the animals was part of the oath ritual of Israel, it was also an efficacious sacrifice. In Hebrews 9:18 the author writes, "Therefore even the first *covenant* was not inaugurated without blood." He then paraphrases Exodus 24:3-8 and concludes by saying, "And according to the Law, *one may almost say*, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:22). The sprinkling of the blood on those taking the oath of allegiance symbolized their spiritual cleansing.

### **Solemn Ceremony – Exodus 24:1-11**

In the ancient Near East a treaty was put into effect by some type of solemn ceremony which often involved a meal between the treaty partners.<sup>91</sup> The meal was the final step in the covenant making process and was an ancient ritual and widespread.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Mendenhall and Herion, "Covenant," 1:1185.

<sup>91</sup> D. J. Wiseman, *The Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon* (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1958), 88; Hillers, *Covenant*, 57; Kline, *Treaty*, 16.

<sup>92</sup> John M. Lundquist, "Temple, Covenant, and Law in the Ancient Near East and in the Hebrew Bible," in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison* (ed. Avraham Gileadi; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 301.

In light of the treaty analogy it is not surprising to find the final step in the making of the Sinaitic Covenant to be a meal:

Then He said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel, and you shall worship at a distance. Moses alone, however, shall come near to the LORD, but they shall not come near, nor shall the people come up with him." (Exod 24:1-2)

Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself. Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they saw God, and they ate and drank (Exod 24:9-11).

Which person of the Trinity "ate and drank" with the elders of Israel? It is God the Son whose role it is to represent God physically to man. John 1:18 states, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*." Thus the Old Covenant was instituted at a meal in which God the Son ate and drank with the elders of Israel. In the upper room the New Covenant was likewise instituted at a meal (Luke 22:20) at which God the Son ate and drank with the elders (cf. 1 Pet 5:1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1) of the church.

Jesus at the institution of the new covenant at the Last Supper paraphrased the words of Moses at the institution of the Old Covenant (Exod 24:8). Moses had said, "This is the blood of the covenant" (Exod 24:6). At the last supper Jesus said, "This is My blood of the covenant" (Matt 26:28). The only difference between the Greek of Jesus' statement in Matthew and the Greek of the Septuagint<sup>93</sup> of Exodus 24:8 is that Jesus substitutes "My" for "the."<sup>94</sup>

### **Israel's Breaking of the Covenant**

Immediately following the covenant meal, God invited Moses to come up to the top of Mount Sinai to receive the two engraved tablets of the covenant. Moses ascended the mountain with Joshua, leaving Aaron and Hur in charge of the camp of Israel. After seven days God called to Moses from the midst of the glory-cloud on the top of the mountain. Moses entered the cloud where he remained for forty days (Exod 24: 12-18).

Meanwhile back at the bottom of the mountain, things were not going well. The people became impatient that Moses had been gone for so long. They assembled around Aaron and said,

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<sup>93</sup> The Septuagint was a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament begun about 250 B.C. which served as the Bible of Greek-speaking Jews.

<sup>94</sup> Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 258.

"Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him" (Exod 32:1). Surprisingly Aaron acquiesced, forged the golden calf and built an altar in front of it. The people cried out, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." (Exod 32:2-5). The following day Aaron presided over a feast before the calf which included burnt offerings and peace offerings.

There are at least two possible interpretations of what the calf represented. One explanation is that the calf was intended to represent Yahweh, the true God.<sup>95</sup> In worshiping it, God's people were violating not the first commandment, but the first minor stipulation of the covenant, "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them. . . ." (Exod 20:4-5). The other explanation is that the people were worshipping a calf-god that they said had delivered them from Egypt, thus breaking the first commandment by giving their allegiance to a foreign god.<sup>96</sup> In either case, their apostate religion had both an altar and a high priest!

### **Lawsuit**

If a vassal broke the treaty with his suzerain, he was breaking a legal agreement. Just as in modern society when someone breaks a legal contract, the aggrieved party may bring a lawsuit to enforce the contract. Similarly in the ancient Near East, when a vassal violated a treaty, the suzerain would institute a lawsuit against him. There were two distinct phases in the lawsuit: the first was the sending of messengers by the suzerain to the rebellious vassal. If the messengers were not heeded, the lawsuit went into its second phase, a declaration of war by the suzerain upon the vassal.

### **The Sending of Messengers**

The first stage of the lawsuit was conducted by messengers who were sent to the rebellious vassal. The messengers delivered threats which were couched in a form that reflected the pattern of the original treaty. They interrogated the vassal and reminded the vassal of the suzerain's benefits and of the treaty's curses. They demanded obedience to the provisions of the

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<sup>95</sup> Peter Enns, *Exodus (The NIV Application Commentary)*; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 569-70.

<sup>96</sup> R. Alan Cole, *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary* (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries; Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1973), 214-15.

treaty and admonished the vassal to mend his ways. They confronted the vassal with the treaty's curses which were now in the form of an ultimatum. The messengers warned the vassal of the vanity of hope to escape through recourse to any alien quarter.

In the covenants between God and his people the prophets are the messengers whom God sends to his covenant-breaking people.

Israel's sin made God's anger burn against them. God's immediate response was to send Moses as his messenger to his covenant breaking people. Since Moses was a prophet (Deut 34:10), it was entirely appropriate for Moses to be the messenger. Moses accompanied by Joshua descended the mountain, tablets of the covenant in hand. When Moses saw the golden calf and the people dancing around it, he threw the tablets to the ground at the foot of the mountain, shattering them and signifying that the covenant had been broken.<sup>97</sup> He immediately interrogated Aaron, asking him, "What did this people do to you, that you have brought *such* great sin upon them?" (Exod 32:11-21).

Aaron's weak response was, "'I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.' So they gave *it* to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf" (Exod 32:24).

### **Declaration of War**

If the messengers of the suzerain were rejected, imprisoned or especially if they were killed, the legal process entered its second phase, a declaration of war on the covenant breaker. The war was seen as an execution of the curses of the covenant. War was a visitation of curses of the treaty by the oath deities against the offending party. The war was understood as a trial by ordeal in which the god-witnesses to the treaty would vindicate the righteous by giving them victory.

In the case of Moses dealing with Israel's breaking of the covenant with the golden calf, he saw that the people were completely out of control and so he called out, "Whoever is for the LORD, *come* to me!" Only the men of the tribe of Levi answered his call (Exod 32:26). As a result God declared war on his people. Moses announced, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Every man *of you* put his sword upon his thigh, and go back and forth from gate to gate in the camp, and kill every man his brother, and every man his friend, and every man his neighbor.'" The sons of Levi did as they were commanded and killed 3,000 men of Israel that day (Exod

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<sup>97</sup> Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 202.

32:27-28).

### **The Recurring Pattern of Biblical History**

There is a covenantal pattern that repeats itself throughout Scripture. God makes a treaty with his people. Then his people break the covenant. God's response is to initiate a lawsuit against the covenant-breakers. First he sends messengers to them and, when the messengers are rejected, he judges them. This is summarized in Chart 2.

<b>Chart 2</b>	
<b>The Recurring Pattern of Biblical History</b>	
1	The Making of a Covenant
2	The Breaking of the Covenant The Sending of Messengers to the Covenant
3	Breakers
4	Judgment on the Covenant Breakers

### **The Covenantal Administrations of Biblical History**

There are seven major covenants in the Bible which each launch a new age of Biblical history. These covenants are listed in Chart 3. In each of these ages there is the recurring pattern of events. In some ages the pattern recurs more than once. In the remainder of the book we will examine each of these ages, noting the amazing way that the same pattern of events is repeated in each age. But before we commence a study of the seven ages, we will first learn of a covenant in eternity past.

<b>CHART 3</b>	
<b>The Covenantal Ages of the Bible</b>	
1	The Age of The Creation Covenant
2	The Age of The Adamic Covenant
3	The Age of The Noahic Covenant
4	The Age of The Abrahamic Covenant
5	The Age of The Mosaic (Old) Covenant
6	The Age of The New Covenant with the Church
7	The Age of The New Covenant with Israel

## Chapter Two

### The Messianic Covenant (Popularly Known as The Covenant of Redemption)

We have seen in Chapter One that the Mosaic Covenant was given in the form of a suzerainty treaty to show clearly the type of relationship God was establishing with his people. There is a second reason why God ordained to include suzerainty treaties in human history and that is to enable his people to understand the interrelationships of the persons of the Trinity. We shall see that God the Father entered into a covenant with God the Son in the form of a suzerainty treaty with the Holy Spirit being the divine witness. Theologians refer to this treaty as the Covenant of Redemption.<sup>1</sup> However, since its main purpose was to define the role of God the Son as Messiah, we shall refer to it as the Messianic Covenant.

- I. Introduction to the Covenant
- A. The Covenant Identified

At the Last Supper God the Son said to His disciples, "Just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom" (Luke 22:29-30). Here the Greek word translated "grant" is *diatithēmi*, the verbal form of *diathēkē*, the Greek word for "covenant." Thus, in this passage we have the next thing to applying the word "covenant" to the relationship between the Father and the Son.<sup>2</sup> In the Biblical record it will be seen that all the features of a covenant are present in the interrelationship of the persons of the Trinity.<sup>3</sup>

- B. The Type of Covenant

In addition to the suzerainty treaties discussed in Chapter One, in the ancient world there also were two other major types of treaties. The first of these was the parity treaty. This was a treaty between equals, such as between Abraham and Abimelech (Gen 21:22-34), between Isaac and Abimelech (Gen 26:26-33) and between Jacob and Laban (Gen 31:43-54).

The second type of treaty was called the royal grant. In a royal grant an ancient ruler would reward individuals for their faithful service by giving them special status,

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), II: 359-62; William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), II:359-63; L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 265-71.

<sup>2</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue* (published by the author, 1993), 87.

<sup>3</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 139.

bestowing title over a specified territory with its revenue or exempting a territory under someone's authority from its customary obligations.<sup>4</sup>

One way of distinguishing between suzerainty treaties, parity treaties and royal grants is to note who takes the oath. In a suzerainty treaty, only the vassal takes the oath. In a parity treaty, both parties take the oath, whereas in a royal grant only the suzerain takes the oath. One further combination in the ancient world was a suzerainty treaty with an accompanying royal grant. The Abrahamic Covenant appears to be of this type as both God (Gen 15:9-18) and Abraham (Gen 17:10-14) go through oath rituals and it is obviously not a parity treaty between equals.

The Messianic Covenant appears, like the later Abrahamic Covenant, to be a suzerainty treaty with an accompanying royal grant. Clearly by this covenant, God the Father is making God the Son his vassal king over creation. He is totally under the authority of God the Father (Ps 40:7-8; Matt 26:39; John 4:34; 5:19, 30, 36; 6:38; 7:16; 8:26, 28-29; 10:18; 12:49; 14:10, 24, 31; 17:4, 8; Rom 5:19; Phil 2:8; Heb 5:8; 10:17). As vassal king he had commandments to obey (Deut 18:18; John 10:18; 12:49; 14:31; 15:10). But there is also a royal grant... Jesus said, "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father" (Matt 11:27; cf. Dan 7:13-14; John 3:35; 10:22; 17:2). The Father granted to the Son a kingdom (Luke 22:29) as well as the citizens of that kingdom. The elect, chosen "in Him (the vassal king) before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4) were given from the Father to the Son (John 6:37, 39; 17:2, 6, 9, 24) as a royal grant.<sup>5</sup> The citizens of Christ's kingdom are those whose names were "written in the book of life from the foundation of the world" (Rev 17:8; cf. 13:8). The book of life is no doubt the census book of the new Jerusalem where God will dwell with his people forever.<sup>6</sup>

Jesus is thus described as The Vassal King. The Messianic Covenant has the features of a suzerainty treaty. God would pattern not only the covenants of the Bible but also the treaties of history after the Messianic Covenant.

## II. The Time of the Making of the Covenant

If God the Father made a covenant granting God the Son a kingdom, the question must be asked, when did this happen? In Matthew 25:34, Jesus tells us when the preparation for this covenantal kingdom began. In the parable of the sheep and the goats, Jesus states, "Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed of

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<sup>4</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 234-35.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Michael Horton, *Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 45.

<sup>6</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text (The New International Greek Testament Commentary)*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 701-2.

My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Romans 8:16-17 tells us who these are who are God’s heirs. Paul writes, “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ...” Just as we make our children our heirs, so God makes his children his heirs.

Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:4 when God chose those who were to become his children. “...He (God the Father, Eph 1:3a) chose us in Him (the Lord Jesus Christ, Eph 1:3b) before the foundation of the world...” (cf. Rev 13:8; 17:8). In 2 Timothy 1:9 Paul writes, “Who (God, 2 Tim 1:8) saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.” In Titus 1:1-2 Paul begins his epistle by saying, “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the sake of God’s elect ... in hope of eternal life which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began” (ESV) (cf. 1 Pet 1:18-20).

When was the covenant made between God the Father and God the Son? It was in eternity past “before the foundation of the world” (Eph 1:3).

### III. The Features of the Covenant

Although we do not have the text of the covenant between God the Father and God the Son, the features of later suzerainty treaties can be identified.

#### A. Preamble

God the Father and God the Son hardly needed an introduction. Yet in the ancient Near East the relationship between a great king and his vassal was expressed in terms of “father” and “son.”<sup>7</sup> Thus the terminology “God the Father” and “God the Son” are an accurate description of their roles in the covenant. God the Son became a vassal king under the great king, God the Father.

#### B. Historical Prologue

The purpose of the historical prologue of a covenant was to summarize the past benefits which the vassal king had received from the great king. The Bible describes what God the Son received from God the Father throughout the ages of eternity. The New Testament repeatedly describes God the Father’s love for God the Son (Matt 3:17; 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 3:22; John 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 17:23, 24; 2 Pet 1:17). God the Son received from the Father both honor (2 Pet 1:17) and glory (John 17:5; 2 Pet 1:17).

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<sup>7</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*, 788.



## C. Stipulations

### 1. Major Stipulation: Allegiance

There is no greater unity than the oneness between God the Father and God the Son (John 10:30). The Son did not come into the world on his own initiative (John 7:28). In fact he did nothing on his own initiative (John 5:30). He was totally dependent upon the Father (John 8:28-29) and loved him with perfect divine love (John 14:31).

### 2. Minor Stipulations

The messianic mission of God the Son is stated prophetically in Psalm 40:7-8, “Then I said, ‘Behold I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delighted to do thy will, O my God; Thy law is within my heart.’”<sup>8</sup> Christ was sent on a mission by the Father with a commandment to obey (John 10:18), a righteousness to fulfill (Matt. 3:15) a baptism of death to undergo (Luke 12:50) and a work to finish (John 17:4). Jesus was sent as a Second Adam to be obedient where the First Adam would be disobedient. The messianic mission which Christ performed on earth had been designed in heaven (John 6:38).<sup>9</sup> The Son covenanted to become a man, to live under the Mosaic Covenant (Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:14-18) and to obey all the commandments of the Father (Heb. 10:7-9) “becoming obedient to the point of death, even on the cross” (Phil. 2:8). He was to do nothing on his own initiative nor to seek his own will but only the will of him who sent him (John 5:30; 6:38).<sup>10</sup> His commission was to gather for Himself a people and guard them, that none of them should be lost (John 17:12).<sup>11</sup>

### 3. Probation

Throughout the Bible God the Father continually has put his people through testing. An excellent example of this is when “God tested Abraham” (Gen 22:1) by commanding Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. This testing was an anticipation of the crucifixion, where although God spared Abraham’s son (Gen 22:11-12), he did not spare his own Son (Rom 8:32). It was also a test for Isaac to

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<sup>8</sup> Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:360-61.

<sup>9</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 86-87.

<sup>10</sup> Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 266.

<sup>11</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 518.

allow himself to be bound on top of the altar (Gen 22:9). Correspondingly, all of Christ's life leading to the cross was a test for him.

Coming as the second federal head representing his people, Christ, the Second Adam, underwent a similar probation to that of the first Adam who was also the federal head over all of his later seed (Rom 5:12-19). It is in Christ's temptation that the parallelism is particularly pronounced. Satan was present with the same strategies he used in the garden of Eden. He attempted to switch the Son's allegiance from the Father to himself (Luke 4:7). The probation of Jesus not only involved the responsibility of being victorious over Satan in the temptation (Luke 4:1-13) but also of being victorious over him through death (Heb. 2:14-15). The probation had to be undergone successfully in historical time to gain the reward of the covenanted kingdom (Rev. 5:9-10) promised in Genesis 1:28.<sup>12</sup> By His obedience in His probation, the champion of the woman's seed would bring salvation to the rest of her seed and bestow on them the kingdom.<sup>13</sup>

#### D. Promise

Jesus was sent from heaven with divine commitments from the Father. The messianic Psalms give the content of these oath commitments from the Father to the Son. The Father committed to the Son a kingship on earth over the entire earth (Ps. 2:6-9) and an eternal royal priesthood (Ps. 110:4; cf. Heb. 5:6; 7:17, 21).<sup>14</sup> The earthly kingdom and everlasting priesthood were the same as the promise made later to Adam of a world-wide kingdom (Gen. 1:28) and his role as a servant-king (Gen. 2:15a) and guardian-priest (Gen. 2:15b).<sup>15</sup>

The Father promised in addition to prepare a physical body within which the Son would dwell (Col. 2:9; Heb. 10:5), to deliver Him from the power of death (Ps. 16:8-11; Acts 2:25-28), to give to the Son a people whom He would redeem for His own possession (Ps. 22:27-28; John 17:2, 6, 24), to send the Son to be their representative (Rom. 5:18-19) and finally to reward Him with the glory He shared with the Father before creation (John 17:4).<sup>16</sup>

#### E. Blessings and Curses

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<sup>12</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 3.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 89-90.

<sup>14</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 87.

<sup>15</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 3.

<sup>16</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p. 518; L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 270.

## 1. Blessings

In John 17, God the Son recalled the commitment of God the Father to grant to Him, the obedient Messianic Servant, the glory He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5, 24). He presented His claim as the obedient Servant who had met the conditions of the eternal covenant by faithfully fulfilling His mission (John 17:4). As so, He then made His request that the grant of glory be conferred (John 17:5). Jesus, the second Adam, could stand before His judgment tree and declare that He had overcome temptation and that He had accomplished His charge to defeat Satan.<sup>17</sup> Because God the Son was “obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross... God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

## 2. Curses

The curse of the later Kingdom Covenant was death for the covenant breaker (Gen. 2:17). Yet Christ, though He was sinless (Heb. 4:15), suffered the curse vicariously for God’s people (Gal. 3:13).

The first Adam was disobedient by his eating of the tree. The second Adam obediently went to his tree and therefore bore the curse of all those for whom He is Champion, the curse brought about by the first Adam's eating from his tree. As a result the way is opened up to the tree of life (Rev. 2:7).

## F. The Deposit of the Text of the Covenant

### 1. The Text Itself

The document of the covenant between the Father and the Son is the “book. . . sealed with seven seals” of Revelation 5:1ff.<sup>18</sup> In the Roman Empire a book sealed with seven seals was a *diathēkē*, a last will and testament,<sup>19</sup> the same Greek word translated “covenant” throughout the New Testament.

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<sup>17</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 87.

<sup>18</sup> E. Michael Rusten, “A Critical Evaluation of Dispensational Interpretations of the Book of Revelation, (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1977), 278-85.

<sup>19</sup> Ulpian, Fragm. Vatic. 23.6; 28.6; Gaius Inst. 2.119, 147; Justinian, Inst. 2.10. 1-14; Ferdinand Mackeldey, *Handbook of Roman Law* (Philadelphia: T. and J. W. Johnson and Co., 1883), 514-17, Theodore Zahn, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (2 vols., Leipzig: A. Deichertsche Verbuchhandlung Dr. Werner Scholl, 1924-26), I:340-42; Theodor Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 3 vols.; (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1953), III:393-96;

Seven witnesses were required to sign and seal the testament.<sup>20</sup> The seven seals were attached to the threads with which the document was tied together, so that all seven seals had to be broken before the will could be read.<sup>21</sup> After the death of a testator, a testament could not be opened until the surviving witnesses had been brought together and had acknowledged their seals.<sup>22</sup> It would then be opened and executed.

That the seven sealed book is a testament is noteworthy in that the primary meaning of *diathēkē*, the word usually translated “covenant” in the New Testament, is “testament.”<sup>23</sup> A secondary meaning from Aristophanes (427 B.C.) was “compact” or “covenant.”<sup>24</sup> However, the translators of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament made beginning about 250 B.C., chose *diathēkē* to translate *berith* the Hebrew word for covenant instead of *suntheke*, the normal Greek word for “contract” or “covenant.”<sup>25</sup> (Specifically the Hebrew word for “covenant,” *berith*, is translated by *diathēkē* 268 times and by *sunthēkē* once.<sup>26</sup>)

The testamentary nature of the Old Testament covenants is particularly evident in the covenants dealing with dynastic succession. A ratification of the covenant was undertaken when there was a change of leaders in Israel.<sup>27</sup> The great king in the ancient Near East appointed his successor while he was still alive and then obligated his vassals by a treaty to recognize his successor.<sup>28</sup> This same form

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Ethelbert Stauffer, *Christ and the Caesars* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955), 181-83; G. R. Beasley-Murray, “The Revelation,” *The New Bible Commentary Revised* (Ed. by D. Guthrie and J. A. Motyer (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 1288; George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 623; Emmet Russell, “A Roman Law Parallel to Revelation Five,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* CXV (July, 1958), 258-64. Cf. Glenn W. Barker, William L. Lane and J. Ramsey Michaels, *The New Testament Speaks* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 371; G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 339-48.

<sup>20</sup> Mackeldey, *Handbook of Roman Law*, 516; Adolph Berger “Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series, LXIII Part 2: (1953), 707.

<sup>21</sup> Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, III, 406; George E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 80. Cf. *Gaii Institutionum Iuris Civilis Comentarium Quattuor* or Gaius, *Elements of Roman Law*, trans. and ed. by Edward Poste (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), 293.

<sup>22</sup> Berger, “Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law,” 707.

<sup>23</sup> Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 394.

<sup>24</sup> Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 395.

<sup>25</sup> J. Barton Payne, “Covenant (In the New Testament),” *Zondervan Pictorial Dictionary of the Bible*, I: 995-96; Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Dictionary*, 1717.

<sup>26</sup> Hatch and Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament*, I:300-302:II:1316.

<sup>27</sup> Klaus Baltzer, *The Covenant Formulary*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1971), 97.

<sup>28</sup> Baltzer, *Covenant Formulary*, 81-82.

was followed in Israel as in Deuteronomy 31-Joshua 1, Joshua 23-24, I Samuel 12, I Chronicles 22-29, II Kings 11.<sup>29</sup> From the viewpoint of the subject people, the treaty of a suzerain guaranteeing loyalty to his successor was an expression of their covenantal relationship to their king. However, from the viewpoint of the royal son(s), the treaty was testamentary. It was not in force until the testator died.

The identification of the seven-sealed book as a testament is consonant with the rest of Scripture. The New Testament frequently speaks of the church as gaining possession of its future blessings under the figure of an inheritance and, accordingly, uses the language of a testamentary disposition. In Roman law the appointment of an heir was the primary element in a testament.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, Hebrews 1:1-2 tells us that God has appointed His Son “heir of all things.” Just as the Roman father made his children his heirs so Romans 8:16-17 states, “The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him” Paul adds in Galatians 4:7, “Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.” As a matter of fact, every New Testament writer with the exception of Jude uses this figure of speech.<sup>31</sup>

What is the inheritance which God’s people will receive? In Daniel 7, the parallel passage to Revelation 4-5, the specific parallel to Christ’s receiving the book from God the Father (Rev. 5:8) is His receiving a kingdom<sup>32</sup> (Dan. 7:14) which in turn is given to the saints (Dan. 7:27). In Matthew 25:34 Christ says, “Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”<sup>33</sup> (cf. also Matt. 21:33-44; Luke 22:29-30; I Cor. 6:9-10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 1:14; 5:5; Col. 1:5, 12-13; 3:24; Heb. 6:12; 9:15;<sup>34</sup> James 2:15; I Peter 1:3-4; Rev. 21:7). Thus, the inheritance contained in the testament is the kingdom.<sup>35</sup> This inheritance is still laid up in heaven (I Peter 1:4) and therefore the testament has not yet been opened and executed.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Baltzer, *Covenant Formulary*, 63-83; Kline, *Treaty of the Great King* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963) 27-44.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 733.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Zahn, *New Testament Introduction*, III, 394.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Psalm 2:8.

<sup>33</sup> In Matthew 25:46 inheriting the kingdom is equated with eternal life. Cf. Mark 10:17, 23.

<sup>34</sup> Note that in Hebrews 9:15 Israel inherits the kingdom.

<sup>35</sup> James D. Hester, *Paul’s Concept of Inheritance: A Contribution to the Understanding of Heilsgeschichte*, *Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers*, No. 14 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1968), 36-104.

<sup>36</sup> Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 394.

When the seventh seal of the testament is opened in Revelation 8:1 one would expect to read about the inheritance of the kingdom. Instead John writes, “And I saw the seven angels who stand before God; and seven trumpets were given to them” (Rev. 8:2). As indicated above, these seven angels were no doubt the witnesses to the covenant/testament. Then in Revelation 8:5 we read, “And the angel took the censer; and filled it with the fire of the altar and threw it to the earth.” This fire thrown to the earth was a fire ordeal to determine who is worthy to inherit the kingdom. As will be discussed later, fire ordeals were a common judicial procedure in the Ancient Near East to identify the guilty and to vindicate the innocent.<sup>37</sup> The seven witness-angels announce the results of the fire ordeal. The first six angels announce that each of God’s enemies is found unworthy to inherit the kingdom. The “the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever’” (Rev. 11:5). Then will commence the millennial reign of Christ when in fulfillment of the promise of Genesis 1:28, the earth will be filled with the children of God, the earth will be subdued and God’s people will exercise dominion over the earth and its creatures. The Messianic Second Adam will have fulfilled the promise of Genesis 1:28 in history.<sup>38</sup>

Because it pleased God to make both the first and second Adams the federal representatives of corporate humanity, the obedient performance of the covenant obligation would have the result that all whom they represented would share the proposed grant of kingdom glory. In the case of the first Adam all the predestined mankind that should descend from him were represented by him in his covenant and would have shared the blessing of the kingdom if he had been obedient. In the case of the second Adam, the Lord Jesus, not all mankind is elect in Him and represented by Him in His covenant. Therefore only those elect through sovereign grace will be the beneficiaries of the eternal glory bestowed through His obedience.<sup>39</sup>

## 2. The Deposit of the Text

Just as ancient treaties were deposited with the nation’s gods in their temple, so God is the one who keeps possession of the covenant in His temple/throne room (Rev. 5:1). When at last “the kingdom of the world has

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<sup>37</sup> Tikva S. Frymer-Krensky, “The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1977).

<sup>38</sup> Rusten, “Revelation,” 366-437.

<sup>39</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 87-88.

become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ. . . the temple of God which is in heaven was opened and the ark of his covenant appeared in his temple” (Rev. 11:15-19). God will have fulfilled every covenant promise.

#### G. Witnesses

Elsewhere in Scripture the Holy Spirit is frequently pictured in the role of covenant witness.<sup>40</sup> The witnesses to international treaties typically included all of the gods of both the suzerain and the vassal. Here the Holy Spirit was the divine witness to the covenant. It was the responsibility of the witnesses to ensure that the blessings and curses contained in the treaty were carried out.<sup>41</sup> Therefore it is significant that it is the Holy Spirit who applies the benefits of salvation to God’s people. When Hebrews 9:14 speaks of “the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God,” this is a reference to the Holy Spirit’s role as a witness to the covenant ensuring that the covenantal curses deserved by all of God’s people were laid upon the Messianic Lamb of God. It will be shown later, for example, that the Holy Spirit was the witness to the covenant between God and Adam and Eve before the Fall.<sup>42</sup>

“The seven angels who stand before God” (Rev. 8:2) were no doubt the seven witnesses required by later Roman law.<sup>43</sup> Beginning with the intertestamental book I Enoch, angels are identified as covenant witnesses.<sup>44</sup> Later in the Dead Sea Scroll documents of the Manual of Discipline and the Damascus Document, angels have the role of witnesses and guarantors of the covenant, executing its curses on those who have broken their oath.<sup>45</sup> John mentions the angel-witnesses at this point to indicate that all legal requirements for the opening of the testament/covenant have been met. Since the covenant was composed by God, it would be only natural that the seven witnesses would be “the seven angels who stand before God” (Rev. 8:2).<sup>46</sup> These were the natural available witnesses in addition to the divine witness of the Holy Spirit.

#### H. The Oath and Sacrifice

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. Meredith M. Kline, “The Holy Spirit as Covenant Witness,” (Th.M. Thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, 1972); Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 128-29.

<sup>41</sup> George E. Mendenhall and Gary A. Herion, “Covenant,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1:1181.

<sup>42</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>43</sup> Rusten, “Revelation,” 359.

<sup>44</sup> Baltzer, *Covenant Formulary*, 24

<sup>45</sup> Baltzer, *Covenant Formulary*, 105-13.

<sup>46</sup> Rusten, “Revelation,” 360.

In a suzerainty treaty the vassal king took an oath of allegiance to the great king. In the ancient Near East, the oath often took the form of a ritual<sup>47</sup> frequently involving cutting.<sup>48</sup> Cutting was so central to covenant making in the Bible that the Hebrew verb for “making” a covenant is the word “cut.” In Jesus’ death “He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of [his] people to whom the stroke was due” (Isa 53:8). Other oath rituals were symbolic. In the Abrahamic Covenant God took the oath by passing between the divided (cut) carcasses of sacrificial animals. By so doing, God was symbolically swearing, “If I am not faithful of this covenant, may I experience the curse of being cut apart like these animals.” In the oath ritual of the cross, Christ was not simply saying, “May I experience the curse of death if I am unfaithful to my covenant with my Father.” He vicariously experienced the curse of death for all his people. In Christ’s oath ritual, he demonstrated his total allegiance to God the Father by being obedient unto death on the cross (Phil 2:8). This ratified his covenant with his Father and was foundational to all God’s covenants of grace with his people.<sup>49</sup> It is because of his perfect obedience unto death that “God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him, the name which is above every name” (Phil 2:9) and that one day “every tongue [will] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:11). It was by this sacrificial death that he “purchase[d] for God with [His] blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation...and...made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God” (Rev 5:10).

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<sup>47</sup> Hugenberger, *Marriage*, 194.

<sup>48</sup> Hillers, *Covenant*, 40-41.

<sup>49</sup> Kline, *Covenant*, 153.



## Chapter Three

### The Plot of the Bible Introduced: Genesis 1:1-2:3

The Bible is at the same time sixty-six books written by many authors and one book written by a single author, God. When it is viewed as one book, Genesis functions as its first chapter and initiates the plot of the Bible.<sup>1</sup> Within Genesis it is the first chapter which is the most crucial for understanding the Bible's plot. Specifically, Genesis 1 reveals that God has two primary purposes in the world, but in order to identify them and to understand their significance, we must first interact with many of the interpretational issues found in the chapter.

#### The Creator God

The Bible's first sentence is the familiar, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). With this statement, only seven words in Hebrew,<sup>2</sup> Moses announces to his initial audience in the wilderness of Sinai and to God's people of every subsequent generation that their God is the creator of the universe.<sup>3</sup> God is the subject of the Bible's very first sentence and in the seven day creation account (Gen 1:1-2:3) is mentioned thirty-five times, interestingly a multiple of seven. The creation account, indeed the entire Bible, is about him. To read it and to come to any other conclusion is to miss its point.<sup>4</sup>

The rest of the Bible echoes the teaching of Genesis 1. There was a time when no matter existed. The psalmist writes, "Before the mountains were born or you gave birth to the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God" (Ps 90:2). In the original creation God created all things out of nothing, *ex nihilo*. Hebrews 22:3 states, "By faith we understand that the

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<sup>1</sup> Tremper Longman III, *How to Read Genesis* (Downers Gove: InterVarsity, 2005), 15, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Moses uses the number seven and its multiples to demonstrate God's design and perfection. The three key words of Genesis 1:1, "God," "heavens" and "earth," are all repeated in Genesis 1:1-2:3 in multiples of seven. "God" is used thirty-five times; "earth" and "heavens" both twenty-one times. After the opening seven-word sentence, the next two phrases in Genesis 1:2 describing the chaotic condition of the earth are both composed of seven words in Hebrew. The phrase "God saw that (it) was (very) good" is found seven times in the initial creation account (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). The phrase "and it was so" is also repeated seven times. The narrative of the six days (Gen 1:3-31) leads to a climactic seventh (Gen 2:1-3). The account of the seventh day in Genesis 2:2-3a contains three sentences, each of seven Hebrew words and each containing the phrase "the seventh day." In the middle of the three sentences are the words "the seventh day." Such a pattern cannot be coincidence. (U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I From Adam to Noah Genesis I-VI* 8 [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961], 12-15; Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* [San Francisco: Harper, 1988], 66-68; Nahum M Sarna, *Genesis* [JPS Torah Commentary 1; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989], 4; W. Robert Godfrey, *God's Pattern for Creation: A Covenantal Reading of Genesis 1* [Phillipsburg: P&R, 2003], 32-33).

<sup>3</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 58.

<sup>4</sup> Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction on and Commentary* (Downers Gove: InterVarsity, 1967), 43.

worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.” Romans 4:17 tells us that “God ... calls into being that which does not exist.” God is the creator (Ps 33:6, 9; John 1:3; Col 1:16; Rev 4:11) who created everything out of nothing.<sup>5</sup> But when was that original creation? We will seek the answer in Genesis 1.

While creation is the major theme of Genesis 1, unfortunately many twenty-first century Christians have come to think of Genesis 1 primarily as fodder for the creation versus evolution debate. If that is all we see in the chapter, we are missing much of what God has there for us. When allowed to speak for itself, Genesis 1 triumphantly affirms the sovereignty, wisdom and omnipotence of the Creator God<sup>6</sup> and at the same time introduces the reader to God’s ultimate purposes.

### **The Translation of Genesis 1:1-2**

In reading any book, special attention needs to be given to its opening words and that is especially true of the book of Genesis.<sup>7</sup> Within Genesis 1 it is the first two verses that are the most important for understanding the chapter as a whole, and therefore the first issue to be decided is to determine their proper translation. Chart 4 shows a comparison of the translations of Genesis 1:1-2 in the New American Standard Bible (NASB), the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) and the New International Version (NIV).

The difference between these three translations, though slight, is significant. The NASB intimates that the dark, water-covered earth of Genesis 1:2 is the result of God’s creating work in Genesis 1:1. The NRSV translates Genesis 1:1 as a dependent “when” clause and implies that a

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<sup>5</sup> Wayne Grudem. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 262-65.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (WBC 1; Waco: Word, 1987), 40.

<sup>7</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000). 24.

### Chart 4

#### Alternate Translations of Genesis 1:1-2

	<u>New American Standard Bible</u>		<u>New Revised Standard Version</u>		<u>New International Version</u>
vs 1	In the beginning  God created the heavens and the earth.	vs 1	In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth,	vs 1	In the beginning  God created the heavens and the earth.
vs 2	The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep....	vs 2	the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep....	vs 2	Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep....

### Chart 5

#### Is the Formless Earth of Genesis 1:2 the Result of the Creation of Genesis 1:1?

	<u>Genesis 1</u>
vs 1	In the beginning <b>God created the heavens</b> and <b>the earth</b> .
vs 2	The earth was <b>formless</b> (Hebrew: <i>tohu</i> ) and void,  and <b>darkness</b> (Hebrew: <i>hoshek</i> ) was over the surface of the deep....
vs 18	For thus says the LORD, who <b>created the heavens</b> (He is the <b>God</b> who formed <b>the earth</b> and made it, He established it <i>and</i> did not <b>create it a waste place</b> (Hebrew: <i>tohu</i> ), <sup>1</sup> <i>but</i> formed it to be inhabited), "I am the LORD, and there is none else.
vs 19	I have not spoken in secret, in some <b>dark</b> (Hebrew: <i>hoshek</i> ) land...."

<sup>1</sup>Clearly Genesis 1:2 cannot be describing the result of the creation of Genesis 1:1 since Isaiah 45:18 states that God did not create the earth as a formless/waste place (Hebrew: *tohu*).

formless, void earth was already present when God began to create in 1:1. The NIV also intimates that the formless, empty earth was already in existence at the time of Genesis 1:1, but takes verse 1 as an independent clause.<sup>8</sup>

### **Genesis 1:1 - A Summary Statement of the Chapter**

Whereas Bible-believing Christians differ on the translation of Genesis 1:1, the weight of evidence favors the translating of it as an independent clause<sup>9</sup> and understanding it as a summary statement of the creating work of the whole chapter.<sup>10</sup> The opening phrase of Genesis, “in the beginning,” refers not to a time before the six days nor to the first day, but to all six days of creation<sup>11</sup>. The initial period indicated by “in the beginning” is not just verse 1 but the whole first chapter.<sup>12</sup> Although many have suggested that Genesis 1:1 is describing the first event of creation rather than summarizing the creative activity of the six days, the Hebrew grammar makes this improbable.<sup>13</sup> Genesis 1:1 could not be describing just the creation of the “formless” (Hebrew: *tohu*) world of Genesis 1:2 because Isaiah 45:18, which clearly alludes to the language

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Longman, *Genesis*, 102-3; John H. Walton, *Genesis* (The NIV Application Commentary; Grand rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 69.

<sup>9</sup> Crucial to translating Genesis 1:1 is the grammatical form of the first Hebrew word *bereshit*, “in the beginning.” Here the issues are complicated and require some understanding of Hebrew to comprehend fully. (See Bill T. Arnold, *Encountering the Book of Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 25; Bill T. Arnold, “reshit,” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 3:1025-26). If the word is in a grammatical form called the construct state, then Genesis 1:1 must be a dependent “when” clause as in the New Revised Standard Version. However if it is in the absolute state, the other grammatical possibility, then the verse must be an independent clause as in the traditional translation. What is most convincing in resolving this issue is that every single ancient version translates Genesis 1:1 as an independent clause. These, including the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament begun about 250 B.C.; Targum Onkelos, the official Aramaic paraphrase of the Hebrew Pentateuch; the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible made by Jerome beginning in 382; and the three second century revisers of the Septuagint: Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, all translate the verse as an independent clause (Arnold, “reshit,” 3:1025-26; Bruce K. Waltke, *Creation and Chaos* [Portland: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974], 30). The grammatical construction that Moses used for *bereshit*, “in the beginning,” is the only one which he could have used to indicate that the sentence was an independent clause. On the other hand, an alternative grammatical construction for “in the beginning” would have clearly indicated that the phrase was a dependent “when” clause (Waltke, *Creation*, 30). As a result, we can conclude that the traditional wording of the verse is correct.

For a full discussion of the grammatical issues, see Waltke, *Creation*, 18-36.

<sup>10</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (rev. ed.; The Old testament Library, eds. Peter Ackroyd, et al.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 49.

<sup>11</sup> Whereas the Hebrew word *reshit* can mean the beginning of something, in Genesis 1:1 it more likely means an initial period of time. Examples of this usage are Job 8:7 and Jeremiah 28:1. In Job 3:8 the “beginning” refers to Job’s life before his tribulations began. The word “beginning” in the phrase “in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah” in Jeremiah 28:1 does not refer to a point in time but to the initial period of a king’s reign which in a unique reckoning system was not counted as part of the king’s official reign (Walton, *Genesis*, 68; John Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound: A Provocative New Look at the Creation Account* [Sisters, Ore: Multnomah, 1996], 38-42; John Sailhamer, “Genesis,” in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990], 2:20-230.

<sup>12</sup> Walton, *Genesis*, 70.

<sup>13</sup> See Waltke, *Genesis*, 58-59; Walton, *Genesis*, 70.

of Genesis 1 as shown in Chart 5, specifically states that God did not create the world *tohu* or “a waste land” as the word is translated there. The God of light would not create a world of darkness.<sup>14</sup>

That Genesis 1:1 is a summary of the whole chapter can be seen by comparing it with Genesis 2:1-3, the account of the seventh day and the final section of the introductory literary unit. When two sections of a passage are parallel to one other but in inverted order, it is called a chiasm. Chart 6 shows that, when the Hebrew word order is followed, Genesis 2:1-3 repeats the phrases of Genesis 1:1 except in reverse order, forming a chiasm. This not only clearly sets off Genesis 1:1-2:3 as a literary unit but also shows that Genesis 1:1 is a summary of the creation of all six days.<sup>15</sup> Genesis 1:1-2:3 thus follows the normal Semitic tendency to state first a general proposition and then to give the particulars.<sup>16</sup>

<b>Chart 6</b>	
<b>Chiasm of Genesis 1:1 and 2:1-3</b>	
(Hebrew Word order)	
A	In the beginning <b>created</b> (1:1a)
B	<b>God</b> (1:1b)
C	<b>the heavens and the earth.</b> (1:1c)
C'	Thus <b>the heavens and the earth</b> were completed....(Gen 2:1)
B'	„ <b>God</b> ....(Gen 2:2)
A'	... <b>created</b> ....(Gen 2:3)

### Genesis 1:2 - The Description of a Chaotic Earth Already Present

Since Genesis 1:1 is a summary of the creation of the entire chapter and since Isaiah 45:18 tells us that God did not initially create the earth as described in Genesis 1:2, Moses is assuming the dark, water-covered earth to be already in existence when he picks up the story at the beginning of Genesis (see footnote for details).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Waltke, *Creation*, 52.

<sup>15</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 5, 36.

<sup>16</sup> Waltke, *Creation*, 33.

<sup>17</sup>To understand the relationship between Genesis 1:1 and 2, it is important to remember that these verses were written in Hebrew, not English, and therefore must be understood in light of Hebrew grammar. God reveals himself in terms of the language, thought forms and culture of the initial audience to which a particular book of the Bible was initially written (David Wilkenson, *The Message of Creation: Encountering the Lord of the Universe* [BST; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002], 22).

One theoretical possibility is that Genesis 1:2 is a sequential clause after verse 1. Advocates of this view, popularly called the “gap theory,” translate Genesis 1:1-2 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and then the earth became....” Unfortunately this view does not stand up to a grammatical analysis of the Hebrew

The resulting structure of Genesis 1 is as follows:

- I. Introductory Summary Statement
- II. Pre-creation Situation 1:2
- III. Narrative of Creation 1:3-31<sup>18</sup>

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text. For example, this view assumes that the “ands” beginning verses 2 and 3 both mean “and then.” The “and” beginning verse 3 does indicate sequence and in fact the grammatical construction is called “*waw* consecutive.” On the other hand, the “and” at the beginning of verse 2 is different in both form and function and cannot introduce a clause which is independent and sequential. In other words, the “and” beginning verse 2 cannot mean “and then” (Waltke, *Creation*, 20-22).

Another view of the relationship of verse 1 to verse 2 is that verse 2 indicates the state of the earth when it was created in verse 1. According to this view God originally created the earth formless (*tohu*) and void (*bohu*). However, Isaiah 45:18, clearly alluding to Genesis 1:1-2 as seen in Chart 5, specifically states that God did not create the earth *tohu* here translated “a waste place.” In addition, whereas the rest of creation is called into existence by the Word of God, there is no such reference in Genesis 1:2 (Waltke, *Creation*, 25). There is in fact no evidence that the earth as described in Genesis 1:2 is the result of God’s creating work (Gregory A Boyd, *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997], 103).

The explanation of the opening verses of Genesis most consistent with their grammar is that verse 1 is an introductory independent clause and verse 2 is a circumstantial “when” clause associated with verse three, indicating that the chaotic state described in verse 2 was already in existence when the story is taken up in verse one. (Waltke, *Creation*, 32-36; von Rad, *Genesis*, 47; Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 720; Walton, *Genesis*, 70). The resulting translation would be similar to that of the New International Version: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” The NET Bible translates these verses, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was without shape and empty, and darkness was over the surface of the watery deep, but the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the water. God said, ‘Let there be light’” (2<sup>nd</sup> beta ed.).

In favor of this view is the fact that this grammatical construction is the same as Genesis 2:4-7, as shown in Chart 22. In both passages there is first an introductory statement of creation followed by a circumstantial clause with the Hebrew “and” followed by a noun and then the verb “was,” indicating an initial negative circumstance prior to creation. This is then followed by the main clause of the common Hebrew construction of the word “and” followed by a verb in the Hebrew imperfect tense indicating sequence and in both passages describing a creation (Waltke, *Creation*, 32-36). A parallel grammatical construction is found also in Genesis 3:1 (which introduces the creation of sin in the human race), although this passage does not have a separate introductory summary statement since it is a sub-story of the creation of man introduced by the summary statement of Genesis 2:4 (Waltke, *Creation*, 32-36). The opening sentences of contemporary Near Eastern creation stories similarly have parallel grammatical structures (Waltke, *Creation*, 33-35) and assume that matter was already present at the time of creation. (Longman, *Genesis*, 103).

Asserting that Genesis 1:1 begins the story of creation with a chaotic earth already present (Gen 1:2) is not suggesting that God did not create the heavens and the earth out of nothing. It is simply stating that Genesis 1:2 was not the first stage of creation (cf. Isa 45:18). The author of Hebrews 11:3 states unequivocally, "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible" (Heb 11:3). The question is not whether God created the world *ex nihilo*, but when he did so.

### Genesis 1:2 - A Description of an Earth under Judgment

Additional evidence that the dark earth of Genesis 1:2 cannot be the first stage of God's creation is the fact that throughout the Bible darkness consistently represents evil. Darkness is a symbol for wickedness (Prov 2:13; Isa 5:20), judgment (Exod 10:21; Isa 5:30; 8:22; Lam 3:2; Zeph 1:15) and death (Job 10:20-22; 17:13; Ps 88:11-12; Eccl 6:3-4).<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, "God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). Salvation itself is associated with light (Ps 27:1; Acts 26:28; 2 Cor 4:4-6). On the first day of creation only the light was called good (Gen 1:4)<sup>20</sup> and the darkness was what remained of the chaos of Genesis 1:2<sup>21</sup>.

The dark, water-covered earth of Genesis 2:2 is in direct contrast to God's final creation described in the book of Revelation. On the new earth "there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them" (Rev 22:5) and "there is no longer any sea" (Rev 21:1). In other words, the Bible

Chart 22				
Grammatical Parallels in Genesis 1-3				
		Genesis 1	Genesis 2	Genesis 3
I	Introductory Summary Statement	vs 1 In the beginning God <b>created the heavens and the earth.</b>	vs 4 This is the account of <b>the heavens and the earth when they were created....</b>	(2:4 This is the account of <b>the heavens and the earth when they were created<sup>5</sup>....</b> )
II	Circumstantial clause of the pattern (Hebrew) <i>w</i> ("and" in the sense of "now") + Noun + Verb <i>hayah</i> ("was") indicating an initial negative circumstance prior to a creation	vs 2 <b>Now<sup>2</sup></b> the earth <b>was</b> formless....	vss 5-6 <b>Now</b> no shrub of the field <b>was</b> yet in the earth....	vs 1a <b>Now</b> the serpent <b>was</b> ....
III	Main clause of <i>waw</i> consecutive (a very common Hebrew construction beginning with the word "and" + a verb in the imperfect tense) indicating sequence and here describing a creation <sup>1</sup>	vs 3 <b>And<sup>3</sup></b> God said....	vs 7 <b>And<sup>4</sup></b> the LORD God formed man....	vs 1b <b>And</b> he said.... <sup>6,7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Bruce K. Waltke, *Creation and Chaos* (Portland: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974), 32-36.  
<sup>2</sup>Translation of Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 34.  
<sup>3</sup>Translation of Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 34.  
<sup>4</sup>Translation of Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 33.  
<sup>5</sup>This section does not have a separate introductory summary statement since it is a substory of the creation stories regarding man introduced by Genesis 2:4 (Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 33).  
<sup>6</sup>Genesis 3:1ff. describes the creation of sin in the human race (Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 35).  
<sup>7</sup>The opening lines of contemporary Near Eastern creation stories also have parallel grammatical structures (Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 33-35).

<sup>18</sup> Waltke, *Creation*, 36.

<sup>19</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 16; Sarna, *Genesis*, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 18.

<sup>21</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis*, 52.

begins with a dark, water-covered earth and ends with a new earth where all is light and where the only water is the river of the water of life (Rev 21: 1).

The reversal of darkness and light from the beginning to the end of history is illustrated another way in Chart 7. The Bible begins with a dark earth and the God of light hidden behind the curtain of the heavens (Ps 104:1-2), whereas the new creation is pictured as a God-illuminated earth (Rev 21:1,3; 22:5) with the wicked being cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt 22:13). This is also seen in Chart 8 where the final destiny of God's



Chart 7

**The Reversal of Darkness and Light from the Beginning to the End of History**

**The Beginning**

**Darkness**

The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep.... (Gen 1:2)

**The End**

**Light**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.... And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them.... And there shall no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need for the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them.... (Rev 21:1,3; 22:5)

**God's Light Behind the Curtain of the Heavens**

O LORD my God, You are very great;  
You are clothed with splendor and majesty,  
covering Thyself with light as with a cloak,  
stretching out heaven like a *tent* curtain...( Ps 104:1-2).

**Outer Darkness**

"...throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 22:13).

## Chart 8

### God's Final Separation in Light of Genesis 1:2

#### The Initial Description of the Earth

	<b>Darkness</b>		<b>Deep/Waters/Lake/Sea</b>
Gen 1:2b	... <b>darkness</b>	Gen 1:2c	was over the surface of the deep ...over the surface of the waters.

#### The Final Destiny of God's Enemies

		Rev 20:15	And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, <b>he was thrown</b> (Greek: <i>ballo</i> ) <b>into the lake of fire.</b>
Matt 22:13	"..., <b>throw</b> (Greek: <i>ekballo</i> ) him <b>into the outer darkness</b> ; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."		

#### The Final Destiny of God's People

		Rev 21:1	And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and <b>there is no</b> longer <i>any</i> sea.
Rev 21:23-25	And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. ...for <b>there shall be no</b> night there....		

enemies is the exact opposite of that of his people in terms of darkness and the nautical terms of deep, lake and sea. The destiny of God's enemies is the lake of fire (Rev 20:15) in outer darkness (Matt 22:13) whereas for God's people on the new earth there will be no night (Rev 21:23-25) and no sea (Rev 21:1).

What is most significant in comparing Genesis 1:2 to the book of Revelation is that the last of the four visions through which God revealed himself to the apostle John (21:9-22:17)<sup>22</sup> shows how God ultimately will reverse all the negative conditions of the earth described in Genesis 1:2. This is summarized in Chart 9. Instead of a formless earth (Gen 1:2a), Revelation 21:9-23 describes the form of the new earth. Instead of an empty earth (Gen 1:2b), the next verses in Revelation describe the filled new earth (Rev 21:24-27). Revelation 22:5 next indicates God's light to be the ultimate antidote to the darkness of Genesis 1:2. And corresponding to the reference to the Spirit and the waters in Genesis 1:2, Revelation 22:17, the final verse in the vision, proclaims, "The **Spirit** and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the **water** of life without cost (author's emphasis)."

<sup>22</sup> Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 32-35.

## Chart 9

### The Content of the Fourth and Final Vision of Revelation, 21:9-22:17, against the Background of Genesis 1:2

#### Genesis 1:2

The earth was formless

and void,

and darkness

was over the surface of the deep,

and the Spirit of God

was moving over the surface of the waters.

#### Revelation 21-22

21:9-23 The Formed New Earth

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. *There were* three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them *were* the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, *according to* human measurements, which are *also* angelic *measurements*. The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb.

21:24-27 The Filled New Earth

The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. In the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

22:5 The Light of the New Earth

And there shall no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

22:1-4 The Water of the New Earth

Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of* fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him and they will see His face, and His name *will be* on their foreheads.

22:17a The Spirit's Invitation

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come."

22:17b to the Water of Life

And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

Lastly, Revelation 21:23-22:5 is written in the form of a chiasm, an inverted parallelism, and again illustrates how the final glorious new earth is the exact opposite of the chaotic earth described in Genesis 1:2. This is shown in Chart 10.

Genesis 1:1-2 itself forms a chiasm as found in Chart 11.<sup>23</sup> In a chiasm the central propositions are what are being emphasized. In the chiasm of Genesis 1:1-2 the emphasis is on the negative conditions of the chaotic world.

In light of all the accumulated evidence, it is possible to conclude that the earth of Genesis 1:2 could not be the initial creation of a God who only creates what is good (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). God would not create an earth such as this (Isa 45:18)<sup>24</sup>.

If God did not create the earth as described in Genesis 1:2, what is the explanation for its being in this condition? The answer is found in Jeremiah 4:23-26 and Isaiah 34:11, the two other Bible passages beside Genesis 1:2 that contain both the words “formless” and “void.” In each of these texts these terms are applied to the results of a catastrophic divine judgment.

A comparison of Genesis 1:1-2:3 and Jeremiah 4:23-26 is found in Charts 12 and 13.<sup>25</sup> The context of Jeremiah 4 is that God is pronouncing judgments upon his rebellious people (Jer 4:13). Verses 23-26 are part of a lament over Judah’s coming destruction at the hands of the Babylonian armies (Jer 4:12). In this setting God likens the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah (Jer 4:4) in his wrath to returning creation to the *tohu* and *bohu* of Genesis 1:2 (Jer 4: 26). Creation will be reversed in judgment.

The other passage in the Old Testament that pairs “formless” and “void,” is Isaiah 34:11 which is a description of the Lord’s “day of vengeance” against Edom (Isa 34:8). Here, regarding their land (Isa 34:9), God states that “He shall stretch over it the line of desolation (Hebrew: *tohu*) and the plumb line of emptiness (Hebrew: *bohu*)” (Isa 34:11). In other words, the plumb line which normally would be a tool of construction is here one of destruction and judgment.<sup>26</sup> The judgment of a day of the Lord is once again likened to a reversal of creation.

Since in both Jeremiah 4:23-26 and Isaiah 34:11 *tohu* and *bohu* describe the results of God’s cataclysmic judgment upon his enemies in a day of his wrath, one would expect to find the

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<sup>23</sup> Joel W. Rosenberg, “Kingship vs. Kinship: Political Allegory in the Bible – A New Reading of Gen 1-3 and Related Texts” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Cruz, 1978), 11.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. E.A. Speiser, Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes (Anchor Bible 1; Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 12-13.

<sup>25</sup> Adapted from Michael Fishbane, “Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern,” *Vetus Testamentum* 21 (1971) : 152 cited by Waltke, *Creation*, 12.

<sup>26</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39* (New International Commentary on the Old Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 615.

same to be true of Genesis 1:2, and that is indeed the case. We will see shortly who the enemies were who were the cause of God's turning creation into chaos before beginning his (re-)creation of the heavens and the earth.

### **The Cause of the Dark, Water-covered Earth of Genesis 1:2**

Having established that Genesis 1:2 describes the state of the earth at the time of the creation of the present earth, one must next determine what precipitated God's judgment. If one

## Chart 10

### The Chiasm of Revelation 21:23-22:5 against the Background of Genesis 1:2

<u>Genesis 1:2</u>	<u>Revelation 21:23-22:5</u>
...darkness	A <b>And the city has no need of the sun</b> or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of <b>God has illumined</b> it, and its <b>lamp</b> is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its <b>light</b> , and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. In the daytime (for <b>there will be no night</b> there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; (21:12-26)
was over the face <sup>1</sup>	B and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose <b>names</b> are written in the Lamb's book of life. (21:23-27)
of the deep;	C And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from <b>the throne of God and of the Lamb</b> , in the middle of its street. (22:1-2a)
of the deep;	D On either side of the river was <b>the tree</b> of life, (22:2b)
	E bearing twelve <i>kinds of fruit</i> , (22:2c)
	E' yielding its <b>fruit</b> every month; (22:2d)
	D' and the leaves of <b>the tree</b> were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse <sup>2</sup> ; (22:2e-3a)
was over the <b>face</b> <sup>1</sup>	C' and <b>the throne of God and of the Lamb</b> will be in it,
	B' and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His <b>face</b> , and His <b>name will be</b> on their foreheads. (22:3b-4)
...darkness	A' And <b>there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light</b> of a <b>lamp</b> nor the <b>light of the sun</b> , because the Lord <b>God will illumine</b> them; and they will reign forever and ever. (22:5) <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>NASB margin and the literal meaning of the Hebrew word.

<sup>2</sup>Revelation 22:3a clarifies Revelation 22:2b, lest anyone might think that the leaves of the tree of life were for healing from any results of the curse.

<sup>3</sup>Revelation 21:23-22:5, the final descriptive section in the Bible shows how God has diametrically forever changed the initial condition of the earth found in Genesis 1:2. Instead of darkness, the glory of God illumines the earth (Rev 21:23) and there will be no night there (Rev 21:25). Instead of the deep covering the earth, the river of the water of life flows from the throne of God and the Lamb (Rev 22:1).

## Chart 11

### The Chiasm of Genesis 1:1-2

- A In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth.  
B The earth was formless and void,  
B' and darkness was over the surface of the deep;<sup>1</sup>  
A' and the Spirit of **God** was moving over the surface of the waters.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Typically, whatever is placed in the middle of a chiasm is its most important statement(s), in this case the description of the formless, void, dark, water-covered earth.

<sup>2</sup>Adapted from Joel W. Rosenberg, "Kingship vs. Kinship: Political Allegory in the Bible - A New Reading of Gen. 1-3 and Related Texts" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Cruz, 1978), 11.

## Chart 12

### The Return of Creation to Chaos under God's Fierce Anger in Jeremiah 4:23-26

	<u>Creation</u>	<u>Becomes Chaos</u>
vs 23a	Earth	Formless and Void
vs 23b	Heavens	No Light
vs 24a	Mountains	Shaking <sup>1</sup>
vs 25a	Man	No Man
vs 25b	Birds	Fled
vs 26a	Fruitful Land	A Wilderness
vs 26b	Cities	Pulled Down <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>A technical term for the final shaking of the world at the return of chaos (Brevard S. Childs, "The Enemy from the North and the Chaos Tradition," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 78 [1959]: 197).

<sup>2</sup>Adapted from Michael Fishbane, "Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern," *Vetus Testamentum* 21 (1971) 152 in Waltke, "Creation," 132:141.

asks the question whether there is any similar description elsewhere in the Bible of a dark, water-covered earth, the answer is "Yes, Noah's flood."<sup>27</sup>

What triggered the flood? The primary cause of the flood was the incident recorded in Genesis 6: 1-4 where "the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Boyd, *God*, 111.

took wives for themselves.” Christians differ in their interpretations of this passage but what appears to be determinative is that the expression "sons of God" in the Old Testament

### Chart 13

#### Parallels Between Genesis 1:1-2:3 and Jeremiah 4:23-26

<u>Day of Creation</u>		<u>Genesis 1-2</u>		<u>Jeremiah 4</u>
Precreation	1:2	Formless and Void	vs 23a	Formless and Void
First	1:3-5	Light	vs 23c	Light
Second	1:6-8	Heavens	vs 23b	Heavens
Third	1:9-13	Earth	vs 24	Mountains and Hills
Fourth	1:14-19	Luminaries	vs 23c	Light
Fifth	1:20-23	Birds	vs 25b	Birds
Sixth	1:26-31	Man	vs 25a	Man
Seventh	2:1-3	Sabbath	vs 26	God's Fierce Anger <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from Michael Fishbane, "Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern," *Vetus Testamentum* 21 (1971) 152 in Waltke, "Creation," 132:141.

refers to angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).<sup>28</sup> The angels of Genesis 6:2 fell from their position in heaven and married women.<sup>29</sup> The passage that seems to confirm the interpretation that this

<sup>28</sup> There are three primary interpretations of the identity of the "Sons of God" (Gen. 6:2, 4). The first of these is that the Sons of God are men from the godly line of Seth. It is argued that the descendants of Seth represent God's true people (Gen. 4:26) and so rightly can be called "the sons of God" (Gen. 6:2). Therefore the sin of the godly sons of Seth was to take wives indiscriminately from the daughters of men (Gen. 6:2). However, the sons of God in Genesis 6:2 are contrasted with "men" (Gen. 6:1), (Hebrew: *haadam*), the Adamic race. This would eliminate the possible identification of the "sons of God" with the descendants of Seth. (D. W. B. Robinson, "Sons Children) of God," *The New Bible Dictionary*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1206.). The normal meaning of the term "sons of God" is "angels" (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Dan. 3:25, 28) and there is nothing in the text to cause the reader to assume anything different (Kidner, *Genesis*, 84).

Another view states that the sons of God are royalty. This is a very old view. Targum Onkelos translates "sons of God" (Gen. 6:2, 4) as "Sons of lords" (Sailhamer, "Genesis," II, 76). (Targums were Aramaic paraphrases of the Old Testament read in the synagogue service after the reading of Scripture for the benefit of those who only understood Aramaic. Targum Onkelos was the official Targum on the Pentateuch and dates from the second or third century A..D.) Ancient texts attest to an ideology of divine kingship, and human kings were called sons of various gods. In this view the sin is that of polygamy as kings inducted "whomever they chose" (Gen. 6:2) into their royal harems. (Meredith G. Kline, "Genesis," *The New Bible Commentary, Revised* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970], 87). However, it would be puzzling why subjects as familiar as kingship and polygamy would be discussed so indirectly (Kidner, *Genesis*, 84).

The view that seems to explain the Biblical data the best is that the sons of God were angels who fell into sin. In addition to the arguments given in the text, in Daniel 3 "a son of the gods" (vs. 25) is identified as an angel (vs. 28). The craving of demons for a body seen in the gospels (Luke 11:24-26, etc.) offers a parallel to their apparent hunger for sexual experience (Kidner, *Genesis*, 84). Of great significance is the fact that the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament from as early as 250 B. C., translates "sons of God" sometimes by "angels of God" shows that this interpretation was held at a very early time. The version of the Septuagint found in the Codex Alexandrinus (c. 450 A.D.) translates sons of God "angels" in Genesis 6:2. This interpretation is also found in the Book of Enoch (200-0 B.C.), Philo (1st century A.D.), Josephus (1st century A.D.), most rabbinical writers and in the oldest church fathers, Justin (100-165 A.D.), Tertullian (160/70 - 215/20 A.D.), Cyprian (200/10 - 258 A.D.), and Ambrose (339-397 A.D.).

For a full discussion, see Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, 262-65, 271-72 and Boyd, *God*, 138-40.



passage is speaking of fallen angels taking human wives is Jude 6-7. There Jude writes, "And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire." The sin of the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah was homosexuality (Gen 19:4-5) in going "after strange flesh." They did this according to Jude "in the same way as these" fallen angels "went after strange flesh." To what other incident would this refer, than to the angels of Genesis 6 going "after the strange flesh" (Jude 7) of "the daughters of men" (Gen 6:2)?

Peter in his discussion of these same angels writes, "... God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment" (2 Pet 2:4). He then immediately in the same sentence goes on to discuss Noah's flood, "and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2 Pet 2:5), the two events apparently being linked together in his mind.

Since the sin which brought on the flood was a fall of angels, it is reasonable to investigate whether the original fall of Satan was the event that precipitated the water-covered earth of Genesis 1:2. Genesis does not tell us when Satan's fall occurred. Certainly it was before Genesis 3:1 where Satan appears as the serpent in the garden of Eden. It is theoretically possible that the fall of the angels may have occurred between Genesis 1:1 and 3:1, but, if it did, it was a major event which went unmentioned.

A positive clue to the time of the fall of Satan is found in Revelation 12:3 where we are introduced to a "dragon having seven heads." To ensure that the reader understands exactly who is being symbolized by the dragon, John identifies him in verse 9 of the chapter as "the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan." The ancient Near East was familiar with a seven-headed snake/dragon named Lotan who was the enemy of the gods in ancient Ugaritic myths<sup>30</sup>. That Lotan is the Ugaritic equivalent of the Bible's Leviathan, "the Twisting One,"<sup>31</sup> is shown in Chart 14 which compares Isaiah 27:1 to the Ugaritic statement, "When you smote Lotan the

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<sup>29</sup> The objection is often made that according to Matthew 22:30 angels do not marry. However, this verse is only speaking of unfallen angels.

<sup>30</sup> Ugarit was an ancient city state on the Mediterranean Sea in what is today modern day Lebanon. Texts discovered there from the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B. C. have provided the most detailed information available regarding the culture of Canaan. For more information regarding Ugarit, see M. Liverani, "Ugarit; Ugaritic," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., 3:937.

<sup>31</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, "The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132(1975): 33.

fleeing serpent, you made an end of the twisting serpent, the mighty one of the seven heads.”<sup>32</sup> Isaiah 27: 1 using parallel terminology states, “In that day the LORD will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, with His fierce and great and mighty sword, even Leviathan the twisted serpent; and He will kill the dragon who *lives* in the sea.” The smitten Leviathan/Lothan is described in both passages a “the fleeing serpent” and “the twisting/twisted serpent.” The Ugaritic passage adds the important detail that Leviathan/Lothan has seven heads, the same number as the dragon/serpent of Revelation 12:3.<sup>33</sup> The fact that Isaiah alluded to the tradition of Ugarit from centuries earlier is an indication that the Ugaritic myth was a pagan corruption of an ancient saying of God’s people.

<b>Chart 14</b>	
<b>A Ugaritic Parallel to Isaiah 27:1</b>	
<u>Isaiah 27:1</u>	<u>UT, 67:I:1-3<sup>1</sup></u>
In that day the LORD will punish <b>Leviathan the fleeing serpent</b> , With His fierce and great and mighty sword, Even Leviathan <b>the twisted serpent</b> ; And He will kill the dragon who lives in the sea.	When you smote <b>Lotan the fleeing serpent</b> , you made an end of <b>the twisting serpent</b>  the mighty one of the seven heads.
<sup>1</sup> Cited by G. P. Hugenberger, “Leviathan,” ISBE, rev. ed.; 3:109.	

Rahab,<sup>34</sup> meaning “the Proud One,”<sup>35</sup> is another name for Leviathan,<sup>36</sup> pride being one of the reasons for Satan’s fall (Ezek 28:17).<sup>37</sup> In Hebrew poetry, parallel statements are often

<sup>32</sup> UT , 67: I:1-3, cited by G. P. Hugenberger, “Leviathan,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed. 3:109.

<sup>33</sup>In Psalm 74:14 there is a reference to “the heads (plural) of Leviathan” without a specific number being given.

<sup>34</sup> Rahab the dragon/sea monster is not to be confused with Rahab the heroine of the fall of Jericho whose name is spelled differently in Hebrew.

<sup>35</sup> Waltke , “Creation , “ 132:32.

<sup>36</sup> Not only are Leviathan and Rahab described as having similar roles as the enemy in connection with the chaos of Genesis 1:2, but both are labeled “the fleeing serpent,” Rahab in Job 26: 12-13 and Leviathan in Psalm 89:10.

<sup>37</sup> Although the interpretation of Ezekiel 28:11-19 is disputed, it is likely that these verses include a reference to Satan. The prophecy is “a lamentation over the king of Tyre” (Ezek 28:12). Ezekiel used the word “king” infrequently and therefore its use here instead of the word “leader” (NASB) or “prince” (ESV) used in Ezekiel 28:2 is significant. In verses 11-19, Ezekiel describes this “king” in terms that would not apply to a man. This “king” was present in the Garden of Eden (v. 13), had been a heavenly cherub (v. 14a), had access to the holy mountain of God (v 14b), and was created sinless. When the immediate hearers would have heard of the “King of Tyre,” they would

synonymous and both Leviathan and Rahab are used in parallel in poetic passages to the Hebrew word *tannin* (Ps 74:13 and Isa 27:1 of Leviathan; Isa 51:9 of Rahab) translated “dragon” in Isaiah 27:1 and 51:9 and “sea monster(s)” in Psalm 74:13<sup>38</sup>. In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Greek word which is used to translate *tannin* in the Isaiah passages is *drakon*,<sup>39</sup> the word translated “dragon” throughout Revelation 12. In other words, Leviathan and Rahab thus are names applied to Satan in several passages.

Revelation 12:3-4 informs us that when Satan the dragon originally rebelled against God, one-third of the angels joined him.<sup>40</sup> He dispatched his angelic allies, now demons, to the earth as his invading army (Rev 12:4). Far from a random act, Satan’s goal from the beginning of his revolt was to be the god of this world (2 Cor 4:4; cf. Isa 14:13-14). That was the reason he asked Eve whether she would like to “be like God” (Gen 3:4). He felt that what had motivated him to rebel against God (Isa 14:14b) would motivate her as well. Satan’s agenda from the time of his fall was to be ruler of the world (John 12:31).

In several texts<sup>41</sup> such as are shown in Chart 15, God is pictured as in conflict with the dragon. In these passages, God is described as defeating the dragon/Leviathan/Rahab in the context of the chaotic earth of Genesis 1:2.<sup>42</sup> It is significant that the term “dragon” is used in Revelation 12:3-4, a passage describing his initial fall. Apparently the fall of Satan and his angels to the earth (Rev 12:3-4) preceded Genesis 1, and Genesis 1:2 describes the results of God’s judgment on them and the earth they had made their headquarters. God’s response to the fall of Satan and his angels was the same as his response to the second fall of angels in Genesis 6:1-4. In both cases he sent a flood that was a reversal of creation.

When one understands Genesis 1:2 as describing God’s response to the fall of Satan, the story line of the Bible becomes complete from beginning to end. It begins with Satan throwing

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have thought of the god of the city. The god of the city was Malcart whose name means “king of the city.” The gods of the cities were demons (Deut 32:17). Apparently the god of Tyre was Satan. See Charles H.D. Dyer, “Ezekiel” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck; Wheaton: Victor, 1985), 1:1283.

<sup>38</sup> F. A. Spina, “Rahab,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed. 4:34.

<sup>39</sup> In the Septuagint of Psalm 74:13 the phrase mentioning to the dragon/sea monsters was omitted.

<sup>40</sup> In the book of Revelation stars symbolize angels. The reader is informed in the very first chapter of the book that “the seven stars” which Jesus held in his right hand (Rev 1:16) “are the angels of the seven churches” (Rev 1:20). Satan himself is symbolized by a star in Revelation 8:10 and 9:1 as he is also in Isaiah 14:12.

<sup>41</sup> Allusions to God’s conflict with a dragon are found in Job 9, 26; Psalms 74, 89, 93, 104, Isaiah 27, 51 (Maarten J. Paul, “Leviathan,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2:779).

<sup>42</sup> For a further discussion of the defeat of the dragon at creation, see Waltke, “Creation,” 132:33-36; Boyd, God, 73-113; Mary Wakeman, *God’s Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery* (Leiden: Brill, 1973); Cyrus H. Gordon, “Leviathan: Symbol of Evil” in *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*, ed. Alexander Altman (Cambridge: Harvard, 1966), 1-9.

his angelic co-conspirators to the first earth (Rev 12:3-4) and ends with a new earth (Rev 21:1) and Satan being “thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev 20:10). The pattern of events evidenced in relation to Genesis 1:2 will repeat itself at least three more times in the future as outlined in Chart 16. In connection with the crucifixion, the second coming of Christ and the consummation of the age there will be a fall of Satan, darkness, a voice from heaven, a reference to heaven/the splitting of a veil, an earthquake and a subsequent reference to light. These events will all be discussed in later chapters.

## Chart 15

### The Defeat of Rahab/Leviathan in the Context of the Creation Account of Genesis 1

<u>Genesis 1</u>	<u>Psalm 89</u>	<u>Job 26</u>	<u>Psalm 74</u>
vs 1 In the beginning <b>God</b> created the heavens and <b>the earth</b> .		vs 7 "He stretches out the north over empty space And hangs <b>the earth</b> on nothing.	vs 12 Yet <b>God</b> is my king from of old, Who works deeds of deliverance in the midst of <b>the earth</b> .
vs 2 ...and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving <b>over</b> (Hebrew: 'al) <b>the surface of the waters</b> .	vs 9 You rule the swelling of <b>the sea</b> ;  When its waves rise, You still them.	vs 12a "He quieted <b>the sea</b> with His power, vs 10 "He has inscribed a circle <b>on</b> (Hebrew: 'al) <b>the surface of the waters</b>  At the boundary of <b>light</b> and <b>darkness</b> .	vs 13 You divided <b>the sea</b> by Your strength <sup>1</sup> ;  You broke the heads of the sea monsters in <b>the waters</b> . vs 14 You crushed the heads of Leviathan.... vs 16b You have prepared the <b>light</b>
vs 3 Then God said, "Let there be <b>light</b> "; and there was <b>light</b> . vs 4 ...God separated the <b>light</b> from the <b>darkness</b> . vs 5 God called the light <b>day</b> , and the darkness He called <b>night</b> . vs 7 God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from <b>the waters</b> which were above the expanse; and it was so.		vs 8 "He wraps up <b>the waters</b> in His clouds, And the cloud does not burst under them. vs 12b And by His understanding He shattered <b>Rahab</b> . vs 13b His hand has pierced the fleeing serpent. vs 13a "By His breath <b>the heavens</b> are cleared;	vs 16a Yours is the <b>day</b> , Yours also is the <b>night</b> ;
vs 8 God called the expanse <b>heaven</b> . vs 10 God called the dry land <b>earth</b> ....	vs 10 You Yourself crushed <b>Rahab</b> like one who is slain; You scattered Your enemies with Your mighty arm. vs 11 <b>The heavens</b> are Yours, <b>the earth</b> also is Yours; The world and all it contains, You have founded them. vs 12 The north and the south, You have created them....		vs 17 You have established all the boundaries of <b>the earth</b> ;  You have made summer and winter. vs 16c and the sun.
vs 14 Then God said, "Let there be lights... for seasons.... vs 16 God made... the greater light ... and the lesser light....		vs 9 "He obscures the face of the full moon....	

<sup>1</sup>The psalmist likens the deliverance through the Red Sea to the creation account in Genesis 1.

## Chart 16

### The Pattern of Genesis 1:2-8 Repeats Itself

	<u>Creation</u>	<u>Crucifixion</u>	<u>Coming Again</u>	<u>Consummation</u>
A Fall of Satan	Rev 12:3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: <b>and</b> behold a great red dragon.... Rev 12:9 ...who is called <b>the devil</b> and <b>Satan</b> .... Rev 12:4 And his tail swept away a third of <b>the stars</b> <sup>1</sup> of <b>heaven</b> ,  and <b>threw them to the earth</b> . <sup>3</sup>	Luke 10:18 "I was watching  <b>Satan</b> <b>fall</b> from <b>heaven</b> like lightning." John 12:31 ...now the ruler of this world <b>will be cast out</b> . <sup>4</sup>	Rev 9:1a ...I saw Rev 8:10 ...a great <b>star</b>  <b>fell from heaven</b> .... and <b>the stars</b> will fall from the <b>sky</b> <sup>2</sup> .... Rev 9:1b a <b>star from heaven</b> <b>which had fallen to the earth</b> ....	Rev 20:10 <b>And the devil</b> ...  <b>was thrown</b> into the lake of fire.... Rev 21:23 The city has no need of <b>the sun</b> or of <b>the moon</b> to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it <sup>7</sup> .... Rev 21:5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Rev 21:10 And he... showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of <b>heaven</b> from God, Rev 21:11 having the glory of God. <sup>12</sup> Rev 21:1 ... <b>the first earth</b> passed away.... Rev 22:5 And there will no longer be <i>any</i> night, and they will not have need of... <b>the light</b> of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them....
Darkness	Gen 1:2b <b>and darkness</b> was over the surface of the deep <sup>5</sup> ....	Matt 27:45 <b>Now</b> from the sixth hour <b>darkness</b> fell upon the whole land until the ninth hour. <sup>6</sup>	Matt 24:29a ...the sun <b>will be darkened</b> and <b>the moon</b> will not give its light,	
Voice from Heaven	Gen 1:3 Then God said ,  "Let there be light."	John 12:28 There came ...a voice out of <b>heaven</b> : "I have both glorified it (i.e. My name <sup>8</sup> ), and will glorify it again." <sup>9</sup>	1 Thess 4:16 ...the Lord Himself will descend from <b>heaven</b> with a shout....	Rev 21:5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."
A Separating	Gen 1:7 God... separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so.  Gen 1:8 And God called the expanse <b>heaven</b> .	Matt 27:51 And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. <sup>10</sup>	Rev 6:14 <b>The sky</b> <sup>11</sup> was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up....	Rev 21:10 And he... showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of <b>heaven</b> from God, Rev 21:11 having the glory of God. <sup>12</sup>
Earthquake	Gen 1:2a <b>And the earth</b> was formless and void,	<b>and the earth</b> shook....	<b>and</b> every mountain and island moved out of their places. <sup>14</sup>	Rev 21:1 ... <b>the first earth</b> passed away....
Light	Gen 1:4 ...and God separated <b>the light</b> from the darkness.	Matt 28:1 ...as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week.... Matt 28:2 an angel of the Lord descended from heaven.... Matt 28:3 And his appearance was like <b>lightning</b> ....	Matt 24:27b so will  the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>15</sup> For just as the <b>lightning</b> comes from the east and flashes even to the west,	Rev 22:5 And there will no longer be <i>any</i> night, and they will not have need of... <b>the light</b> of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them....

<sup>1</sup>In the book of Revelation stars often symbolize angels (Rev 1:20) but can also represent physical stars. An example of this is in the third through the fifth trumpets (Rev 8:10-9:1). In the third (Rev 8:10-11) and fifth trumpet (Rev 9:1) the falling star is an allusion to Satan in Isaiah 14:12 ("How have you fallen from heaven, O star of the morning"), whereas in the fourth trumpet (Rev 8:12) stars represent the stars of heaven, being a parallel to Matthew 24:29, etc.

<sup>2</sup>The Greek word translated "Sky in Matthew 24:29, *ouranos*, is the same word translated heaven in Revelation 12:4 and Luke 12:31.

<sup>3</sup>If the original fall of Satan occurred after the creation of Genesis 1, it was a very major event which was not mentioned in the creation story. On the other hand, since the water covered earth of Genesis 7:19-20 was triggered by God's judgment on the fall of angels to the earth (Gen 6:1-6; cf. Jude 6--7), the water covered earth of Genesis 1:2 may similarly have been the result of God's judgment on the earth when it was first invaded by Satan and his horde of one-third of the angels of heaven who fell with him.

<sup>4</sup>On the basis of the victory of Christ on the cross, Satan will be cast out of heaven where he now has access (Job 1:6-12). According to Revelation 12:6-14, this will occur three and one half years before the second coming of Christ.

<sup>5</sup>The Bible begins with a dark, water covered earth.

<sup>6</sup>The darkening of the sun is a sign of a day of the Lord (Joel 2:31), which is a day of God's wrath (Zeph 2:31). The crucifixion was a day of the Lord, a day of God's wrath upon his Son, who was experiencing God's wrath vicariously for the sins of his people.

<sup>7</sup>The Bible begins with a dark water-covered earth (Gen 1:2) and ends with an earth with no night (Rev 21:25 and no sea (Rev 21:1).

<sup>8</sup>In Judaism a person's name represented his total character.

<sup>9</sup>Jesus spoke these words just before the Last Supper (John 13:1ff. and His crucifixion which was His glory (Cf. Mark 10:37;15:27). In the holy place of the temple there was a lampstand whose purpose was "to shed light" (Exod 25:37) continually. This anticipates the lamp of the temple/throne room of the New Jerusalem where "the glory of God illumined it and its lamp is the Lamb" (Rev 21:23). Even during Jesus' earthly ministry he could say, "I am the light of the world...." (John 8:12), and John could testify, "We beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14). Cf. Gen 1:3.

<sup>10</sup>The splitting of the veil separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place in the temple symbolized that every believer now as direct access to God because of Christ as our Great High Priest who once for all offered Himself as the sacrifice for His people (Heb 7:27; 9:11-28). Only once a year could a Jewish high priest enter the Holy of Holies (Lev 16;23:26-32; Num 29:7-11), but now, as every believer is a priest (1Pet 2:9; Rev 5:10), all God's people now have direct access to God in His temple/throne room (Heb 4:14-16).

<sup>11</sup>Just as once a year the high priest on the day of atonement passed out of sight of the people through the veil into the Holy of Holies (Lev 16:15,17), so Christ our "great high priest... passed through the heavens" the veil of the heavenly sanctuary, out of the sight of his watching disciples (Acts 1:9-11) (NASB Study Bible, 1787). The primary color of the veil of the temple was blue along with purple and scarlet, all colors of the heavenly veil (Exod 26:31). (The Greek word for sky is *ouranos*, usually translated heaven.)

<sup>12</sup>The new Jerusalem (Rev 21:2) is described as 1390 mile cube, a huge holy of holies (Rev 21:16), the temple/throne room of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb (Rev 21:22). The progression is therefore that following the crucifixion the veil of the temple split apart giving all of God's people access to the way into the holy of holies (Matt 27:51), then just prior to the second coming the veil of the heavenly temple will be split apart allowing all mankind to see into the holy of holies of the heavenly sanctuary (Rev 6:14; Matt 24:29; 26:64), and then finally the heavenly holy of holies comes to earth as the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:2,10-22:5).

<sup>13</sup>Note that days 1-3 of creation are alluded to in order and are prefaced by an allusion to Gen 1:2.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Rev 6:12.

<sup>15</sup>Into the darkness of the day of the Lord (Matt 24:29), the Son of Man will come like a bolt of lightning.

## The Spirit's Presence in Genesis 1:2

The second verse of Genesis, however, is not all negative. It ends with the words “and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.” Here the Hebrew word *rachap*, translated “moving” in the NASB, would be better translated “hovering” (NASB margin) as the only other usage of this verb in the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy 32:11, uses it to describe an eagle hovering protectively over its young, as shown in Chart 17. There Moses uses the tender care of an eagle for its young as a metaphor for the Glory-cloud hovering protectively over Israel throughout its wilderness wanderings. (In Deuteronomy 32:10, the preceding verse, the word translated “waste” [NASB] is *tohu* the same Hebrew word as translated “formless” in Genesis 1:2, confirming the allusion to Genesis 1:2 in Deuteronomy 32:10-11). Similarly in Exodus 19:4 God tells Israel, “I bore you up on eagle wings and brought you here to myself.”<sup>43</sup>

### Chart 17

#### Parallels Between Genesis 1:2 and Deuteronomy 32:10-12

<u>Genesis 1</u>		<u>Deuteronomy 32</u>	
vs 2	The <b>earth</b> (Heb: 'eres) was <b>formless</b> (Heb: <i>tohu</i> <sup>1</sup> ) and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep,	vs 9	For the LORD's portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance.
	and the Spirit of God <b>was moving</b> (Heb: <i>rachap</i> <sup>2</sup> ) <b>over</b> the surface of the waters.	vs 10	He found him in a desert <b>land</b> (Heb: 'eres), and in the howling <b>waste</b> (Heb: <i>tohu</i> <sup>1</sup> ) of a wilderness;
			He encircled him, He cared for him, He guarded him as the pupil of his eye.
		vs 11	Like an eagle that stirs its nest, that <b>hovers</b> (Heb: <i>rachap</i> <sup>2</sup> ) <b>over</b> its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions.
		vs 12	The LORD alone guided him....

<sup>1</sup>These are the only two usages of this word in the Pentateuch.

<sup>2</sup>These are the only two usages of this word in the Pentateuch.

The Spirit of God led Israel by the pillar of cloud by day and by the pillar of fire by night (Ex 13:21-22). The book of Exodus ends with the statement, “For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel” (Exod 40:38).

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Isaiah 63:9, “Because of his love and pity he redeemed them himself, lifting them and carrying them all the days of old.”

Since it was the Glory-cloud that led Israel throughout its wilderness wanderings and since it is the function of the Holy Spirit to lead God's people (Rom 8:14), it is natural for the Spirit to be associated with the cloud. However, more frequently it is the Lord himself who is seen in connection with the cloud (Exod 13:21; 14:24; 16:10; 19:9; 24:16; 33:9; 34:5; 40: 34, 38; Lev 16:2; Num 9:18-20; 16:42; Deut 5:22; 31:15).<sup>44</sup>

To describe the Glory-cloud with the figure of spreading wings (Deut 32:11) is not related simply to the cloud's overspreading protection, but also to the composition of the cloud itself. According to Ezekiel (1:1-28; 10:1-22; 11:22-24; 43:1-7) when the inner reality of the Glory-cloud is revealed, we see the Lord in His heaven. There in the cloud, the King of glory is enthroned in the midst of the winged cherubim (Ezek 1:5-14; 10:9-22), so that the sound of the cloud is the sound of their wings (Ezek 1:24; 10:5).<sup>45</sup> The Glory-cloud is the invisible heaven brought into cloud-enveloped visibility. This is the royal palace (1 Kings 22:19; Job 1:6; 2:1; Isa 6:1-13; Dan 7:9-10; Rev 4:2-11). As the house of the divine King, it is a temple/throne room.<sup>46</sup> It is the dwelling place of God.

Moses no doubt wrote Genesis during the wilderness wanderings of Israel when he had only to look up to see the Glory-cloud hovering over the tabernacle. (Exod 40:38) By quoting the language of Deuteronomy 32:10-11 in Genesis 1:2, he indicates that the very same Glory-cloud, at which he was looking, hovered over the earth when creation began. Thus Moses' reference to the hovering of the Spirit of God in Genesis 1:2 is to be understood as designating the Glory-cloud. Just as the Lord superintended Israel through their forty years of judgment from the Glory-cloud, he similarly ruled the chaotic earth under his judgment from the Glory-cloud (Gen 1:2). It is significant that the Bible both begins with an allusion to God's glory in its second verse and ends in Revelation with four references to it in its final two chapters.<sup>47</sup>

### **Genesis 1:2 as the Primal Day of the Lord**

Understanding that the picture of the Glory-cloud hovering over the earth is a picture of God's rule over all aspects of the earth is helpful in identifying Genesis 1:2 as the primal day of the Lord. A day of the Lord is a day when the Lord pours out his wrath on his enemies.

Zephaniah defines a day of the Lord (1:14) in this way: "A day of wrath is that day, a day of

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<sup>44</sup> Second Corinthians 3:17 shows the close identification between the Lord and the Spirit, "Now the Lord is the Spirit."

<sup>45</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 14.

<sup>46</sup> In the ancient Near East divine glory was frequently represented as a winged disk which represented the canopy of the heavens with its (storm) clouds (Kline, *Images*, 17-18).

<sup>47</sup> Revelation 21:11, 23, 24, 25.



trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness” (Zeph 1:15). It is interesting to note that Genesis 1:2 has all of these features including a cloud. In the New Testament’s description of the final day of the Lord (1 Thess 5:1-2), initiated by the Lord’s return (1 Thess 4:16), once again clouds are a prominent feature (1 Thess 4:17).

Throughout both Old and New Testaments the precursor of the day of the Lord is the darkening of sun and moon (Joel 2:10-11; 2:31; 3:14-15; Isa 13:9-19; Rev 6:12-17), as illustrated in Chart 18. According to Genesis 1:16-18, God delegated to the sun and moon the governance

## Chart 18

### The Day of the Lord in the Light of Genesis 1: Is Genesis 1:2 the Primal Day of the Lord?

	<u>Genesis</u>	<u>Joel</u>	<u>Joel</u>	<u>Joel</u>	
1:16a	...the greater light to govern the day,	2:31	The sun will be turned into <b>darkness,</b> <b>and the moon into blood,</b>	2:10c	... <b>The sun</b> <b>grow dark</b> <b>and the moon</b> <b>and the stars lose their brightness.</b>
1:2a	...and <b>darkness</b> was over the surface of the deep,			2:10d	<b>and the stars lose their brightness.</b>
1:16b	and the lesser light to govern the night; <i>He made the stars</i> also.		before the <b>great and awesome day of the LORD comes</b> <sup>2</sup> .	2:10e	<b>The day of the LORD</b> is indeed <b>great and very awesome</b> <b>and who can endure it?</b>
1:2b	and the Spirit of God was moving <sup>1</sup> over the surface of the waters.			2:11	<b>The day of the LORD</b> is indeed <b>great and very awesome</b> <b>and who can endure it?</b>
		2:32	And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of <b>the LORD</b> will be delivered; <b>for on Mount Zion</b> <b>and in Jerusalem,</b>	2:12	Now return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and <b>mourning</b> ....
1:1	In the beginning God created <b>the heavens</b> <b>and the earth.</b>		there will be those who escape, ...even among the survivors whom <b>the LORD</b> calls.	2:10b	<b>the heavens tremble,</b>
				2:10a	Before them <b>the earth quakes,</b>
				2:16	Assemble <b>the elders.</b>
	<u>Isaiah</u>	<u>Isaiah</u>	<u>Matthew</u>	<u>Revelation</u>	
13:10b	<b>the sun</b> <b>will be dark</b> when it rises, <b>and the moon will not shed its light.</b>	24:23b	<b>and the sun</b> will be ashamed,	6:11	...their fellow servants... were to be killed....
13:10a	For <b>the stars</b> of heaven... will not flash forth their light;	24:23a	<b>Then the moon</b> will be ashamed	6:12	... <b>and the sun</b> became black... <b>and the whole moon</b> became like <b>blood;</b> <b>and the stars of the sky</b> fell to the earth....
13:9	Behold, <b>the day of the LORD is coming</b> ....			6:13	... <b>for the great day of their wrath has come;</b> <b>and who is able to stand?</b>
		24:23c	<b>for the LORD</b> ...will reign <b>on Mount Zion</b> <b>and in Jerusalem,</b>	6:17	...all the tribes <sup>3</sup> of the earth <sup>4</sup> <b>will mourn</b> <sup>5</sup> over Him.
13:13	Therefore I will make <b>the heavens tremble,</b> <b>and the earth will be shaken</b> <b>from its place</b> ....	24:18	For the windows above are opened, and the foundations of <b>the earth shake.</b>	14:1	...the Lamb was standing on <b>Mount Zion</b> and with Him 144,000....
		24:23e	and <i>His</i> glory will be before His <b>elders</b> <sup>7</sup> .	6:14	And <b>the sky</b> <sup>6</sup> was split apart like a scroll... and every mountain and island were moved <b>out of their places.</b>

<sup>1</sup>The only other usage of the Hebrew word *rachap* in the Pentateuch is in Deuteronomy 32:11, where in describing the relationship between the glory cloud and Israel in the wilderness, Moses writes, "Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that hovers (Hebrew: *rachap*) over its young...." The image of an eagle hovering over its young is one of rule, leadership, superintendence and guidance, depicting God's relationship to Israel during their forty year judgment of death and wandering. Which Person of the Trinity is primarily identified with the cloud? It is the Holy Spirit who has the role of leading and guiding (cf. Rom 8:14), the same Holy Spirit who was hovering over the dark water covered earth, ruling it on behalf of the Godhead (Gen 1:2).

<sup>2</sup>The day of the LORD is a return to the darkness of Genesis 1:2. The purpose of the sun is to govern the days, seasons and years (Gen 1:14). However, the darkening of the sun and moon means that they have at least temporarily ceased their reign over the day; this is now the day of the LORD, the day which He alone will rule as the Spirit of God ruled the darkened deep in Genesis 1:2. Another passage that describes the day of the LORD as a return to Genesis 1:2 is Jeremiah 4:23-28 where the day of the LORD (cf. Jer 4:9) is described as a reversal of the days of creation where chaos emerges from order (Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley and Joel F. Drinkard, Jr., *Jeremiah 1-25* [vol. 26 of *Word Bible Commentary*; eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker: Dallas: Word, 1991], 80-82).

If Genesis 1:2 describes a day of the LORD, what sin would He be judging? The one other occasion in Scripture when there was a water covered earth was the great flood of Genesis 7:6-8:12. Since the flood was triggered by God's judgment on the fall of angels to the earth (Gen 6:1-6; cf. Jude 6-7), the water covered earth of Genesis 1:2 may similarly have been the result of God's judgment on the earth when it was first invaded at Satan's initial fall to the earth along with one-third of the angels of heaven (Rev 12:4). The Bible does not record the time of Satan's fall. If it occurred after the creation of Genesis 1, it was a very major event which was not mentioned in Genesis 1-2. The other possibility is that it occurred earlier and that Genesis 1:2 is a description of God's judgment on an earth filled with demons. Why otherwise would the Bible begin with a dark earth, since darkness in the Scriptures symbolizes evil (e.g. John 1:4-9; 3:19-21; 12:35-36; Eph 5:8-13; 1 John 1:5-7; 2:8-11)?

<sup>3</sup>Cf. The twelve tribes of the 144,000 of Revelation 7:4-8.

<sup>4</sup>This word can also be translated "land."

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Joel 2:12 above.

<sup>6</sup>The Greek word *ouranos* is also translated "heavens."

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Joel 2:16 above.

of day and night (Gen 1:16-18). However, the significance of the sun and moon being darkened is that they have at least temporarily then ceased their reign over the day and night, thus returning the situation to that of Genesis 1:2 where the Lord in the Glory-cloud ruled all of reality. With the darkening of sun and moon, the rule of the day and night now reverts back to the Lord, the Spirit, as in 1:2 where the Lord in the Glory-cloud ruled the darkened deep. Since a day of the Lord is a day not ruled by the sun but by the Lord, Genesis 1:2 describes the first day of the Lord.<sup>48</sup> The first day of the Lord came in response to the first sin.

### **The Purposes of God First Demonstrated**

In the day of the Lord on the demon-invaded earth pictured in Genesis 1:2, we have an initial indication of what will be God's two primary purposes throughout Scripture. From the beginning Satan and his demons sought dominion over the earth and immediately took possession of it. The story line of the Bible thus beginning in Genesis 1:2 shows God's response to this challenge. His two primary purposes from the initial rebellion onward are to subdue his enemies and to re-establish his kingdom over the earth. This becomes the two-fold theme of the rest of the Bible. God is in the process of subduing his enemies and re-establishing his kingdom over his creation.

### **House Building after Victory**

In the theology of the epics of the ancient Near East, the god who proved himself to be king over all the other gods by winning a signal victory over his foes would celebrate his achievement by building for himself a royal residence. For example, in both the Canaanite epic of Baal and the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, there is the theme of cosmic house building by the victorious god after the defeat of draconian chaos.<sup>49</sup> In the Canaanite creation myth, Baal conquers the dragon of chaos and then has a house built for his enthronement. The climax of the creation story is the celebration of the king's exaltation in his cosmic palace which is the model of the temples where he is worshipped on earth.<sup>50</sup> In ancient Near Eastern cosmologies the palace/temple would be constructed in preparation for a typically seven day dedication celebration, sometime during which the god would take up his repose in his temple/throne

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<sup>48</sup> We have already noted that Jeremiah 4:23-26 and Isaiah 34:11 described days of the Lord which picture a reversal of the days of creation where chaos emerges from order. See page \_\_\_\_.

<sup>49</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 79; John H. Walton, "Creation," *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, 164-65.

<sup>50</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Overland Park: Two Age Press, 2000), 27.

room.<sup>51</sup> These universal creation conflict myths are echoes of a reality which were distorted through generations of retelling.<sup>52</sup> When Moses and the other inspired writers of Scripture use the language of contemporary epics, they are correcting them with the truth of revelation.<sup>53</sup>

We have earlier concluded that prior to the creation of Genesis 1, God in the initial day of the Lord was victorious over the Satan, the great dragon with seven heads.<sup>54</sup> We should not then be surprised that he immediately builds a royal house for himself. The divine palace/temple is the universe itself.<sup>55</sup> The building of it is likened to the construction of a gigantic building and God is pictured as architect, surveyor, engineer and artisan. To give Job a sense of what was involved in creation, God asked him a series of questions:

"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?  
Tell *Me*, if you have understanding,  
Who set its measurements? Since you know,  
Or who stretched the line on it?" (Job 38:4-6)<sup>56</sup>

Heaven and earth comprise the palace of the Great King. "Thus says the LORD, 'Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool'" (Isa 66:1; cf. Matt 5:34-35). It is he "who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in" (Isa 40:22). "The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD's throne is in heaven" (Ps 11:4).<sup>57</sup> In Psalm 104:1-4 as the psalmist worships, he indicates how elements of the universe function in God's cosmic house:

O LORD my God, You are very great;  
You are clothed with splendor and majesty,  
Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak,  
Stretching out heaven like a *tent* curtain.  
He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters;  
He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks upon the wings of the wind;  
He makes the winds His messengers,  
Flaming fire His ministers.<sup>58</sup>

After his six days of creating his palace, God rested in it on the seventh day (Gen 2:1-3).<sup>59</sup> Psalm 132:13-14 tells us that God's "habitation" is his "resting place." Since his house is a

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<sup>51</sup> Walton, "Creation," 165. In the thinking of the ancient Near East the ideas of creation, temple and rest were tightly linked (Walton, *Genesis*, 147).

<sup>52</sup> Boyd, *God*, 327.

<sup>53</sup> Kline, "*Genesis*," 80.

<sup>54</sup> Cf., Revelation 12:3-4.

<sup>55</sup> Kline, *Kingdom*, 27.

<sup>56</sup> John Goldingay, *Israel's Gospel* (Old Testament Theology 1; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 87.

<sup>57</sup> Kline, *Kingdom*, 27. His palace even has a penthouse (Amos 9:6; cf., Jer 22:14). Goldingay, *Gospel*, 84.

<sup>58</sup> For a further discussion of heaven and earth as a cosmic temple see Walton, *Genesis*, 147-52.

<sup>59</sup> Walton, "Creation," 165.

royal house, his rest was a royal resting and was his first entrance into his newly completed heavenly palace. Thus the dawning of that first Sabbath witnessed an enthronement of the Lord God in his royal house.<sup>60</sup>

### **Genesis 1:2 as the Key to the Structure of Genesis 1**

Genesis 1:2, as the first verse after the introductory summary statement of 1:1, is the key for understanding not only the initial setting of the creation story, but also the structure of the chapter as a whole. This is diagrammed in Chart 19. Many scholars, going back to Augustine,<sup>61</sup> have noted that the creations of the first three days are parallel to those of days four through six.<sup>62</sup> The opening words of Genesis 1:2 state that “the earth was formless and void.” The creations of days one through three then show how God gave form to the formless earth, and days four through six demonstrate how he filled its emptiness.<sup>63</sup> God formed day and night on the first day, divided the heavens from the waters on the second day and created the dry land on the third day to give form to the formless earth of 1:2. Then on the fourth day God filled “the expanse of the heavens” with sun, moon and stars (Gen 1:14-17), on the fifth day he created the birds and fish to fill the heavens and the waters (Gen 1:20, 22) and on the sixth day he created

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<sup>60</sup> Isaiah 66:1-2 is especially significant for understanding the Sabbath of Genesis 2:1-3 as a divine enthronement. Here not only does the Lord proclaim, “Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool” (Isa 66:1a), but he also links this with his rest (Isa 66:1b) and creation (Isa 66:2) (Kline, *Kingdom*, 34-35). For a discussion of Sabbath rest and enthronement which does not understand it to be following a victory over Leviathan, see Kline, *Kingdom*, 34-40.

<sup>61</sup> *City of God* 11:6, cited in Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17* (New International Commentary on the Old Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 55.

<sup>62</sup> E.g., Arnold, *Genesis*, 24; Albert H. Baylis, *From Creation to the Cross: Understanding the First Half of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 29; Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, 46; Paul Borgman, *Genesis: The Story We Haven't Heard* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 24; D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Genesis, Volume 1: Genesis 1:1-25:18* (Webster: Evangelical Press, 2003), 35; Hamilton, *Genesis*, 55, 125; R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing* (Preaching the Word; Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 25; Kline, *Kingdom*, 38-39; Longman, *Genesis*, 105; James Plastaras, *Creation and Covenant* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1968), 24; Ross, *Genesis*, 104; Sarna, *Genesis*, 4; L. A. Turner, “Genesis, Book of,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, 357; Mark A. Throntveit, “Are the Events in the Genesis Creation Account Set Forth in Chronological Order? No,” in *The Genesis Debate: Persistent Questions about Creation and the Flood* (ed. Ronald F. Youngblood; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990, 48; Walton, *Genesis*, 113; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 7; Ronald F. Youngblood, *The Book of Genesis: An Introductory Commentary* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.: Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1999), 25.

<sup>63</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*, 24; Hughes, *Genesis*, 25; Kidner, *Genesis*, 46; Longman, *Genesis*, 105; Ross, *Genesis*, 104; Youngblood, *Genesis*, 48.

## Chart 19

### Genesis 1:2 as the Key to Understanding the Structure of Genesis 1

Genesis 1:2 <u>The Challenges to be Overcome</u> And the earth was	Genesis 1:3-13 <u>Creation of Realms</u> formless	Gen 1:14-31 <u>Creation of Rulers</u> and void,	Genesis 1:14-31 <u>The Purposes of the Creations of Days Four through Six</u>			
<p>and darkness</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>was over the surface of the deep;</p> <p>and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of <b>the waters</b>.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Forming</u><sup>1</sup> <b>Day 1</b> The Creation of Day<sup>3</sup> and Night (Gen 1:3-5)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 2</b> The Creation of <b>the heavens</b> by their emerging from the waters<sup>6</sup> (Gen 1:6-8)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 3</b> The Creation of <b>the earth</b> by its emerging from <b>the waters</b><sup>9</sup> (Gen 1:10-13)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Filling</u><sup>2</sup> <b>Day 4</b> The Creation of Sun and Moon (Gen 1:14-19)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 5</b> The Creation of Birds and Fish (Gen 1:20-23)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Day 6</b> The Creation of Animals and Man (Gen 1:24-31)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Filling</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ruling</u></p> <p>"let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"<sup>4</sup> (Gen 1:15)</p> <p>and let birds multiply on the earth." (Gen 1:22b) And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, (Gen 1:22a )</p> <p>By implication the animals are to fill the earth<sup>7</sup></p> <p>God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill <b>the earth</b>" (Gen 1:28a)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ruling</u></p> <p>governs the day (Gen 1:18)</p> <p>governs the night (Gen 1:18)</p> <p>By implication the birds are to rule the heavens<sup>5</sup></p> <p>By implication the fish are to rule the seas</p> <p>By implication the animals are to rule the earth<sup>8</sup></p> <p>"let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all <b>the earth</b>, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."<sup>10</sup> (Gen 1:26)</p>		

<sup>1</sup>The creations of the first three days of creation show God's response to an earth that was "formless" (Gen 1:2). See R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004),24.

<sup>2</sup>The creations of the second three days of creation show God's response to an earth that was "void" or empty (Gen 1:2). See Hughes, *Genesis*, 24.

<sup>3</sup>The creation of light on day one (Gen 1:3) was God's response to the darkness of Genesis 1:2.

<sup>4</sup>The sun specifically fills the day with light.

<sup>5</sup>The phenomenon of territoriality among some species of birds is their ruling the heavens for God.

<sup>6</sup>God took control of the waters of the deep (Gen 1:2) to create the heavens by having them emerge from the midst of the waters (Gen 1:6-8).

<sup>7</sup>One can safely infer from the parallel between the blessing of the birds and fish in verse 22 and the blessing of man in verse 28 that a similar blessing is intended for the animals.

<sup>8</sup>The phenomenon of territoriality among animals is their ruling the earth for God.

<sup>9</sup>God took control of the waters of the deep (Gen 1:2) to create the earth by having it emerge from the midst of the waters (Gen 1:9).

<sup>10</sup>God specifically delegates to man the rulership over the creations of days five and six (fish, birds and animals) as well as over the earth itself.

animals and man to fill the earth (Gen 1:28).<sup>64</sup> In response to the formlessness and emptiness of Genesis 1:2, the earth was formed and filled.<sup>65</sup>

Not only were the creations of days four through six to fill the creations of days one through three, but they were also to rule over the realms created on these days.<sup>66</sup> Regarding the sun and the moon, God declares that their purpose is “to govern the day and the night” (Gen 1:18).<sup>67</sup> In fact the functions of the sun and moon in verses 14-17 form a chiasm as illustrated in Chart 20 with the middle function, and therefore the most important, being that of governing.<sup>68</sup>

<b>Chart 20</b>	
<b>The Chiasm of Genesis 1:14-17</b>	
A	<b>"to separate</b> the day <b>from</b> the night" (vs 14a)
B	to "be for signs and for seasons and for days and for years" (vs 14b)
C	<b>"to give light on the earth"</b> (vs 15)
D	<b>"to govern</b> the day" (vs 16a)
D'	<b>"to govern</b> the night" (vs 16b)
C'	<b>"to give light on the earth"</b> (vs 17)
B'	to govern the day and the night" (vs 18a)
A'	<b>"to separate</b> the light <b>from</b> the darkness" (vs 18b)

By analogy the birds and the fish created on the fifth day are to rule the heavens and the seas created on the second day. Likewise, the animals created on the sixth day are to rule the dry land created on day three, as shown in Chart 19. This divine mandate for birds and animals manifests itself in their instinct of territoriality.

The culminating event of the sixth day was the creation of man and woman (Gen 1:27). God indicates that their responsibility is specifically to “rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth” (Gen 1:28). According to Genesis 1:26, this was God’s very purpose in creating man. There God had said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." Man is thus to rule

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<sup>64</sup> Godfrey, *Creation*, 38, 50.

<sup>65</sup> Godfrey, *Creation*, 37.

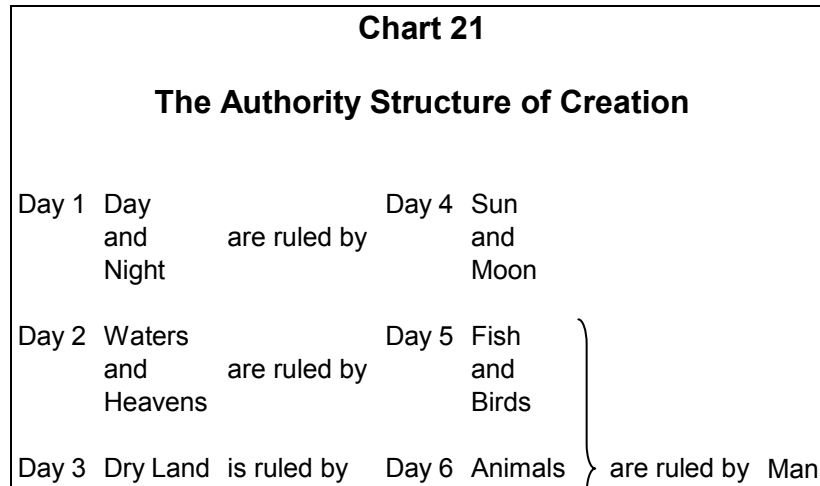
<sup>66</sup> Kline, *Kingdom*, 38-39.

<sup>67</sup> Godfrey, *Creation*, 38-39.

<sup>68</sup> Godfrey, *Creation*, 39.

over the creations of days five and six (Gen 1:20-31) which, in turn, rule over the realms of days two and three (Gen 1:6-13). It is interesting to note that man is not given the responsibility to rule the sun and the moon, the creations of day four. If man chooses to go up and walk around on the moon, God does not mind, but the ruling of the sun and moon is not man's responsibility. The responsibility of the creations of days four through six thus are both to fill and rule the creations of days one through three.

Genesis 1 thus explains the authority structure of God's creation as shown in Chart 21.



God has delegated the rule of the earth to Adam and Eve as his vassal king and queen.

The opening phrase of Genesis 1:2, “The earth was formless and void,” thus gives structure to days 1-3 and 4-6, but, in addition, as shown in Chart 19, the final three phrases (1) “and darkness,” (2) “was over the surface of the deep,” (3) “and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters” relate respectively to (1) days 1 and 4, (2) days 2 and 5, and (3) days 3 and 6, the parallel days of the two triads.

The creations of the first<sup>69</sup> and fourth days address the problem of darkness. On day one, light was created and separated from the darkness, resulting in the realms of day and night (Gen 1:3-5). Then on day four, the sun, moon and stars were created to fill the expanse of the heavens, with the sun and moon governing the day and night respectively (Gen 1:14-18).

On day two, God began to address the problem of the waters covering the earth by creating the expanse of the heavens, thereby separating the waters below the expanse from the waters above the expanse (Gen 1:6-8).<sup>70</sup> The second day is the only time in the six days of

<sup>69</sup> Godfrey, *Creation*, 26, 38.

<sup>70</sup> Godfrey, *Creation*, 31, 38.



creation God does not pronounce the creation of a day as good. The reason for this is that he is not through dealing with the problem of the waters.<sup>71</sup> Then on day five, God created the fish (and even sea monsters) to fill and rule the seas (Gen 1:20-22).

On the third day, God continues to deal with the problem of the waters from Genesis 1:2 by gathering them in one place to allow the dry land to appear.<sup>72</sup> Then on day six, God creates man who is to “rule over the fish of the sea” (Gen 1:26, 28). With this, all the problems of Genesis 1:2 have been solved by the creations of days one through six.

### **The Cultural Promise**

The single most important verse in the Bible for understanding its plot is Genesis 1:28: “God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

The verse sounds like a command. In fact it is often called the Cultural Mandate or the Dominion Mandate. But in reality it is a blessing. Genesis 1:28 begins, "God blessed them; and God said to them ...." A parallel passage makes this clear. Genesis 24:60 records Rebekah's family's farewell to her as she leaves to marry Isaac, “And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, ‘May you our sister become thousand of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them.’” The grammar of Genesis 24:60 is identical to that of Genesis 1:28. This is the Hebrew grammar of blessing.<sup>73</sup> In Gen. 1:28 since it is God who declares and himself guarantees the blessing, it would be inappropriate for the English translation to read, "**may you** be fruitful and multiply. . . ." When God guarantees a blessing, it is a promise. Here God promises that he will bless his creatures and see to it that they will fill the earth, subdue it and have dominion.<sup>74</sup> The verse could therefore better be called the Cultural Promise.

This is a promise which God will fulfill for his people in spite of Adam's later disobedience.<sup>75</sup> Since the Lord of Adam is the God of sovereign grace and election, he is able to

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<sup>71</sup> In Genesis 1:1-2:3 we are told seven times that what God saw was (very) good. However, each day does not include a goodness statement. This declaration is omitted in days two and seven. Yet two such statements are made on both days three and six so that the total number is seven (Godfrey, *Creation*, 32-33).

<sup>72</sup> Godfrey, *Creation*, 34.

<sup>73</sup> The imperatives “be fruitful,” “increase,” and “fill” are not to be understood as commands (in Genesis 1:28) since the introductory statement identifies them as a “blessing.... The imperative, along with the jussive, is the common mood of the blessing ...” Sailhamer, “Genesis,” 2:38. Thus in Genesis 1:28, all the verbs of the blessing are imperatives, whereas in the blessing of Genesis 24:60, “May you become ...” is an imperative and “possess” is a jussive.

<sup>74</sup> R.C. Leeuwen, "Breeding Stock vs. Lords of Creation," *Christianity Today*, 35 (Nov. 11, 1991) 36-37; Sailhammer, “Genesis,” II:38.

<sup>75</sup> Leeuwen, "Breeding," 36-37; Sailhammer, “Genesis,” II:38.

guarantee the realization of his covenant blessings even to those who break his covenant. He is able to do this because the Second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, would one day obediently fulfill every demand of God's law requisite to blessing. And his obedience is reckoned to the believer's account (Rom. 5:13, 19).<sup>76</sup>

The cultural promise reveals God's purposes. The Hebrew word *kabash* translated "subdue" in Genesis 1:28 assumes that the party being subdued is hostile to the subduer.<sup>77</sup> Who was hostile to Adam and Eve in the "very good" creation God made (cf. Gen. 1:31)? It is the third of the angels who had revolted against God and invaded the earth. God promises that one day every demon along with their prince will be subdued. Their threat is vividly pictured in Genesis 3 as Satan, having indwelt a serpent, invades the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1a) and, as will be discussed later, successfully gains control of the kingdom of the world (Gen. 3:1b-6). God's first main purpose revealed in this promise is to subdue his enemies.

The second theme of Genesis 1:28 is the promise that man will one day rule both the earth (Gen 1:26) and its creatures (Gen 1:26, 28) for God, thereby re-establishing God's kingdom throughout the earth. Thus God's second purpose is to establish his kingdom "over all the earth" (Gen. 1:26) and to use man to accomplish this task (Gen. 1:26, 28).

God's statement "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28a) has the same function as the "go" of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19). God's purpose and promise is that His people will fill the earth, everywhere subduing it and ruling it for God.

God promised that one day his people would fill the earth, subdue it and have dominion over it and its creatures, but for Adam personally the realization of the promise was dependent upon his obedience. The mission of Adam was to fill the earth with children of God who would accomplish God's two purposes of subduing His enemies and of establishing His kingdom everywhere, but would he be faithful?

The rest of the Bible is the story of how God subdues his enemies and re-establishes his kingdom over the earth. Every verse of Scripture can be related to one or both of these themes. It is significant that Psalm 110:1-2, the Old Testament passage quoted most frequently in the New Testament, deals with both these themes:

The LORD says to my Lord:  
"Sit at My right hand  
Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.  
The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, *saying*,

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<sup>76</sup>Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 31.

<sup>77</sup> John N. Oswalt, "kabash," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, (eds. R. Laird Harris et al.; Chicago: Moody, 1980), 1:430.

"Rule in the midst of Your enemies" (Ps 110:1-2).

When we come to Revelation, the last book of the Bible, the first half of the prophetic section (Rev 4-11) shows how God will finally re-establish his kingdom and the second half (Rev 12-22) indicates how he will ultimately defeat each of his enemies. The issues raised in the first book of the Bible are resolved in the last book.

### **Conclusion**

The Bible's first chapter introduces us to the plot of the Bible. We learn that Satan fell prior to the creation of Genesis 1 and that God's response to Satan's invasion of planet earth was the first day of the Lord, the results of which are described in Genesis 1:2. God's reaction to a demon-infested earth demonstrates what will be his two primary objectives throughout the rest of the Bible and human history: to subdue his enemies and to re-establish his kingdom over the earth.

Having won his initial victory over Satan and his hosts, God in the six days of creation resolves each problem described in Genesis 1:2. He first forms the earth and then fills it, while simultaneously controlling the darkness and the waters. Not only does he create the first man and woman, but he promises them that one day he will fill the earth with children of God through whom he will successfully fulfill his two-fold purpose of subduing his enemies and re-establishing his kingdom. The rest of the Bible is the story of how God fulfills these two purposes.

## Chapter Four

# The Creation Covenant

The word covenant does not occur in Genesis 1-2 but that does not mean that there is not a covenant made there. Hosea 6:7 states that Adam broke a “covenant” and God's dealings with Adam correspond precisely to the covenants of later history. The reordering of the world following the flood was in effect a reinstatement of the original creation arrangements and it is defined as a “covenant” (Gen. 8:21-9:17). The literary structure of Genesis 1-2 does not correspond to the treaty schema as the Mosaic Covenant does, yet the various components of the relationship between God and Adam correspond to the significant aspects of a covenant.<sup>1</sup>

The successive ages of the kingdom of God each have as their constitution authoritative covenant words of God which govern that age. The covenant is renewed at the beginning of each kingdom era. These successive covenants comprise what we will call the Kingdom Covenant.

We will consider the initial covenant prior to the fall under the interpretive heading, The Creation Covenant.<sup>2</sup> This covenant has historically been called the covenant of works,<sup>3</sup> however, this nomenclature has been criticized since Adam’s good works were the obedience of faith, not of works (Rom. 4:3-5; Gal. 3:10-12).<sup>4</sup>

### I. The Making of the Covenant

#### A. Preamble - Genesis 1:1-2:3

1. The purpose of the Preamble of a suzerainty treaty was to identify the suzerain. Genesis 1, although a revelation of the origins of the earth, is primarily a revelation of the Creator Himself. Thus Genesis 1 serves the purpose of a preamble.

Genesis 1 shows how God relates to man and creation. It does this by showing the authority structure of creation. This can be seen by comparing the creations of days 1-3 with the creations of days 4-6. On the first day of creation God created day and night (Gen 1:3-5), on the second day he separated the waters from the heavens (Gen1:6-8), and on

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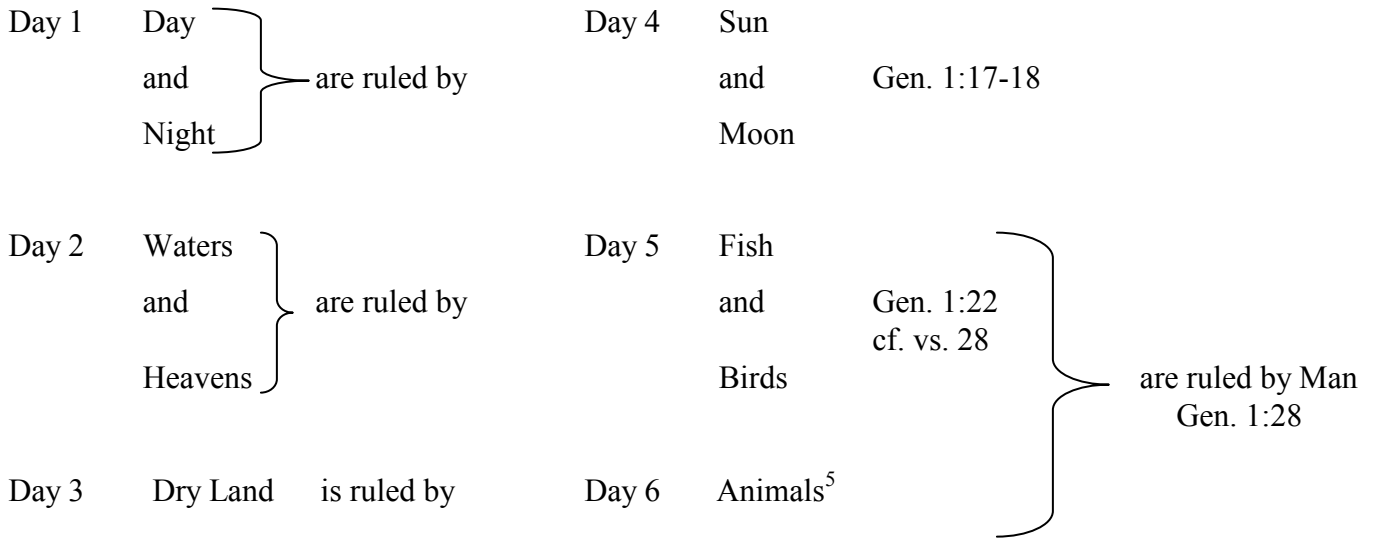
<sup>1</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, (published by the author, 1993), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, p. 10.

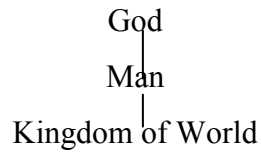
<sup>3</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952), II:117-22; William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.) II:39-40, 152, 359-63; L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952), pp. 211-18.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel P. Fuller, *Gospel and Law* (Pasadena: Fuller Seminary Press, 1990), pp. 65-120.

day three he created the dry land (Gen 1:9-13). It is then very instructive to observe the creations of days four through six



The picture given at the end of Genesis 1 is that man is to rule the kingdom of the world for God as a vassal king.




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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Kline, "Genesis," pp. 82-83.

## 2. Days of Creation Anticipate the Major Covenants of the Bible

<b>Day of Creation</b>	<b>Covenant</b>	<b>Analogy to Day of Creation</b>	<b>Reference</b>
1. Creation of heaven and earth	Creation	Creation of heaven and earth	Gen. 1:1ff.
2. Separation of the waters from the waters	Adamic	The flood, the judgment of the Adamic Covenant, is a reversal of Day 2	Gen. 7:11
3. Dry land appears in the midst of the waters	Noahic	Dry land appears in the midst of the waters	Gen. 8:2-5, 13
4. Creation of sun, moon and stars	Abrahamic	Sun, moon and stars represent Abraham's seed	Gen. 15:5 Gen. 37:9
5. Creation of rulers of heavens and waters	Old (Mosaic)	The plagues of Egypt show God's power over heavens and waters: 1. Nile 2. Frogs 3. Gnats 4. Insects 5. Possibly anthrax carried by frogs 6. Dust 7. Hail 8. Locusts 9. Sky a thick darkness which may be felt 10. The Lord's Passover	Ex. 7:14-25 Ex. 8:1-15 Ex. 8:16-19 Ex. 8:20-32 Ex. 9:1-7 Ex. 9:8-12 Ex. 9:13-35 Ex. 10:1-20 Ex. 10:21-29 Ex. 11:1-12:36
6. Creation of first Adam	New with Church	Birth of Second Adam	Rom. 5:12-22
7. Sabbath	New with Israel	Millennial Sabbath rest Jubilee of Jubilees	Dan. 9:24-27 Rev. 20:4

The relation of the New Covenant with Israel to the Sabbath requires some explanation. The age of the new covenant with Israel is the millennium, the 1,000 year reign of Christ following His second coming.

To understand this relationship it is important to understand the Old Testament concept of jubilee. According to the Old Covenant law, every seventh year "the land shall have a sabbath to the Lord" (Lev. 25:2). In other words, every seventh year the land was to lay fallow. This was also called "a sabbath rest" (Lev. 25:4).

Then every fiftieth year (after 7 sabbatical years,  $7 \times 7 = 49$ ) was to be a year of jubilee when the land again rested, property reverted to its original owners, debts were forgiven and Hebrews who had been enslaved for debt were released (Lev. 25:8-17).

Daniel 9:24-27 refers to a future 70 "sevens" of years. (Whereas our English translations refer to "seventy weeks," it is literally "seventy sevens.") Daniel 9:24-27 is written in a context which had

just mentioned the seventy year Babylonian Captivity which was currently taking place (Dan. 9:2). The reason for the seventy year Babylonian Captivity was that for 490 years the Jews had not kept a Sabbatical year and so God was letting the land rest for the seventy Sabbatical years that had been missed (2 Chron. 36:21).

In Daniel 9:27 the final seven years of the future 490 years are the seven years immediately preceding the second coming (Dan. 9:27 = Matt. 24:15 = Dan. 7:25 = Dan. 12:7 = Rev. 12:13-14 = Rev. 12:6 = Rev. 11:2).

After the 70th seven would be the jubilee year. Since this is in fact the Jubilee of Jubilees - after 490 years - you would expect a ten year jubilee. But the millennium is instead a 10 x 10 x 10 or 1,000 year rest for the land.

#### B. The Historical Prologue - Genesis 2:5-25

In the Historical Prologue of a treaty the Suzerain narrated the history of his relationship with the vassal, emphasizing in particular the past benefits that had accrued to him. Sometimes there was mention of jurisdiction over a specified territory that was being conveyed to the vassal by the treaty. The overall purpose of the Historical Prologue was to produce a sense of obligation and gratitude in the vassal.<sup>6</sup>

In the Mosaic Covenant God would say, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." In the Creation Covenant God says, "I am the Lord, your Creator (cf. Gen. 2:4) who formed you out of the dust of the ground and breathed into your nostrils the breath of life (cf. Gen. 2:7) and placed you in the Garden of Eden (cf. Gen. 2:8)."<sup>7</sup> Understanding Genesis 2:5-25 as Historical Prologue explains the function of the passage. It is not a just a second creation story.

#### C. Stipulations

##### 1. The Major Stipulation: Allegiance - Genesis 1:26, 28

Central to the significance of the suzerainty treaty was the allegiance of the vassal to the suzerain. In the Creation Covenant we have seen this allegiance implicit in the role of man as a vassal king ruling the earth for God (Gen. 1:26, 28).<sup>8</sup>

As will be discussed below, Adam's responsibilities in the garden indicate he likewise had the role of priest in the sanctuary of the garden. Such a role in the sinless environment of

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<sup>6</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28-30

Eden would have meant the he would have faithfully expressed his allegiance to God in his worship.<sup>9</sup>

2. The Minor Stipulations: The Kingdom Commission - Genesis 2:15

“Then the Lord took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it” (Gen. 2:15).

The stipulations of a treaty defined the service which the vassal was to render to the suzerain.

- a. As Eden was a Garden/Paradise, Adam was to exercise his rule over it by cultivating its bounty and beauty as a Royal Farmer (Gen. 2:15a).

The word translated "cultivate" in Genesis 2:15 is the common word for "serve." Adam as God's royal servant was to serve the earth.<sup>10</sup> From the very beginning of the Bible, God's pattern of rule is through service (cf. Matt. 20:25-28). This was the first step in man's "rule. . . over all the earth" (Gen. 1:26) and its creatures (Gen. 1:26, 28).

- b. As Eden was also a sanctuary of God, Adam was to be a Priestly Guardian to protect it from Satan's encroachment. The word "keep" is the same Hebrew word translated "guard" in Genesis 3:24, where the former guards of the sanctuary are themselves expelled from it. This Hebrew word is used frequently throughout the Bible for guarding God's sanctuary against its being profaned by unauthorized strangers (cf. e.g. Num. 1:53; 3:10; 18:3ff.; 1 Sam. 7:13; 2 Kings 12:9; 2 Chron. 34:9; Ezek. 44:15ff.; 48:11) Man's role as guard was part of his priestly duty of subduing the earth for God (Gen. 1:28).<sup>11</sup>

The symbolic picture of Adam in the Garden of Eden is similar to that of the Tabernacle in the wilderness before the glory cloud filled it (Ex. 40:34). There the priests served in the tabernacle while the glory cloud hovered overhead (cf. Ex. 13:21-22). Adam served as a royal priest in the sanctuary of Eden as the glory cloud hovered overhead (cf. Gen. 1:2; IG below).

3. The Minor Stipulations: The Probation - Genesis 2:16

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 54.



God gave Adam the probationary stipulation (Gen. 2:16) before the creation of Eve (Gen. 2:22) reinforcing the fact that it was Adam that was the covenantal head of mankind. This stipulation separated one tree from all the others God had defined as "for food" (Gen. 2:9) and assigned to it the opposite meaning. "You shall not eat" (Gen. 2:16) of it. In the probation tree, man found himself face to face with the claims of absolute lordship. Restricting man in the exercise of his royal authority compelled him to acknowledge that his own kingship was that of a vassal king and the world was only his stewardship. Adam was faced with the demand for absolute obedience to God's Word. He must submit his thought and life to all God said.<sup>12</sup>

The specific significance of the probation tree can be found in its name "the tree of the knowledge (or knowing) of good and evil" (Gen. 2:17). Good and evil are here viewed as opposites between which a choice must be made (the usual usage when "good and evil" are paired in the Bible). This pair is used in contexts of discerning and especially of the rendering of judicial verdicts (cf. Mic. 3:1-2). "Good" and "evil" are at times used as legal terms in pronouncing judgment (cf., e.g., Isa. 5:20; Mal. 2:17). In a clear allusion to the probation tree, God identifies man's knowledge of good and evil as a likeness to Himself (Gen. 3:22; cf. also Gen. 3:5). Elsewhere when the discerning of good and evil is noted as a likeness to God, the reference is precisely to a king rendering judicial decisions (2 Sam. 14:17; Kgs 3:9, 28).

The probation tree was the judgment tree. Here man as the vassal king and priestly guardian of the sanctuary would find himself compelled to judge between good and evil. The name of the tree pointed not to what man would acquire but what he must do. His choice between good and evil was a choice between blessing and curse, between life and death. The choice was between two opposing covenant suzerains, God and the devil.<sup>13</sup> Adam and Eve had to choose between two masters.<sup>14</sup> The probation tree would determine whether man would receive the proposed grant of the kingdom or expulsion from the garden of God. The tree of judgment was the hinge on which everything turned.<sup>15</sup>

#### D. Promise - Genesis 1:28

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-66.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 66-67.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 67.

And God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Genesis 1:28 sounds like a command. In fact it is often called the Cultural Mandate or the Dominion Mandate. But as pointed out in the previous chapter, in reality it is a blessing.

Genesis 1:28 begins, "And God blessed them; and God said to them ...."

When God guarantees a blessing, it is a promise. Here God promises that He will bless His people and see to it that someday they will fill the earth, subdue it and have dominion over it. Yet God's blessings are just for those who are obedient. Therefore because Adam was to sin, God's plan was to send his Son as the Second Adam who would be fully obedient to God the Father (Heb 4:15). If Adam had been obedient, God would have fulfilled the promise of Genesis 1:28 through him. However, since he was disobedient, it will be through the Second Adam that God will fulfill the promise of Genesis 1:28.

The covenant which God made with Adam in Genesis 1-2 was a suzerainty covenant but one which contained promise. A promise by a suzerain was not incompatible to a suzerainty treaty. There are, for example a treaty and a related deed discovered at the ancient city of Alalakh in Northern Syria both of which concerned one Abban, the vizier (the second highest office in a kingdom) and his bestowal of certain cities on a vassal king, Iarimlim. In the treaty, Abban confirmed the gift to Iarimlim in perpetuity by a self-maledictory oath accompanied by the slaughtering of sheep. The treaty also stipulated that the gift would be forfeited if Iarimlim ever became disloyal to Abban.<sup>16</sup> This treaty corresponds to the Creation Covenant God made with Adam before the fall. There was the promise of a kingdom which would encompass the earth, but for Adam personally the realization of the promise for him was dependent upon his obedience.

The Cultural Promise reveals God's purposes. The main theme of Genesis 1:26 and 28 is man's responsibility to rule over the earth (vs. 26) and its creatures (vss. 26, 28) for God as a vassal king. Thus God's first purpose is to establish His kingdom "over all the earth" (Gen. 1:26) and to use man to accomplish this task (Gen. 1:26, 28).

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<sup>16</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), p. 23. The treaty is published by D. J. Wiseman in *The Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 12 (Dec. 1958) 4, 124-29 and in *The Alalakh Tablets* (London, 1953), pp. 25-26.

The Hebrew word *kabash* translated “subdue” in Genesis 1:28 assumes that the party being subdued is hostile to the subduer.<sup>17</sup> Who is hostile to Adam and Eve in the “very good” creation God made (cf. Gen. 1:31)? Revelation 12:4 in describing the fall of Satan states that he “swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.” Since in the book of Revelation stars represent angels (Rev. 1:20), Revelation 12:4 is symbolically indicating that at Satan’s fall a third of the angels joined his rebellion and were cast to the earth. In other words, the earth was filled with demons who along with their prince needed to be subdued. This is vividly pictured in Genesis 3 as Satan, having indwelt a serpent, invades Eden (Gen. 3:1a) and, as will be discussed later, successfully gains control of the kingdom of the world (Gen. 3:1b-6).

God’s statement “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen. 1:28a) has the same function as the “go” of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19). God’s purpose is that His people fill the earth, everywhere subduing it and ruling it for God.

Thus Adam and Eve were to fill the earth with sons and daughters of God who would accomplish God’s two purposes of establishing His kingdom everywhere and of subduing His enemies.

The three parts of the Cultural Promise relate to the offices of prophet, priest and king:

- |         |   |  |
|---------|---|--|
| Prophet | - | to produce sons of God as a Prophetic Parent <sup>18</sup> |
| Priest  | - | to administer all things for God as a Priestly Guardian    |
| King    | - | to exercise dominion as a Vassal King and Royal Farmer     |

#### E. Blessings and Curses

Two trees in the garden represented the curses and blessings (Gen. 2:9):

##### 1. Blessing

The tree of life symbolized the prospect of a glorified life to be attained through obedience. In Revelation 2:7 Jesus says, “To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.” Likewise in Revelation 22:14 he states “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life.”

##### 2. Curse

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<sup>17</sup> John N. Oswalt, “*kabash*” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, edited by R. Laird Harris (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998), I:430.

<sup>18</sup> The role of the prophet is to be God’s representative to his people and to communicate God’s word to them. Within the family this is the roll of parents.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represented the curse of the covenant. God commanded Adam saying, "From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die" (Gen. 2:17). If Adam and Eve were disobedient to the covenant, they would receive the curse of physical and spiritual death. The probation's purpose was life, but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil stood in the way of the path to the tree of life. Adam and Eve had the choice between life and death.<sup>19</sup>

#### F. Instructions for the Disposal of the Text

Conscience is the law of God written in man's heart (Rom. 2:14-15). Thus Adam and Eve's conscience was God's law written on their hearts in the temple of their body (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19).

#### G. Witnesses

In Genesis 1:2 the Hebrew verb *rachap* translated "moving" in the New American Standard Bible would be better translated by "hovering" (NASB margin) so that the verse would read, "The Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters." The only other usage of the Hebrew *rachap* in the Pentateuch is in Deut. 32:11 where it refers to God's hovering over Israel as the Glory Cloud during the wilderness wanderings. "Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions" (Deut. 32:11). (In Deut. 32:10, the preceding verse, the word translated "waste" [NASB] is the same Hebrew word as translated "formless" in Gen. 1:2, confirming the allusion to Gen. 1:2 in Deut. 32:10-11). How did God hover over Israel in the wilderness like an eagle? The Spirit of God led Israel in the pillars of cloud and fire (Ex. 13:21-22). The picture then in Genesis 1:2 is that the Holy Spirit was hovering over the earth in the Glory Cloud as He had over Israel at the exodus from Egypt.<sup>20</sup> The witness to the Covenant thus was the Spirit of God hovering over the earth (Gen. 1:2) in a similar way to which the Spirit was present as witness in the pillar of cloud at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:9, 16; cf. 13:21-22).

#### H. The Oath of Allegiance

Adam was in an attitude of allegiance as he accepted the covenant as a vassal king (Gen. 2:15-17).

#### I. Solemn Ceremony - Genesis 2:16

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<sup>19</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 84.

<sup>20</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), p. 106.

Adam's eating of the tree of life was the solemn ceremony in which the Covenant of Creation was instituted. The garden of Eden was a holy mountain (Ezek. 28:13-14) and since both the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were in the center of the garden (Gen. 2:9; 3:3), that would place both on the top of the mountain. It therefore becomes significant that subsequent solemn ceremonies to institute covenants are held on the tops of holy mountains. We have already seen how the Old Covenant that God made with Israel was formally instituted at a meal on the top of Mount Sinai where Moses, Aaron and the elders of Israel ate and drank in God's presence (Ex. 24:1-11). The traditional site of the last supper where the New Covenant was instituted with the church is Mount Zion. When the New Covenant will be renewed with Israel following the second coming, it will be on the top of Mount Zion (Rev. 14:1). Since the tree of life was the featured tree in the center of the garden of Eden, its fruit would no doubt have been the very first that Adam and Eve would have eaten after God commanded them to eat from all the trees of the garden except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16-17). This is especially true since the likely place where Adam and Eve would have been standing when God spoke to them would have been on the top of the mountain where the tree of life was located. It is on mountain tops where God speaks to man throughout the Bible (e.g., Ex. 19:20; 24:12; Matt. 17:1-5). Therefore after hearing the command to eat, the one tree in their presence from which they could eat in obedience was the tree of life. Continuing to eat of its fruit would have been their renewal of the covenant, renewing their allegiance to God the Great King.

It is interesting to note that the later pagan ziggurats, of which the tower of Babel was the first, were staircase-mountain pyramid-like structures which were imitations of God's holy mountain. Ziggurats were temple towers with a sanctuary on the top.<sup>21</sup> Their stair-cased form was to be a means of ascent and descent for both man and gods.<sup>22</sup> In the theology of Babel, the top of the mountain was where man would meet God.

#### J. Sign

The sign of the covenant was the Sabbath. "The sons of Israel shall observe the sabbath, to celebrate the sabbath. . . as a perpetual covenant" (Ex. 31:16; cf. vss.13, 17). The Sabbath was a

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<sup>21</sup> T. G. Pinches, "Babel, Tower of," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., 1:383.

<sup>22</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Glory in Our Midst: A Biblical Theological Reading of Zachariah's Night Visions*, (Overland Park, KS: Two Age Press, 2001), p. 61.

symbol of the consummated blessing of the covenant when God's people enter their eternal Sabbath Rest (Heb. 4:1-5).<sup>23</sup>

## II. The Breaking of the Covenant

### A. The Temptation

1. From the vantage point of God's purpose in subduing the earth (Gen. 1:28), Satan's advent in Eden is nothing less than a delivering over of Satan to man for judgment. The destiny of man to judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3) was a primal assignment. When the devil entered Eden, setting himself forth as God, it was the responsibility of Adam to rise up in holy judicial wrath and trample the serpent under his feet. If Adam had consigned the devil to divine wrath and participated with God in the slaying of the dragon, what we anticipate at the end of the ages at the final judgment would have taken place at the beginning of history. To slay the dragon (cf. Rev. 19:10) was the mission of Adam from the beginning.<sup>24</sup>
2. In the temptation Satan addressed Eve rather than Adam, striking at Adam's headship.<sup>25</sup> The first step toward sin was when wife and husband switched roles so that she became the spokesman for the two (Gen. 3:1-6).<sup>26</sup>
3. Satan had been brought to the garden for judgment, but he immediately assumes the role of judge:<sup>27</sup>
  - a. First Satan challenged the stipulation of the covenant:<sup>28</sup> "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from and tree of the garden?'" (Gen. 3:1).
  - b. Then he contradicts the covenant's curses,<sup>29</sup> "You shall not surely die! . . ." (Gen. 3:4).
  - c. Satan reinterprets God as a liar by calling the way of the curse the way of blessing:<sup>30</sup> "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:6).

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<sup>23</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, p. 153.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>25</sup> Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., "Male-Female Equality and Male Headship," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*: ed. by John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), p. 108.

<sup>26</sup> John Piper and Wayne Grudem, "Charity, Clarity and Hope" in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. by John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), p. 409.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>28</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 84.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

## B. The Sin - Genesis 3:6

1. The serpent's questions exposed him as a hostile presence and an unholy trespasser in the sacred precincts of the garden/sanctuary. It was the responsibility of Adam and Eve as guardians of the garden to subdue any intruder. (In international treaties at the time of Moses, the author of Genesis, it was the obligation of a vassal king to report any seditious conversation to his suzerain and to take military action against any rebellion.) Adam failed to perform his priestly duty to guard God's sanctuary.<sup>31</sup>
2. For Adam and Eve to accept the serpent as a peer was a failure to exercise their dominion over the creatures (cf. Gen. 1:26, 27). They abdicated their royal authority.<sup>32</sup>
3. "The woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression" (1 Tim. 2:14b) and ate the forbidden fruit. With her missionary zeal for her new religion, she made a convert out of Adam (Gen. 3:6c).<sup>33</sup> Adam misapplied God's formula for marriage (Gen. 2:24) by "leaving" God his Father (Luke 3:38) and "cleaving" to his wife. Whereas Eve was deceived (1 Tim 2:14b), Adam sinned knowing that he was defying God (1 Tim.2:14a). Thus Adam was the one responsible for the fall as the covenantal head of all humanity (Rom. 5:17-19; 1 Cor. 15:21-22).<sup>34</sup> The fact that Adam and Eve's eyes were not opened to their nakedness (Gen. 3:7) until after Adam sinned (Gen. 3:6b) underscores the cosmic significance of Adam's sin as opposed to Eve's.
4. What should Adam have done when tempted by Eve? Adam should have confronted Eve herself as an evil presence who must be repulsed and judged. The later Deuteronomic law stipulated that "if. . . the wife you cherish. . . entice you. . . saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods'. . . , you shall not yield to her or listen to her and your eye shall not pity her, nor shall you spare or conceal her. But you shall surely kill her" (Deut. 13:6-9).<sup>35</sup> Eve had given her allegiance to the devil and had eaten of the forbidden fruit. She therefore deserved the sentence of death for treason against Jehovah her Suzerain (Gen. 2:17).
5. Adam and Eve had the God-like responsibility to discern between good and evil and what they did was to judge God to be evil and Satan to be good.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, p.77.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p.79

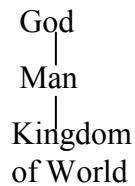
<sup>34</sup> Piper and Grudem, "Charity, Clarity and Hope," p. 409.

<sup>35</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, p. 79.

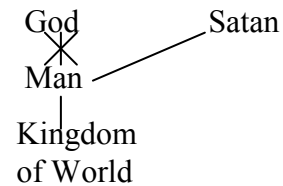
<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p.81.

6. God had brought the devil to the judgment tree to be damned. To man had been assigned the responsibility of standing in God's place as a vassal king and consigning the great adversary to perdition. Adam, however, totally failed in his messianic mission. He had broken his covenant with God and had made one with the devil.<sup>37</sup>
7. By eating of the forbidden fruit and accepting Satan's explanation of the world over God's, Adam and Eve sinned and in so doing they switched their allegiance from God over to Satan. Their eating of the fruit was the solemn ceremony of the covenantal relationship they had just entered into with Satan. In their anti-faith they spurned the table of the Lord to eat of the sacramental tree of the prince of demons.<sup>38</sup>

Before



After



8. When the President makes a treaty with another country, it is not just for himself and his wife, but for the whole nation. In the same way, when Adam and Eve switched their allegiance from God over to Satan, they took their whole kingdom with them. So it was there in the Garden of Eden that Satan became the ruler of this world (John 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 John 5: 19).
9. In Luke 4:5-6 in the temptation of Christ by Satan, Satan "led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, 'I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.'" Thus it was back in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve switched their allegiance from God to Satan that "all the kingdoms of the world" were "handed over to" Satan (Luke 4:5-6).
10. The handing over of the kingdom of the world to Satan made God's fulfilling of his two purposes more challenging:
  - a. Establishing His kingdom over the earth

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.



A few moments earlier God had been ruling over the kingdom of the world through His vassal king Adam. But now Adam had gone over to the side of the enemy and had taken the kingdom with him.

b. Subduing His enemies

Now the kingdom was in the possession of His enemy.

**The rest of the Bible is the story of how God fulfills these two purposes.**

For example, the Old Testament verse most frequently quoted in the New Testament is

Psalm 110:1-2 and it combines both of these themes:

The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet." The Lord will stretch forth Thy strong scepter from Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of Thine enemies."

It is interesting to note that the noun from the Hebrew verb for "subdue" in Genesis 1:28 means "footstool" (2 Chron. 9:18)<sup>39</sup> and is a synonym to the word "footstool" used in Psalm 110:1.

When we come to the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, the first half of the prophetic section, Revelation 4-11, shows how God finally reestablishes His kingdom over the earth. Then the second half, Revelation 12-22 shows how God finally subdues all His enemies.

III. The Sending of a Messenger - Genesis 3:8

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

- A. Here God Himself is the messenger who comes to interrogate the covenant breakers. But which person of the Trinity was the messenger? It is the function of God the Son to represent the Godhead visibly (John 1:18, cf. vs. 14) and it is to him that God the Father has given authority to execute judgment (John 5:27; Acts 10:42; 17:31). The one who will be the Second Adam (1 Cor. 15:45) comes to interrogate the first Adam.
- B. In Genesis 3:8 the Hebrew word translated "cool" is *ruach* which is the common word for "spirit" and makes more sense by being translated "spirit" here. The only previous usage of *ruach* was in Genesis 1:2 where it said "the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters."

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<sup>39</sup> Oswalt, "kabash," 1:430.

Genesis 3:8 should thus be best translated as "they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden as the Spirit of the day."<sup>40</sup>

C. What "day" is referred to here?

The last "day" referred to was in Genesis 2:17 where God had said, "In the **day** that you eat from it you shall surely die." Adam and Eve had just eaten the fruit and therefore this was the Judgment Day when they experienced spiritual death. So what happened on the day they ate? The Lord appeared before them in judgment.

God could have justly consigned His rebellious vassals then and there to eternal wrath along with Satan. But human history was not to be aborted in the Garden of Eden. In eternal covenant with the Son, God the Father had decreed that a new mankind would be redeemed out of fallen mankind. To make room for the history of redemption, the final judgment of men and demons would be postponed until a later day.<sup>41</sup>

The Spirit was identified above as the witness to the covenant and it was the responsibility of the witness to see that the curses of the covenant were executed. Thus the Lord appears as the Spirit of the Day (of Judgment) to interrogate the covenant breakers and execute the curses of the covenant upon them.<sup>42</sup>

D. Another passage which describes what it was like for God to appear as the Glory Cloud is Exodus 19:16-19 where there is an account of the arrival of the Glory Cloud on Mount Sinai.

There Moses reports,

So it came about. . . when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. . . . Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him in thunder.

From these verses one can see why in Genesis 3:8 "they heard the **sound** of the Lord God walking in the garden as the Spirit of the day."

E. The Bible speaks repeatedly of the Day of the Lord when He will appear in judgment.

Here in Genesis 3 is the prototype of the Day of the Lord when the Lord appears in the Glory Cloud as the Spirit of the Day of the Lord.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>41</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, p. 80.

<sup>42</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, p. 64.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97-131.

- F. A parallel situation to Genesis 3:8 occurs in Revelation 6:15-17 at the time of the second coming. Note the use there of the words "hide, presence, day" from Genesis 3:8: "And the kings of the earth and the great men. . . and every slave and free man, **hid** themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the **presence** of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great **day** of His wrath has come. . .'" (Rev. 6:15-17).<sup>44</sup>
- G. As the Covenant Messenger, God questions Adam and Eve:  
 Genesis 3:9 "Where are you?"  
 Genesis 3:11 "Who told you you were naked?"  
                   "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"  
 Genesis 3:13 "What is this you have done?"<sup>45</sup>
- H. In answer to God's questions, Adam passes the buck to Eve (Gen. 3:12). Then Eve passes the buck to the serpent (Gen. 3:13).

#### IV. The Judgment

- A. After the interrogation God the Son, the Divine Judge, proceeds at once to the verdict and pronounces curses upon the covenant breakers. He does so in reverse order of how they passed the buck.
- B. As the Son of God pronounced the curses, He was announcing the very curses which he someday would bear (Gal. 3:13). For Him, His pronouncement of the curses was His committal to the cross.
- C. To the serpent He says, "Cursed are you more than all cattle. . . on 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...." (Gen. 3:14-15). The snake, the instrument used by Satan, condemned to slithering in the dust and to be subject to trampling, becomes a symbol for Satan's humiliation and condemnation.<sup>46</sup>
- D. To the woman He says, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you" (Gen. 3:16).

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>45</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>46</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 85.

Pain will now characterize childbirth and marriage will now be disturbed by inclinations to distort its authority structure.<sup>47</sup>

A verse with the same form and logic as Genesis 3:16 is Genesis 4:7, where the Lord says to Cain, "Sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you but you must master it." In Hebrew the same word for "desire" is used in both verses and the same Hebrew word is translated "rule" in Genesis 3:16 and "master" in Genesis 4:7. The paraphrase of Genesis 4:7 would be, "Sin has a desire, Cain. It wants to control you. But you must not allow sin to have its way with you. You must rule over it."<sup>48</sup> Just as sin's desire is to dominate Cain, so God gives up the woman to a desire to dominate her husband. Because Eve usurped Adam's headship in the temptation, God's curse upon her is the misery of competition with her rightful head.<sup>49</sup>

- E. To Adam He says, "Cursed is the ground because of you. In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life" (Gen. 3:17). Up to this point in God's providence the ground had ministered to Adam's welfare (Gen. 1:29), but now it becomes the medium of a judgment-curse against him.<sup>50</sup> God next says, "Thorns it shall grow for you" (Gen. 3:18). Thorns become a symbol of the curse born by Christ in His crucifixion (Matt. 27:29). The tribute brought to the King of Kings by a cursed earth was a crown of thorns.<sup>51</sup>

Finally He says to Adam, "For you are dust and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3:19). Death would now terrorize man the covenant breaker as the wages of sin (Rom. 5:12; 6:23).<sup>52</sup> The ground that man was to subdue (Gen. 1:28) would now subdue him.<sup>53</sup>

- F. Then Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24).

The first period of human history ends with an angelic judgment of fire and sword. God preserved the garden with the tree of life and so reaffirmed the hope of return from exile. Yet the way of return to the tree of life led through the death curse of God's judgment sword.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., "Male-Female Equality and Male Headship," pp. 108-9

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>50</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 86.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, p. 84.

<sup>52</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 85.

<sup>53</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, p. 84.

<sup>54</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 86.

This is the curse that Christ, the second Adam, experienced for His people when He suffered and died on the cross (Gal. 3:13; cf. John 19:34, 37). Whereas the first Adam was disobedient, the second was obedient, even unto death (Rom. 5:19; Phil. 2:8).

G. What would have happened if Adam had been obedient?

It has been discussed earlier that at creation the Glory Cloud was hovering over the earth (Gen. 12). According to Ezekiel (1:1-28; 10:1-22; 11:22-24; 43:1ff.) when the inner reality of the Glory Cloud is revealed, we behold God in His heaven. There the King of glory is enthroned in the midst of myriads of angels. It is the invisible heaven brought into cloud-enveloped visibility. This is the royal palace (1 Kings 22:19; Job 1:6; 2:1; Isa. 6:1-13; Dan. 7:9-10; Rev. 4:2-11). As the house of the divine King it is a temple/throne room.<sup>55</sup> It is the dwelling place of God.

What the Old Testament knows as the Glory Cloud, the New Testament knows as the New Jerusalem. It is pictured as descending from heaven to the new earth (Rev. 21:2, 10) “having the glory of God” (Rev. 21:11, cf. 21:23-26). It too is a temple (Rev. 21:22)/throne room (Rev. 22:1, 3).

The New Jerusalem is a cube 1380 miles by 1380 miles by 1380 miles (Rev. 21:16). It is therefore a huge version of the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle and later temple, which also was a cube (cf. 1 Kings 6:20). The Holy of Holies was God’s temple/throne room where He dwelt in the midst of His people (Ex. 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:10-13).<sup>56</sup>

The New Testament’s New Jerusalem is but another name for the Glory Cloud of the Old Testament. Therefore if the first Adam had been obedient and had established God’s kingdom and subdued God’s enemies, the same thing would have happened as when the second Adam will have reestablished God’s kingdom (Rev. 4:1-11:19) and subdued His enemies (Rev. 12:1-20:15). The Glory Cloud/New Jerusalem would have come down to the earth (cf. Rev. 21:2,9) so that the first Adam could have heard the glad announcement, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them” (Rev. 21:3).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>56</sup> E. Michael Rusten, *The End Times*, (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1997), p. 88.

<sup>57</sup> Mark W. Karlberg, *Gospel Grace: The Modern-Day Controversy* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 110-11.

## Chapter Five

# The Adamic Covenant

Simultaneous with God's pronouncing of the curses of the covenant, he renewed the covenant with Adam. This was the first step in reestablishing God's kingdom over the earth and in subduing His enemies.

The covenant with Adam after the fall and its renewals has historically been termed the Covenant of Grace.<sup>1</sup>

### I. The Renewal of the Covenant with the First Adam

The making of the covenant between God and Adam and Eve is symbolized by God's clothing of them. This is covenant marriage symbolism. That the Bible describes marriage as a covenant (Mal. 2:15) and the covenant between God and His people as one of marriage (Hos. 1-3; Jer. 31:32; Ezek. 16).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the Bible associates nakedness with divorce.<sup>3</sup> The nakedness of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:7) is a picture of their sin causing a divorce in their covenant/marriage with God. Therefore for God to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve was to reunite them to Himself in covenant/marriage. In ancient Israel for a man to spread a garment over a woman was a pledge of marriage (Ruth 3:9). Thus God's clothing of Adam and Eve symbolized His renewing of the covenant with them (Gen.3:21). In the words of Ezekiel 16:7-8, "You were naked and bare. Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time of love; so I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness. So also I swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you are mine."<sup>4</sup>

Many of the features of a suzerainty treaty are present in the Adamic covenant:

#### A. Preamble - Genesis 3:8

God the Son's visible appearance to Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:8) served the purpose of the treaty prologue, identifying God as the Great King making the covenant.

#### B. Stipulations

##### 1. The Major Stipulation - Allegiance

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<sup>1</sup> Hodge, Systematic Theology, II: 362-77; Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, II:359-63; Berkof, Systematic Theology, pp. 272-301.

<sup>2</sup> George E. Mendenhall and Gary A. Herion, "Covenant," Anchor Bible Dictionary, I:1194-95.

<sup>3</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p.81; David Freeman, "Divorce," Interpreter's Standard Bible Encyclopedia, rev. ed., I:975.

<sup>4</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p.94.

As part of effecting the curse upon the Serpent/Satan, God announces that the allegiance recently transferred to Satan by Adam and Eve will be reversed. God says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed" (Gen. 3:15). The enmity God placed between Satan and Eve would end her allegiance to him. This enmity would characterize all those who would be of Eve's seed rather than of Satan's. God is promising that He will sovereignly reconcile His people to Himself and reinstate their allegiance to Him.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Minor Stipulations

In the Creation Covenant Adam had been given a three-fold role of Gardener/King (Gen. 2:15a), Guardian/Priest (Gen. 2:15b) and Parent/Prophet (Gen. 2:19-20, 24) who was to fill the earth with children of God (Gen. 1:28). Although the promised outcome of the Cultural Blessing is assured (Gen. 1:28), now Adam and Eve must fulfill their roles in a situation of curse rather than blessing. Nevertheless, the roles remain unchanged:

### a. Guardian/Priest - Genesis 3:15

God's pronouncing the curse of enmity between the woman and Satan was a declaration of holy war. The Lord had come not to bring peace but a sword – the conflict of the ages which would last until the final defeat of Satan.<sup>6</sup> The ultimate priestly responsibility of man to deliver a subdued earth to the Creator Lord has been made infinitely more dangerous as it must now be accomplished in an age long battle to the death.

### b. Prophet/Parent - Genesis 3:16

The goal remains to fill the earth with children of God, but now God says to the woman, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children" (Gen. 3:16).

### c. Gardener/King - Genesis 3:17-19

Man was still responsible "to cultivate the ground" (Gen. 3:23), but now God says, "Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" (Gen. 3:17-

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<sup>5</sup> Meredith G. Kline, "Genesis," The New Bible Commentary, Revised, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 85.

<sup>6</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p. 83.

19). As the Gardener/King attempts to serve ("cultivate") the land, it fights back with thorns and thistles.

### C. Promise

It is important to notice that the Adamic Covenant contains promise. God states to the Serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and his seed; He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise Him on the heel" (Gen. 3:15). Not only does God promise that the allegiance of man to Satan will be reversed and that He will sovereignly effect a reconciliation to Himself, but that those who are the seed of the woman by faith will have continuing conflict with the sons of Adam who manifest sonship to Satan. Jesus says to His enemies, "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father" (John 8:34). Those who are the sons of the devil identify with him in the spiritual battle and so must share his eternal judgment.<sup>7</sup>

When God says to the serpent, "He shall bruise you on the head" (Gen. 3:15), an individual is meant. What is envisioned in the all-decisive battle is a judgment ordeal of individual combat fought by the individual champions of the two rival hosts.<sup>8</sup> The seed of the woman will have as its champion Christ, the second Adam, who will defeat Satan. A wounding of the head is fatal while a wounding on the heel is not. Christ will be wounded - the promised redemption involves suffering, even death (although not a permanent one).<sup>9</sup> Satan, on the other hand, will be defeated by the second Adam through that death (Heb. 2:14). It would naturally be in the trampling of the serpent's head that the Seed of the woman would experience the wounding of His heel.<sup>10</sup> The judicial task of judging Satan that was given to man at the beginning will be carried out by a Son of Man.<sup>11</sup>

Genesis 3:15 is a promise in that it is not dependent upon man. God promises to accomplish this. Such promises, in which certain benefits to a vassal which were not dependent upon his obedience, sometimes occurred in suzerainty treaties.<sup>12</sup>

The reason why God is able to make promises to Adam is that the God of Adam is the Father of the Lord Jesus. Christ's obedience to God's covenant is credited to the believer's account. Thus God can promise blessing at the same time He states that His holy demands must

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<sup>7</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p.85.

<sup>8</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p. 83.

<sup>9</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 85.

<sup>10</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p.91.

<sup>11</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p. 89.

<sup>12</sup> Meredith G. Kline, By Oath Consigned, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), p. 23-24.



be met, because it is Christ who meets them. Since the God of Adam is also the God of sovereign grace and election, He is able to promise blessing to the people He has chosen. Christ both bears the curse of the covenant and fulfills its demands. Thus the covenant with Adam contains both a promise of guaranteed blessing and a law of blessing dependent upon obedience.

D. Witness - Genesis 1:2

The Holy Spirit hovering over the earth was witness to the covenant just as He was to the creation Covenant (Gen. 1:2).

E. Ratification by Oath and Solemn Ceremony - Genesis 3 :21

The gospel of the Garden of Eden is found in Genesis 3:15:

I will put enmity  
Between you and the woman  
And between your seed and her seed;  
He shall bruise you on the head,  
And you shall bruise him on the heel.

God would sovereignly reverse the allegiance of the woman to Satan and the Champion of her seed would be victorious over him. There would be two warring seeds, the seed of the woman which would eat of the Tree of Life and the seed of the serpent/Satan who would continue in the way of death.

What was the response of Adam and Eve to God's words? Genesis 3:20-21 pictures them as hearing the gospel of redemptive judgment in the judicial sentence against Satan and responding in faith.<sup>13</sup> We next read, "Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living" (Gen. 3:20). When Adam named his wife Eve, meaning "Life," he was naming her after the Tree of Life (Gen 2:9). The reason he named her Life was "because she was the mother of all the living." In other words, Adam believed the gospel of Genesis 3:15 that through the Individual Champion of Eve's seed all of her seed would eat of the Tree of Life and live. Adam's naming his wife Life was a confession of his faith.<sup>14</sup> The fact that just four verses later Eve said, "I have gotten a man child with the help of the Lord" (Gen 4:1) demonstrates her faith as well. God had immediately reversed her allegiance to Satan (cf. Gen 3:15). Adam and Eve passed from death to life not realizing that this was because their Suzerain, standing before them, would one day die for them. From the very beginning God was never without a believing remnant.

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<sup>13</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p.93.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p.93.

Genesis 3:21 then indicates how God responded to Adams's confession of faith: "And the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them." Adam and Eve's homemade fig leaf garments were insufficient to cover their nakedness. Only God could do that.

We have already discussed how God's covering of Adam and Eve was a marriage/covenant renewal. Because of the whoredom of Adam and Eve in giving their allegiance to another god, the Lord had set forth his covenant wife naked and had said, "She is not my wife and I am not her husband" (cf. Hos. 2:2-3). But now in forgiving grace He betroths her to Himself forever (cf. Hos. 2:19-20) in response to her confession, "Thou art my God" (Hos. 2:23; cf. Deut. 26:17-18).<sup>15</sup>

To understand the significance of Genesis 3:21, it is instructive to review treaty oath rituals. The oath ritual of the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 15 was the customary one in treaty ratifications. Animals were sacrificed and their carcasses divided in two. The one taking the oath of the covenant would then pass between the divided carcasses of the animals (Jer. 34:18-19). Through this symbolic act, the participant declared, "May the one who breaks this covenant be cut apart like these animals." So central was this ritual to covenant making that the Old Testament expression translated "make a covenant" (Gen. 15:18) in Hebrew is literally "cut a covenant."<sup>16</sup>

When "the Lord God make garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21, He first sacrificed the animals and then clothed them by placing them within the skins of the slain animals. The symbolism is comparable to that of Genesis 15 except that the one taking the treaty oath typically just passed between the slain animal's body parts, whereas Adam and Eve were permanently placed within the skins. This was no doubt their oath ritual.<sup>17</sup> The fate of the sacrificed animals would be theirs if they failed to keep the covenant.<sup>18</sup>

Did God use tanned animal skins? No: they were likely fresh skins, with drops of blood still on them, looking forward to the redemption which would come through being washed in the blood of the Lamb. As Moses wrote Genesis 3:21, he no doubt visualized the ratification of the covenant at Mount Sinai when he had sprinkled the blood of the sacrificed animals on the people as part of the oath ratification ceremony. In both cases those taking the oath were sprinkled with the blood of an innocent sacrifice.<sup>19</sup> This was a picture also of how Christ

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>16</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 95.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p. 95.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Mendenhall and Herion, "Covenant," Anchor Bible Dictionary, I:1185.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Ibid

through His blood bore the curse for covenant breaking man so that “the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (I John 1:7).

There is additional significance in God clothing Adam and Eve. The Hebrew word *kuttonet*, translated “garments,” means a tunic signifying authority (Gen. 37:3; Ex. 28:4 ff.; II Sam. 13:18; Ezra 2:69; Isa. 22:21).<sup>20</sup> This is a picture of how at the coronation of the King of Kings soldiers clothed the Second Adam with a scarlet robe (Matt. 27:28).<sup>21</sup> The tunic now worn by the Second Adam is “a robe dipped in blood” (Rev. 19:13) like that of the first king and queen.

Who put the royal robes on Adam and Eve? It was the Son of God, making the first Adam and Eve his vassal king and queen.

Having thus reinstated his vassal royalty, the Son of God “sent them out of the garden to cultivate (literally “serve”) the ground from which he was taken” (Gen. 3:23). Vassal King Adam was sent out of the garden to rule the earth for God through service anticipating the Great Commission when the Second Adam sends out the eleven to “make disciples of all the nations” (Matt. 28:19). The expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden is stated positively in Genesis 3:23 and negatively in Genesis 3:24. The Greek word for “sent out” in the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament, translated beginning in about 250 B.C.) is *exapostello*. Four of the six usages of this word in Acts are for the sending out of an apostle, missionary or angel (Acts 7:29-30; 11:22; 17:14; 22:21).

When God sovereignly brought the allegiance of Adam and Eve back to Himself, why did they not bring the kingdom of the world with them back under God’s authority? The answer is that prior to their switching their allegiance to Satan, God had delegated to them the responsibility of ruling the kingdom of the world for Him as His vassal king and queen (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15). Therefore when they switched their allegiance to Satan, they took their kingdom with them. However, under Satan they were delegated no authority and so when God returned their allegiance to Himself, they came just as individuals, having left their kingdom under Satan’s authority (Luke 4:5).

#### F. Sign of the Covenant

In the covenant with Abraham, the sign of the covenant was circumcision (Gen 17:11) which is the oath sign of the covenant, signifying the curse of being cut off from God’s people (Gen 17:14). By analogy, it is likely that clothing was the sign of the Adamic Covenant,

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. D. N. Freedman and M. P. O’Connor, “*Kuttonet*,” Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament 7:385-86.

<sup>21</sup> This insight is from Ardel Caneday.

signifying the curse of being killed as the animal, in whose skin Adam and Eve were clothed (Gen 3:21).

## II. The Breaking of the Covenant

### A. Genesis 4 – Murder

“Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain” (Gen 4:1).

Cain, the first born of Adam and Eve, murdered his brother, Abel (Gen. 4:8). The outcome was that “Cain went out from the presence of the Lord” (Gen. 4:16). The first-born of the race, the crown prince of the earth, portrays the destiny of fallen man going into exile, “having no hope and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12).<sup>22</sup>

### B. Making a Name for Themselves

“And Cain had relations with his wife and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch: and he built a city and called the name of the city Enoch, after the name of his son” (Gen 4:17).

Enoch means “consecration” (cf. the godly Enoch of Gen 5:14). Here in Adam’s firstborn son is the beginning of man’s self-serving need to make a name for himself and his posterity.<sup>23</sup>

The difference between the line of Seth, the literal seed of the woman (see Gen 4:26 NASV margin) and the line of Cain, the seed of the serpent, can be seen in the following comparison:

#### Genesis 4:1-17

vs 1 **Now the man had relations with his wife** Eve,

And she conceived  
**and gave birth to**

Cain,  
And she said,  
"I have gotten a man-child with *the help of the*  
Lord."

vs 17 And Cain had relations with his wife  
and she also conceived,  
and **gave birth** to Enoch;

#### Genesis 4:25-26

vs 25 **And Adam had relations with his wife**  
again;

**and she gave birth to** a son,  
and named him  
Seth,  
for *she said*,  
"God has appointed me another offspring

in place of Abel; for Cain killed him."

vs 26 And to Seth,

to him also a son **was born**;

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<sup>22</sup> Kline, “Genesis,” p. 86.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

and he built a city,  
**and called the name** of the city  
Enoch,  
after **the name**  
of his son.

**and he called his name**  
Enosh.  
Then *men* began to call upon **the name**  
of the Lord.

While Cain and Enoch were making a name for themselves, Seth and Enosh were “call(ing) upon the name of the Lord” (Gen 4:26). Another possible translation of Genesis 4:26b is “then they began to call themselves by the name of the Lord.”<sup>24</sup> This is the same Hebrew expression used in the second line of Isaiah 44:5 where John Oswalt translates the verse:

This one will say, “I belong to the Lord,”  
And this one will call himself by the name of Jacob,  
And this one will write with his own hand, “The Lord’s”  
And by the name of Israel will he title himself.<sup>25</sup>

Since lines 1 and 3 are parallel, lines 2 and 4 would be parallel as well, indicating that the expression “to call upon the name of the Lord” can mean to “call oneself by the name of the Lord.” If this is the sense, the contrast between Cain and Seth is even greater. Whereas Cain was making a name for himself and his son, Seth and his son were taking the surname of God: they were Yahweh-people.<sup>26</sup> This begins a theme which will continue until the new Jerusalem when God’s name will be on the foreheads of his people (Rev 22:4).

### C. Genesis 6 - Gross Immorality

Just as Satan had engineered the breaking of the first covenant with Adam, so demons were involved in the culminating offense of the second Covenant with Adam (Gen. 6:1-5).

Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . And the Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Kline, Kingdom Prologue , pp.117-20.

<sup>25</sup> John N. Oswalt, The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40-66, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, eds. R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. , (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), p. 163.

<sup>26</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue , pp.117-18.

face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them."

The expression "sons of God" in the Old Testament always refers to angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). These angels fell from their position in heaven and had sexual intercourse with women.

The passage that seems to confirm the interpretation that this passage is speaking of fallen angels having sexual relations with women is Jude 6-7. In a passage speaking of fallen angels, Jude writes, "And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these (fallen angels) indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh. . ." The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was homosexuality in going "after strange flesh." They did this according to Jude "in the same way" as these fallen angels "went after strange flesh." What other incident would this refer to than the angels of Genesis 6 going "after the strange flesh" (Jude 7) of "the daughters of men" (Gen. 6:2)?

In the culminating sin of the first Covenant with Adam, Eve "saw" and "took" (Gen. 3:6). In the culminating sin of the second covenant with Adam, the fallen angels "saw" and "took" (Gen. 6:2).<sup>27</sup>

The apparent offspring of the sons of God and the daughters of men are called Nephilim which means "fallen ones."<sup>28</sup> The translators of the Septuagint understood them to be giants (cf. Num 13:33). Their translating Nephilim by *gigantes* suggests that they understood them to be the offspring of fallen angels since in Greek mythology the *gigantes* were produced by the union of heaven and earth.<sup>29</sup>

They are referred to as "mighty men" (Hebrew: *Gibborim*) (Gen. 6:4) who are Satan's counterfeits of *El Gibbor*, "The Mighty God," "the child" who was to "be born" (Isa. 9:6).<sup>30</sup> In addition these offspring are called "men of renown," in Hebrew "men of the name." Shem means name and it was to be his line that would bear God's name (Gen 9:26).<sup>31</sup> These offspring were counterfeiting the people of the name. Thus the reason why the incident of the sons of God

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<sup>27</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Vol. 1 of *Word Biblical Commentary*, ed. David H. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, (Waco: Word Books, 1987), p. 141.

<sup>28</sup> Richard S. Hess, "Nephilim," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, IV:1072; H. Seebass, "*Napal*," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, IX:497.

<sup>29</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, p. 143.

<sup>30</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue* (published by the author, 1985), II:88.

<sup>31</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue* (1993), p. 163.

and the daughters of men is so heinous is that instead of being fruitful and filling the earth with children of God, the daughters of men were filling the earth with antichrists.

The Nephilim are mentioned in Numbers 13:33 possibly indicating that the cohabitation of demons and women continued following the flood. The admonition of 1 Corinthians 11:10 “The woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head because of the angels” may indicate an ongoing need for women not to be a sexual temptation to angels.

God’s evaluation of the world at this time is found in Genesis 6:12 which is most forceful when compared with its parallel, Genesis 1:31:

**Genesis 1:31**

**And God saw** (Heb: *ra'ah*)  
all that He had made,  
**and, behold, it was**  
very good.

**Genesis 6:12**

**And God looked on** (Heb: *ra'ah*)  
the earth,  
**and, behold, it was**  
corrupt.<sup>32</sup>

D. The Covenant Community

By Noah's day the covenant community was close to extinction, down to only a family of eight (Gen. 6:9, 18). (This is similar to what will occur prior to the second coming described in Luke 18:8, “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”.)

III. The Sending of Messengers.

Enoch and Noah were the two prophetic messengers whom God sent to disobedient mankind. Both are referred to as having a prophetic ministry (Enoch - Jude 14 and Noah - 2 Pet. 2:5). And of both it is said that they “walked with God” (Enoch - Gen 5:22, 24 and Noah - Gen. 6:9). This particular Hebrew verb and preposition are used together nowhere else in Scripture. The verb "walk" is used of persons in a judicial mission. It is used of God walking in the garden as covenantal messenger in Genesis 3:8 (cf. Job 22:14; 1 Sam. 12:2; Zech. 1:10, 11; 6:7). The picture is of Enoch and Noah walking with God as covenant messengers in the judicial process which God had begun in Eden (Gen. 3:8).<sup>33</sup>

IV. Judgment - The Flood

The importance of the flood is seen in the amount of space devoted to it. The event (Gen. 6:9 - 8:22) takes as much space as the period of time from Adam to Noah (Gen. 4:1 - 6:8) or from Noah to Abraham (Gen. 9:1 - 11:26).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Rolf Rendtorff, “‘Covenant’ as a Structuring Concept in Genesis and Exodus,” Journal of Biblical Literature, 108 (1989) 386.

<sup>33</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue (1993), pp.86-88.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

## A. Seven Sections in the Account of the Flood

There are 7 sections in the account of the flood, arranged in chiastic order:

1. The Building of the Ark 6:13-22 (Construction)
2. Embarkation 7:1-5
3. The Deluge of Water 7:6-12
4. The Prevailing of the Waters of Judgment 7:13-24
5. The Decreasing of Water 8:1-14
6. Disembarkation 8:15-19
7. Building of the Altar 8:20-22 (Consecration)<sup>35</sup>

## B. Trial by Ordeal

Trial by judicial ordeal was the procedure God used to settle the disputed inheritance of the kingdoms of this world. Trial by ordeal was a common judicial procedure in the ancient world. It was a technique by which courts sought to determine the judgment of the gods. The divine verdict was ascertained through the ordeal, clearing the innocent and condemning the guilty. In some ordeals the procedure served both to determine guilt and to execute the offender.<sup>36</sup>

There are several different types of ordeals. Each was considered a trial by ordeal. War was considered a trial by ordeal in which the gods as treaty witnesses would give victory to the nation with the just cause. In some cases individual national champions would fight (e.g. David and Goliath, Christ and Satan). The two most frequent ordeal elements were fire and water.<sup>37</sup> Second Peter 3:5-7 tells us that God will judge the earth twice: once with water (Noah's flood) and once with fire (the end of the age).

## C. Water Ordeals

Water ordeals were the most frequent in the Ancient Near East. Since in most cultures the rivers were considered divine, the accused would typically be thrown in a river. If he were able

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p.133.

<sup>37</sup> Tikva S. Frymer-Kensky, "The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1977)



to get out of the water safely, that meant he was innocent. If he began to drown, that meant he was guilty.

There is a frequent use of water ordeals in the Bible:

1. When Israel passed through the Red Sea on dry land, God was vindicating His people by bringing them safely through a water ordeal. The armies of Pharaoh were found guilty as they perished in the ordeal waters.
2. When Israel crossed the Jordan River on dry land, the judicial question was the rightful ownership of the Promised Land. God declared in favor of Israel by bringing them safely through the water ordeal. When the kings of the land learned what had happened, "there was no spirit in them" (Josh. 5:1) because they knew that God had given the verdict in favor of the Jews by bringing them safely through the water ordeal.<sup>38</sup>
3. When Jonah was cast into the sea, he remained under the water in the belly of the fish for three days (Jonah 1:17) until he repented and confessed his sin to the Lord (Jonah 2:1-9). As soon as he was right with God, God brought him out of the water and placed him on dry land (Jonah 2:10). God held him under until he repented.
4. Peter was able to walk on the water as long as he kept his eyes on the Lord (Matt. 14:28-29). However, as soon as Peter took his eye off the Lord and looked at the circumstances, he went under (Matt. 14:30).
5. Baptism by immersion is a water ordeal in which God declares a person justified by bringing him safely through a water ordeal.
6. The creation of the heavens (Gen. 1:7) and earth (Gen. 1:9) was by means of a water ordeal as both in turn emerged from the midst of the waters. God was thus symbolically declaring His creation good (Gen. 1:9).

An ancient example of a water ordeal is found in the Code of Hammurapi in which the accused had to cast himself into the river. This was seen as casting himself into the hands of the divine judge who would declare the verdict. His emergence from the waters would signify his vindication. "If the River shows that man to be innocent and he comes forth safe," he shall dispossess his false accuser and the latter shall be put to death. But "if the River overpowers him, his accuser shall take possession of his estate."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Meredith G. Kline, By Oath Consigned (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), p. 56.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

This is exactly what happened at the flood. There was a direct revelation of the divine verdict. Water was the ordeal element. The condemned were overpowered by the water, whereas the vindicated were delivered and inherited the estate of the ungodly.<sup>40</sup> God's sealing of the elect in the Ark for their vindication (Gen. 8:16) was simultaneously a shutting of the door to the kingdom for those outside. The election of some assumes the reprobation of others.<sup>41</sup>

The flood results in a reversal of Genesis 1. On the second day of creation God "separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse and it was so. And God called the expanse heaven" (Gen. 1:6). Then at the flood, "all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened" (Gen. 7:11). The flood thus reversed the original creation and returns the earth to the situation of Genesis 1:2 where the earth was covered with water.<sup>42</sup>

In the Abrahamic Covenant we will later see how circumcision is a picture of the curse of the covenant. The symbolism there is that whoever is disobedient will be cut off from God's people (Gen. 17:14). The flood is also pictured as a cutting-off curse. In Genesis 9:11 God says to Noah and his sons, "All flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of a flood." "Cutting off" here is the same Hebrew word as the "cutting off" of circumcision (Gen. 17:14). The word "flesh" also occurs in both passages. Thus the flood was a picture of the cutting off of flesh as a curse of the covenant, like circumcision later would also be.<sup>43</sup>

A passage which compares the flood with baptism is 1 Peter 3:20-21. There Peter writes of "the days of Noah, during the construction of the Ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons were brought safely through the water." The Greek words translated "brought safely through the water" mean "saved through the water." How did the flood save Noah and his family? They were declared justified as God brought them safely through a water ordeal. The waters of the flood declared either condemnation-destruction or justification-salvation.<sup>44</sup>

Peter then goes on to state, "And corresponding to that (i.e. the flood), baptism now saves you - not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience" (1 Pet. 3:21). How does baptism relate to the flood? Both are water ordeals

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 55-56.

<sup>41</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 89.

<sup>42</sup> W. J. Dumbrell, Covenant and Creation, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984), pp. 14-15.

<sup>43</sup> Kline, By Oath Consigned, p. 62.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-66.

in which God declares His people justified. Baptism pictures the believer coming safely through a water ordeal. The fact that he emerges from the waters indicates his justification/salvation.<sup>45</sup>

## V. Covenant Blessing: The Ark as an Anticipation of the Consummation of the Kingdom

### A. A Covenant of Grant

In Genesis 6:18 there is the first use in the Bible of the word "covenant." There God says to Noah, "I will establish my covenant with you" (Gen. 6:18). The question arises, to what does this covenant refer: promised salvation through the ark or the Noahic covenant of Genesis 9? One possibility is that it refers to the ark experience itself. In Genesis 6:17 God says, "I am bringing a flood of water upon the earth," and then in 6:18 says, "and I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark. . ." This is in the first of the seven sections of the flood story which comprise a literary unit. In Genesis 8:1 we read, "God remembered Noah. . . in the ark." In other words He remembered the covenant that He had made with Him. "Remember" in a covenantal context describes one who is mindful of his covenantal commitments and as a result carries them out (cf. Gen. 9:15-16; Ex. 2:24; 6:5; 32:13-14; Lev. 26:42-45; Ps. 98:3; 105:8-15; 106:45; 111:5; Luke 1:72-75).<sup>46</sup>

The covenant of Genesis 6:18 is a covenant of grant. The corresponding treaty of grant was one which ancient rulers awarded to noteworthy persons for meritorious service to the crown. A treaty of grant might guarantee the grantee's special status, bestow on him title over cities or lands with the resulting revenue or grant to territory already under his control exemption from certain requirements. Such grants had the character of a royal charter.<sup>47</sup>

The covenant before the fall contained the proposal of a grant in which the suzerain offered to give favored treatment to a lesser ruler on the condition of performing loyal service as a covenant vassal. Although Adam was created as a covenant servant, he was on probation. If he kept the covenant, he would receive the eschatological grant. Noah like Adam was also viewed as a covenant servant, but one who had already demonstrated his obedience. According to Genesis 6:8, "Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord." That expression means "to be approved as deserving favorable treatment." This was a standard term applied to the faithful recipients of rewards in extra-Biblical grants. It does not mean to find favor as an act of mercy in spite of one's sin (e.g. Gen. 39:4; 50:4; Deut. 24:1; Prov. 3:4; Luke 2:52). It refers to a covenantal grant bestowed on one whose faithful service by means of God's grace receives

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue (1993), p.143.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p.144-145.

God's blessing. Of course, God's dealings with Noah find their ultimate explanation in God's sovereign grace.<sup>48</sup>

## B. A Symbol of the Consummated Kingdom

The ark is a symbol of the consummated kingdom. The picture of Noah and his family in the ark is of man ruling over representatives of vegetable and animal kingdoms in total order with the wolf lying down with the lamb.<sup>49</sup>

The ark is also a picture of the Sabbath rest of the Consummated Kingdom. Noah's name itself means "rest" (Gen. 5:29). Genesis 8:4 says the ark "rested" on the mountain in the seventh month, the verb "rest" being a word play on the name Noah. This is the same word for rest used in Exodus 20:11 for God's resting on the seventh day.<sup>50</sup> The consummated Ark/Kingdom was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Noah's father who in naming him stated, "This one shall give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the Lord has cursed" (Gen. 5:29).<sup>51</sup>

In the seventh and final section of the account of the flood Noah builds an altar and consecrates the Ark/Kingdom to God (Gen. 8:20). This is a precursor of Christ's delivery of the kingdom to God at the end of the consummated Millennial Kingdom (1 Cor. 15:23-25).<sup>52</sup>

There is a parallel between the events in the world that was before Noah's flood and the events that will end the present world:

### The Kingdom in the World That Then Was

Covenant	Culminations of Wickedness	Judgment Water Ordeal	Anticipation of Consummated Kingdom
Gen. 3:14-21	Gen. 4-6	2 Pet. 3:6	Gen. 6:18 - 8:22

### The Kingdom in the World That Now Is

Covenants	Culmination of Wickedness	Judgment Fire Ordeal	Consummated Kingdom
Gen. 8:20ff.	2 Pet. 3:3-4	2 Pet. 3:7, 10, 12	2 Pet. 3:13

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.145.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.,p.140.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.141.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p.141.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Ibid., p.141-42.

## Chapter Six

### The Noahic Covenant

To understand the significance of the Noahic Covenant, it is helpful to think back to the judgment of the Creation Covenant in Genesis 3 and to the simultaneous making of the Adamic Covenant. For the gospel promise of Genesis 3:15 to have time to take effect, the final day of judgment would have to be postponed. If the final judgment had been in Genesis 3, Adam and Eve would have gone to hell and that would have been that. Since God had promised in Genesis 1:28 that man as vassal king would fill the earth, subdue it and have dominion over the creatures, time was necessary for God to bring His promise to fruition. As a result the curse which God pronounced in Genesis 3:16-19 was a temporal, common curse, not the final judgment. Man was not cast immediately into outer darkness. The world order continued. The blessing of God's restraint in judging Adam and Eve is not part of the eternal blessing of God's Kingdom which comes to the elect through God's saving grace but consists of temporal blessings that all men experience by virtue of their being part of the continuing world order. They are part of God's common grace to all men, just and unjust alike. The blessings of common grace are not deserved but part of God's grace to those who deserve His wrath.<sup>1</sup> The Noahic Covenant is the common grace covenant for the earth after the flood.<sup>2</sup>

#### I. The Making of the Covenant

##### A. A Covenant of Grant

As the commitments of the Noahic Covenant were unilaterally from God, the covenant is one of royal grant. A royal grant was a treaty in which a king would unconditionally grant a benefit to a loyal subject for faithful service.<sup>3</sup>

Regulations are included in the Noahic Covenant regarding man's conduct but no commitments were exacted from man upon which the continuance of the covenant was dependent. Indeed God promises to be faithful to His covenantal commitment even though "the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 9:21). Like all the covenants of God, it is a sovereign administration of God's heavenly reign.<sup>4</sup>

##### B. The Parties to the Covenant

The covenant is made with Noah and his family as representatives of humanity in general, just as the curses of the Creation Covenant were given to Adam and Eve as representatives of all of their seed. In fact the Noahic Covenant is not made just with Noah and his sons and "their descendants after them" (Gen. 9:8-9) but with "every living creature of all flesh" (Gen.

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<sup>1</sup> Meredith G. Kline, Kingdom Prologue, (Published by the author, 1993), pp. 95-96.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ibid., pp. 144-45.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 151.

9:10, 12, 15-17). The Noahic Covenant is with the earth itself as well (Gen. 9:13). The covenant sign of the rainbow is visible to all, consecrating no one. The Noahic Covenant defines a provisional world order under God's general royal governance. God covenants to maintain the world order faithfully until the final judgment.<sup>5</sup>

#### C. The Preamble

In discussing the Creation Covenant we noted that Genesis 1:1-2:3 served the purpose of the Covenant Preamble, identifying God as the Creator-Suzerain. In light of this, it is interesting to note that Genesis 8 is parallel to Genesis 1:1 - 2:3, once again identifying God as the Creator-Suzerain who transforms the water covered earth (Gen. 7:24 - 8:1, cf. 1:3) into dry land to be subdued by man as vassal king (Gen. 9:1-7 cf. 1:28).<sup>6</sup>

<u>Day of Creation</u>	<u>Corresponding Event in Genesis 8</u>	<u>Reference</u>
1	The <i>ruach</i> (translated "wind" in Gen. 8:1, "Spirit" in 1:2) passes over the water covered earth	Gen. 8:1; cf. 7:24
2	Separation of the waters over the earth from the waters on the earth	8:2
3	Dry land appears	8:3-5
4	"The window of the ark" (8:6) corresponds to "the windows of the heavens" (7:11 NASV margin) Which, when opened, reveal visually the full canopy of the heavens for the first time in a year.	8:6
5	Birds are sent out to rule the heavens	8:7-12
6	a) Animals are to be fruitful and multiply on the earth (8:17) b) Man enters the re-creation (8:18)	8:13-19
7	The world is consecrated to God by man	8:20-22 <sup>7</sup>

#### D. Stipulation

Equivalent to God's command to Abraham to "Go forth from your country" (Gen. 12:1) is God's command to Noah to "Go out of the ark" (Gen. 8:16). Likewise he is to "bring out

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. ibid. pp. 136-38.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 223-24.

with (him) every living thing” (Gen. 8:17). Since God is making this covenant not just with Adam but with all His creatures (Gen. 9:10-12, 15-17) it is necessary that all, like Abraham, leave their former habitation and enter into the promised land God has prepared for them.

The parallelism between the Noahic Covenant and Abrahamic Covenant can be illustrated as follows:

	<b>Genesis 8-9</b>		<b>Genesis 11-12</b>
8:15	Then God spoke to Noah , saying, "Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons' wives with you."	12:1a	Now the Lord said to Abram "Go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father's home."
8:19	So Noah went out and his sons  and his wife and his sons wives.	11:31b 11:31a	and they went out together Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grand son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abraham's wife;
9:1	And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth (Heb: <i>eres</i> )	12:2b 12:3 12:2a 12:1b	And I will bless you, And I will bless those who bless you, And I will make of you a great nation, to the land (Heb: <i>eres</i> ) I will show you;

The use of the names of God is significant in these accounts. In Genesis 8:15 it is “God” the Creator addressing Noah and His creatures in common grace. In Genesis 12:1 it is the Lord addressing His covenant people.

In writing his account of Noah’s emergence from the ark, Moses also describes it in terms of the Exodus. This can be illustrated by comparing Genesis 8:13-20 with Exodus 12:2-13:50:

	<b>Genesis 8</b>		<b>Exodus 12-13</b>
		12:2	This month shall be the beginning of months... it is the first month of the year to you.
8:13	In the first month	12:31	Then he (Pharaoh) called for Moses and Aaron at night and said, "Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel...."
8:15	Then God spoke to Noah  Saying,  "Get out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives...."	12:32	Take both your flocks and your herds...."
8:17	Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh..., birds and animals...."		All the hosts of the Lord
8:18a,c	So Noah... and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him		went out
8:18b	went out	12:38a	And a mixed multitude

8:19	Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves... went out....	12:38c along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock 12:38b also went up with them
8:20	Then Noah... took of every clean animal and every clean bird and offered burnt sacrifices....	12:42- Regulations for the Passover 50 And 13:1-5 the first born of animals

God commanded both Noah (Gen. 8:16) and Moses (Ex. 3:10-12 cf. 11:8; 12:31) to come forth to inherit their respective promised lands, vindicating them through a water ordeal ( in Moses' case through the Red Sea).<sup>8</sup>

#### E. Promise

##### 1. Guardian-Priest - Genesis 8:20-22

In exercise of his priestly office Noah built an altar to the Lord (Gen. 8:20a) and, in the token form of representative animals offered as burnt offerings to the Lord (Gen. 8:20b), consecrated to God the consummated kingdom in the Ark. Noah's priestly consecration of his kingdom to God points forward to the priestly act of Jesus, our High Priest, who having subjected all things to Himself delivers up the kingdom to God the Father, subjecting Himself "to the One who subjected all things to Him that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:24-28).<sup>9</sup>

Noah's priestly sacrifice expressed propitiation, the turning away of wrath through the offering of a gift. "The Lord smelled the soothing aroma" of Noah's sacrifice (Gen. 8:21a). From this sacrifice of special grace, the blessings of common grace flow. "The Lord said to (or in) His heart, 'I will never again curse the ground on account of man'" (Gen. 8:21b NASV margin). God's anger is turned aside through the offering of Noah's sacrifice.<sup>10</sup>

This promise of the Noahic Covenant made earth a protectorate of God the Great King until the final judgment.<sup>11</sup> Central to the suzerain-vassal relationship was the pledge of the suzerain to protect his vassal's realm.<sup>12</sup> Man as guardian-priest is now to subdue (Gen. 1:28b) and protect (Gen. 2:15b) the earth which has by covenant been made a protectorate of God the Suzerain of the Universe. Since flood-judgment would be an appropriate response to the sin in any age, mankind has been preserved by grace alone.

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<sup>8</sup> Meredith G. Kline, "Genesis," The New Bible Commentary, Revised, ed., D. Guthrie, et. al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 89.

<sup>9</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, pp. 141-42.

<sup>10</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 89.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> NIV Study Bible, p. 19.



The continued existence of the created world until the final judgment is grounded solely in God's grace.<sup>13</sup>

The expression in Genesis 8:22, "while earth remains," is a temporal limitation. Latent is the threat that the ultimate vengeance of the Covenant Lord will one day destroy the earth (2 Pet. 3:5-7).<sup>14</sup>

2. Parent-Prophet - Genesis 9:1, 7

"And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth'" (Gen. 9:1, 7 cf. Gen. 1:28). Genesis 9:1ff, like Genesis 1:28, is a promised blessing from God. As He had done in Genesis 1:28, God promises that He will bless His creatures by enabling them to fill the earth with Sons of God.<sup>15</sup>

3. Gardener-King

a. Instructions Regarding Sustenance

God will one day give man dominion over all the animals, but in the interim it will be with greater difficulty because, as God says to Noah, "The fear of you and the terror of you shall be in every beast of the field and on every bird of the sky; with every thing that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given" (Gen. 9:2). After the fall, only snakes had feared man (Gen. 3:15), but now all animals do. (The fact that up to the flood animals had not feared man explains how Noah got the animals into the ark.)

In the next verse, God says further to Noah, "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you as I gave the green plant" (Gen. 9:3). In other words, God did not permit man to eat animals until He had placed a fear of man upon them.

Along with new permission to eat meat came the stipulation not to eat blood (Gen. 9:4). This prohibition had its rationale in blood's sanctity as a symbol in altar sacrifice.<sup>16</sup>

b. The Judicial Authority of the State

God goes on to the implications of man's dominion for the state. God establishes the state again after the flood by covenantal stipulation (Gen. 9:5-6; cf. 4:15).<sup>17</sup> The reaffirmation of the state's power of the sword regulates it by insisting that the punishment not exceed the crime (Gen. 9:5-6).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> William J. Dumbrell, Covenant and Creation, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984), p. 27.

<sup>14</sup> Meredith G. Kline, By Oath Consigned, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), pp. 27-28.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. R. C. Leeuwen, "Breeding Stock vs. Lords of Creation," Christianity Today, 35 (Nov. 11, 1991) 36-37.

<sup>16</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 90.

<sup>17</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p. 155.

<sup>18</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 90.

c. Implications for the Future

Since the Noahic Covenant was a covenant with all mankind (Gen 9:8-9), its stipulations were considered binding on Gentiles as well as Jews. The two stipulations of the Noahic Covenant (Gen 9:3-6) were expanded to as many as thirty Noahide Laws which were the requirement for “God fearers,” Gentiles who worshiped the God of Israel but had not become Jewish proselytes through circumcision (cf. Acts 10:2, 22, 35; 13:16).<sup>19</sup> Apparently at the time of the Jerusalem Council the list had just four (Acts 15:20, 29; cf. Rev 2:14, 20). In other words the decision of the Jerusalem Council was to receive Gentiles into God’s people just as they always had been received, by requiring only they keep the Noahide Laws.<sup>20</sup>

F. Sign

The sign of the Noahic Covenant is the rainbow (Gen. 9:12-17). To man it is a divine guarantee that "never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh" (Gen. 9:15). To God it was a reminder of His commitment as world-Protector. The usual meaning of "bow" is that of a weapon.<sup>21</sup> The war bow is mentioned as part of God's arsenal of wrath particularly when He is pictured as advancing in the war cloud of judgment dispatching His arrows of lightning (cf. e.g., Deut. 32:42; Ps. 7:12; 18:14; 64:7; 77:17; 144:6; Heb. 3:11; Zech. 9:14). But as a sign of the Noahic Covenant, the Divine Warrior has laid aside His battle-bow and is now prepared to govern rebellious mankind with forbearance for a season.<sup>22</sup> Since a rainbow is pictured as encircling God’s throne, the sign of the covenant is ever before Him (Rev 4:4; cf. Ezek 1:28).

G. Blessings and Curses - Genesis 9:20-27

To understand the blessings and curses of the Noahic Covenant, it is helpful to note the parallels between the Fall in Genesis 2-3 and Noah’s drunkenness in Genesis 9:20-27:

**The Fall  
(Gen. 2-3)**

1. “And the Lord God planted a garden. . . and there He placed the man” (2:8)
2. “She took from its fruit and ate” (3:6)

**Noah’s Drunkenness  
(Gen. 9:20-27)**

1. “And Noah. . . planted a vineyard” (9:20)
2. “And he drank of the wine and became

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<sup>19</sup> J. Julius Scott, Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), pp. 340-41; David E. Aune, Revelation 1-5, vol. 52 of Word Biblical Commentary, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas: Word, 1997), p. 187; “Noahides,” Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period, p. 456.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Aune, Revelation 1-5, p. 187.

<sup>21</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 90.

<sup>22</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p. 152.

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|    |   | drunk” (9:21a)   |
| 3. | “And they knew that they were naked” (3:7b)   | 3. “he. . . uncovered himself inside his tent (9:21b)                                      |
| 4. | “Then the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them” (3:21) | 4. “Shem and Japheth took a garment. . . and covered the nakedness of their father” (9:23) |
| 5. | “Then the eyes of both of them were opened” (3:7a)                                      | 5. “Noah awoke from his wine” (9:24)   |
| 6. | “Cursed are you” (3:14)   | 6. “Cursed be Canaan” (9:25)   |
| 7. | Cain, Abel and Seth (4:1-2, 25)   | 7. Shem, Ham and Japheth (9:25-27) <sup>23</sup>   |

Satan induced Adam and Eve to sin. "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (Gen. 3:7). But then God in His love clothed them (Gen. 3:21).<sup>24</sup>

In Genesis 9 Noah sinned by getting drunk and then exposing his nakedness (Gen. 9:21). His son Ham "saw" and "told."<sup>25</sup> He aggravated the shame of his father's nakedness by publicizing it to his brothers (Gen. 9:22).<sup>26</sup> This act of disrespect, if not evidence of a present encroachment of the seed of the serpent in the remnant family, was at least prophetic of the future.<sup>27</sup>

Shem and Japheth on the other hand covered the nakedness of their father out of their loving concern (Gen. 9:23), just as God had covered Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21).<sup>28</sup> Their act demonstrates the devotion of their spirits to the imitation of God.<sup>29</sup>

#### 1. The Cursing of Canaan - Genesis 9:25

Just as Satan's act of malice involving the exposure of nakedness resulted in God's curse on his seed, so Ham's malice toward his father's nakedness brought a curse on his seed, his son Canaan (Gen. 9:18). The curse on both Satan and Canaan is personal. It means exclusion from the kingdom of God. In the case of Canaan, it looks to the future when Israel conquered the Promised Land of Canaan. The conquered Canaanites are seen

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. John H. Sailhamer, Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), pp. 292-93.

<sup>24</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 90.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p. 161.

<sup>27</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 90.

<sup>28</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p. 161.

<sup>29</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 90.

to be representatives of the serpent's seed, crushed under the heel of the redeemed people of the Lord in a typological act of judgment, pointing to the final judgment.<sup>30</sup>

2. The Blessing of Shem - Genesis 9:26

Shem means "name" and God's blessing on his line was that they would bear God's name. The blessing on Shem is in the form of a doxology, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem" (Gen. 9:26a). As God sovereignly differentiates between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, He identifies His own name with the former by entering into a covenant with them in which they are adopted as His chosen people, acknowledge Him as God and Father, and surname themselves after Him.<sup>31</sup>

It was in particular in the Lord's covenantal calling of Abraham, the descendant of Shem, that the blessing of Shem found its realization.<sup>32</sup> The blessing on Shem then looks forward to the rest of the Old Testament when God dealt with Israel, the seed of Abraham, and to the millennium when "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26).

The last phrase of the blessing on Shem is "And let Canaan be his servant" (Gen. 9:26b). Just as the curse on Satan in Genesis 3:15 implied the salvation for God's elect, so the curse on Canaan was a means of blessing Shem. Israel possessed the Promised Kingdom Land by dispossessing Canaan.<sup>33</sup>

3. The Blessing of Japheth - Genesis 9:27

The blessing of Japheth, the progenitor of the Gentiles, moves beyond the ethnic particularism of the Old Testament's concentration on Israel to the Messianic Age and the church's embrace of the nations. It states, "May God enlarge Japheth and let him dwell in the tents of Shem" (Gen. 9:27a).<sup>34</sup>

The imagery used to convey the union of Shem and Japheth in the covenant community is adapted from the incident which had just occurred with Noah. Together Shem and Japheth had entered the tent of their father to perform their godly act of love and respect. Thus the covenant is pictured as a tent-dwelling in which they will dwell together for eternity.<sup>35</sup>

Noah's figure of the opened tent is reflected in the New Testament missionaries' report of "how God had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27).<sup>36</sup> As a result today we live in the Gentile age (Luke 21:24) when Japheth is dwelling in the salvation

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<sup>30</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, pp. 162-3.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 90.

<sup>34</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p. 164.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

tents of Shem. Thus in the curses and blessings of the Noahic Covenant we have a summary of salvation history.

#### H. Solemn Ceremony

The solemn ceremony was Noah's altar sacrifice (Gen 8:20), similar to Moses' sacrifices at the solemn ceremony of the Mosaic Covenant (Ex 24:4-5). Both Moses and Noah offered burnt offerings upon an altar which they built (Gen 8:20; Ex 24:4-5) and which was associated with a mountain of deliverance (Gen 8:4; Ex 19:2-8; 24:1-11).

## II. The Breaking of the Covenant - Babel's Ascent to Heaven - Genesis 11:1-4<sup>37</sup>

As in every other age, man broke the covenant. This breaking culminated in the building of the Tower of Babel. The introduction to the tower of Babel is found in Gen 10:10 where in speaking of Nimrod, Moses writes, "The beginning of his kingdom was Babel..." Since this has been the first usage of the word "beginning" since Genesis 1:1, it appears that here we have the beginning of the kingdom of the seed of the serpent in contrast to God's vassal kingdom through the seed of the woman (Gen 1:26, 28; 3:21).

Moses next writes, "And it came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there" (Gen 11:2). As in the story of Cain's city (Gen 4:16), the account begins with a reference to expelled mankind wandering in the east.<sup>38</sup> (It will not be until God's call of Abraham that there is movement to the west.<sup>39</sup>)

God's purpose for man was to multiply, fill the earth and subdue it (Gen. 9:1, 7; cf. 1:28). So what did they do? In Genesis 11:4 we read, "And they said, 'Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.'" Instead of filling the earth and subduing it, they decided to come together to build a city, the exact opposite of filling the earth and subduing it.

One of the plots of the Old Testament is the genealogy of the seed of the serpent. In the culminating sin of the Adamic Covenant, the apparent offspring of the sons of God and the daughters of men were "men of renown" (Hebrew: "men of the name"). Here once again the seed of the serpent desires to "make for ourselves a name." The name they were to make for themselves, however, would commemorate their judgment, not their success<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p.167.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> "East," Dictionary of Biblical Imagery, p. 225.

<sup>40</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, vol. 1 of Word Biblical Commentary, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Waco: Word, 1987), p. 235.

The tower described here is an ancient staircase-mountain pyramid-like structure called a ziggurat. Ziggurats were temple towers with a sanctuary on the top.<sup>41</sup> Their stair-cased form was to be a means of ascent and descent for both man and gods.<sup>42</sup> The word Babel, usually translated “Babylon,” in Akkadian means “gate of God” while in Hebrew it means “confused.”<sup>43</sup> In Babylonia a number of these ziggurats were built. In Genesis 11:4 we have an account of the building of the first ziggurat in the city of Babylon. The ziggurat at Babylon had the name "The House of the Foundation of Heaven and Earth" and had eight stair-cased levels, 607 feet on each side at its base.<sup>44</sup> Archeologists who have excavated the tower estimate its height to have been 295-300 feet. Babel/Babylon was the exact opposite of the city of God,<sup>45</sup> and in the book of Revelation is contrasted to the New Jerusalem (Rev. 17:1-5; 21:9-10). In Babylonian theology Babel was the gate of God and their ziggurat was the way to God. But God would turn Babel into confusion.<sup>46</sup>

It is interesting to note that the making of baked bricks mentioned in the building of the tower (Gen 11:3) is also specifically mentioned in the description of the building of the ziggurat of Babylon in Enuma Elish (6:50-70), a seven tablet Akkadian epic from the early second millennium B.C., and from an account of Nabopolassar in Neo-Babylonian times. Nabopolassar was told to “make its summit like the heavens” just as Genesis 11:4 states “whose top will reach into heaven.” It was typical of Mesopotamian ziggurats that their tops were said to reach the heavens. Another king was said to have made “the head of his ziggurat as high as the heavens.” The top of the ziggurat of Hammurapi was said to have been “lofty in the heavens.” Esarhadon said of the ziggurat that he built, “To the heavens I raised its head.”<sup>47</sup>

Also instructive in the Enuma Elish is that after the god Marduk was enthroned on the top of the ziggurat, we read that “they looked up to its horns” (Enuma Elish VI, 66). The temple tower had a crown of horns. Similarly, ziggurats depicted in inscriptions and bas-relief have horns on their summits. In as much as the altar (Ex. 27:2) of burnt offering had “a horn at each of the four corners” (Ex. 27:2), the ziggurat was also a gigantic altar. Further substantiation of this is that the altar of Ezekiel’s temple is in the shape of a ziggurat or mountain shaped (Ezek 43:13-17).<sup>48</sup> The ziggurats were not simply pagan tower-temples but also counterfeit altars. To summarize, Babel is the initial

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<sup>41</sup> T. G. Pinches, “Babel, Tower of,” International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, rev. ed., 1:383.

<sup>42</sup> Meredith G. Kline, Glory in Our Midst: A Biblical Theological Reading of Zachariah’s Night Visions, (Overland Park, KS: Two Age Press, 2001), p. 61.

<sup>43</sup> Frank Anthony Spina, “Babel,” Anchor Bible Dictionary, I:561.

<sup>44</sup> Pinches, “Babel, Tower of,” 1:383.

<sup>45</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p. 167-69.

<sup>46</sup> B. T. Arnold, “Babylon,” New Dictionary of Biblical Theology, p. 394.

<sup>47</sup> Paul H. Seeley, “The Date of the Tower of Babel and Some Theological Implications,” Westminster Theological Journal 63 (Spring 2001) 18.

<sup>48</sup> Kline, Glory in our Midst, pp. 61-62.

and prototypical attempt of an idolatrous world to exalt itself to heaven for its own glory and by its own effort. Babel/Babylon is the great apostasy.<sup>49</sup>

The real gate of heaven is found in Jacob's ladder (Gen 28:17) which was "a ladder. . . set on the earth with its top reaching into heaven. . . . And behold, the Lord stood above it. . ." (Gen 28:12-13). Jacob named this place "the gate of heaven" because this staircase did reach heaven (Gen 28:17). Jacob memorialized the place with a pillar monument (Gen 28:18).<sup>50</sup> This was the reality of which Babel was the counterfeit:

<u>Genesis 11</u>	<u>Genesis 28</u>	<u>Genesis 28</u>
vs 4 And they said,		
"Come, let us build for ourselves a city, And a tower whose <b>top</b> <b>Will reach into heaven</b>	vs 12a And he had a dream vs 12c was set (Hebrew: <i>nasab</i> ) on earth  vs 12b and behold, a ladder vs 12d with its <b>top</b> reaching <b>into heaven</b>	vs 18 So Jacob arose early in the morning, and took the stone... and set it up (Hebrew: <i>sum</i> )  as a pillar, and poured oil on its <b>top</b> .

In Ezekiel 28 "Eden, the garden of God" (vs. 13) is described as "the holy mountain of God" (vss. 14, 16). Whether this chapter is describing the earthly Garden of Eden or its heavenly prototype (cf. Heb. 8:5; 9:23) it is likely that the Garden of Eden was a holy mountain. A ziggurat was shaped like a mountain.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, what the Babylonians were doing was trying to copy the mountain of the Garden of Eden. Whereas through their staircase mountain their motive was to "make for ourselves a name" (Gen. 11:4, cf. 4:17; 6:4), God's mountain where he dwells (Ps. 74:2) is "the dwelling place of (His) name" (Ps. 74:7).

### III. The Sending of Messengers: Heaven's Descent to Babel - Genesis 11:5-7<sup>52</sup>

According to ziggurat theology, the god was expected to descend upon the tower. The tower of Babel was favored with a descent, but not the kind of descent its builders hoped for. The people's challenge of "Come, let us build. . . into heaven" (Gen. 11:4) was answered by "Come, let Us go down and. . . confuse" (Gen. 11:7). By pointing out the necessity of God's descending, Moses notes with a smile that the tower had not yet reached heaven.<sup>53</sup>

Genesis 11:1-9 is written as an extended chiasm:

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 188.

<sup>50</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p. 228.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>52</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p. 169.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

- A the whole earth used the same language (vs. 1)
- B there (vs 2)
- C one another (vs. 3a)
- D Come, let us make bricks (vs, 3b)
- E let us build for ourselves (vs. 4a)
- F a city and a tower (vs. 4b)
- G the LORD came down (vs. 5a)
- F<sup>1</sup> the city and the tower (vs. 5b)
- E<sup>1</sup> which the sons of men had built (vs. 5c)
- D<sup>1</sup> Come let Us...confuse (vs. 7a)
- C<sup>1</sup> one another's speech (vs. 7b)
- B<sup>1</sup> from there (vs. 8)
- A<sup>1</sup> the language of the whole earth (vs. 9)<sup>54</sup>

In a chiasm the middle statement is invariably the most important one. In this case it is “the Lord came down” as covenant messenger.

God the Son is the covenant messenger (Gen. 11:5-6) as He was in Eden (Gen. 3:8). An interesting parallel to God the Son's coming “down to see the city and the tower” (Gen 11:5) is found in the gospels. The Greek word used in the Septuagint for “came down” in Gen 11:5 is *katabainō* which is frequently used of Jesus' coming down from heaven to earth (Jn. 3:13; 6:33-35, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58). A New Testament passage closely related to God the Son's role as Covenant Messenger to Babel is Matthew 21. There in verses 33-46 Jesus tells a parable of a “land owner who planted a vineyard...and built a tower” (vs. 33). According to Isaiah 5:7, “The vineyard...is the house of Israel” (cf. Isa. 5:1-6). “When the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. And the vine growers took his slaves (i.e. the prophets) and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third... But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, “They will respect my son.” But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, “This is the heir; come let us kill him and seize his inheritance.” And they took him, and threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.” This and the succeeding parable in Matthew 22:1-14 are Covenant Messenger Parables showing how Israel rejected and killed the messengers which their Covenant Suzerain sent to them, including His Son.

It is interesting to note the context of these parables. Matthew 21:1-11 records Palm Sunday, the day of the official visit of the Messiah/Covenant Messenger to the city of Jerusalem. What does he immediately do upon his arrival? “And Jesus entered the temple and cast out all those who were buying and selling in the temple....” (Matt. 21:12).

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<sup>54</sup> Wenham, Genesis 1-15, p. 235.



Just as the Son of God had visited the city of Babel and its tower-temple so here He visits Jerusalem and its temple, which is on top of a mountain (II Chr. 3:1). He next symbolically gives his verdict on Israel and its temple by causing the fig tree with no fruit (representing Israel, cf. Jer 8:13, Hos 9:10, Mic 7:1, Neh. 3:12) to wither (Matt 21:18-19). The only remedy for Adam and Eve clothed in fig leaves but having no spiritual fruit had been to give their allegiance to their Covenant Lord, God the Son, who had come to them as Covenant Witness (Gen. 3:7-21). Similarly, Israel represented by the fig tree with leaves but no fruit could look for nothing but judgment unless they gave their allegiance to the Messianic Son of God who came to them as Covenant Messenger.

In explaining the withering of the fig tree, symbolizing the false religion of Israel and its temple, Jesus says to his disciples, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you shall not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it shall happen” (Matt. 21:21). This is language very similar to that of the second trumpet of Revelation 8:8 where “the second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea.” Revelation 8:8 is a reference to Jeremiah 51:25 where the overthrow of Babylon is pictured as the throwing down of a burnt out mountain. A mountain is used as a symbol of Babylon because of its original mountain-shaped temple-tower (Gen. 11:4-5). The allusion to the tower of Babel continues in Jeremiah 51:53 where “The Lord declares...though Babylon should ascend to the heavens and though she should fortify her lofty stronghold, from Me destroyers will come to her.”<sup>55</sup>

A comparison of Revelation 8:8 with 18:21 further establishes that the mountain of 8:8 refers to Babylon:

<p><u>Rev 8:8</u>  <b>And the second angel</b>          Sounded,          and something like a <b>great</b> mountain          Burning with fire  <b>was thrown</b>  <b>into the sea</b></p>	<p><u>Rev 18:21a</u>  <b>And a strong angel</b>            took up a stone like a <b>great</b> millstone            and <b>threw</b> it  <b>into the sea,</b></p>	<p><u>Rev 18:21b</u>            saying,          "Thus will Babylon that <b>great</b> city    <b>will be thrown down</b>            with violence,          and it will not be found any longer."</p>
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Revelation 17-18 are devoted to a description of this final form of Babylon. What does Babylon represent? There is a two-fold ending to the book of Revelation where Babylon the harlot (Rev. 18:5) is contrasted to Jerusalem the bride (Rev. 21:9-10). In both cases two chapters are devoted to their respective descriptions (Rev. 17-18, 21-22). Since Jerusalem, the bride of Christ is

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<sup>55</sup> Kline, Glory in Our Midst, p. 62, footnote 13.

the true people of God, its opposite is Babylon the harlot who represents false religion. This continues the theme begun with the tower of Babel/Babylon in Genesis 11.<sup>56</sup>

Just as Revelation pictures Babylon as a mountain based on the mountain shaped tower-temple of Gen. 11, so we read of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 16:16, “the city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long” (NIV). A stadion was a measurement of length 202 yards or 185 meters<sup>57</sup> so the New Jerusalem will be a cube 1380 miles or 2220 kilometers high. The Holy of Holies of both the tabernacle and temple were cubes (I Kings 6:20).<sup>58</sup> Thus the New Jerusalem is pictured as a 1380 mile high temple-tower, the dwelling place of God (Rev. 21:3, 16, 22; 22:3) on top of “a great and high mountain” (Rev. 21:10). The city of our God is His holy mountain (Ps. 48:1; cf. Isa. 2:2; Zech. 8:3; cf. Isa. 2:2-4<sup>59</sup>). Zion, the little hillock, will become the towering holy mountain.<sup>60</sup>

Back in Matthew 21:21 when Jesus said, “If you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’” what mountain was he talking about? Since He was on His way to the temple (Matt. 21:23), he would have been referring to the temple mount. Just a few days later He would say of the temple, “Not one stone here shall be left upon another, which shall not be torn down” (Matt. 24: 1-2). This of course was a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Roman armies in A.D. 70.

What Jesus was therefore saying in Matthew 21:21 was that just as he pronounced a curse on the barren fig tree and it withered (Matt. 21:19), so the believer that pronounced a curse on the Jewish temple and its false religion would likewise call down God’s judgment upon it.

Similarly, at the end of the present age God will send two final prophets of ultimatum to the covenant breakers (corresponding to John the Baptist and Jesus, the final two prophets sent to the covenant breaking Israel, cf. Matt. 21:37). They too go to Jerusalem (Rev. 22:2, 8). However, now since the only true temple is in heaven (Rev. 11:2 cf. 3:12; 6:9; 7:15; 8:3, 5; 9:13), the only part of the temple remaining on earth is the outer court, the court of the Gentiles, now equated with the city of Jerusalem which has been given to the Gentiles. They will tread it underfoot for forty-two months (Rev. 11:2). (The Greek word *ethnoi*, translated “nations” here in the NASV, is also the word for “Gentiles.” The latter translation is here a better translation.) Thus at the end of this age two covenant messengers will be sent to the city of Jerusalem, now the outer court of the temple. Once

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. William J. Dumbrell, The End of the Beginning: Revelation 21-22 and the Old Testament (Homebush West, Australia: Lancer Books, 1985), p. 19.

<sup>57</sup> William F. Arndt and F. Wilber Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, p. 764.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. the somewhat confusing Exodus 26:1-35; 36:9-18. See Arthur E. Cundall, “Tabernacle, Temple,” Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible, pp. 2017, 2021.

<sup>59</sup> Dumbrell, The End of the Beginning, p. 10.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

again the covenant messengers go to city and temple. The following chart shows how Revelation 11 is thematically parallel to Matthew 21:33-22:13.

	<u>Matt 21-22</u>	<u>Rev 11</u>
1. Vineyard and tower/Jerusalem and temple	21:33a	1-2
2. Vineyard/Jerusalem put under the authority of a people	21:33b	2a
3. A time frame	22:34a	2b,3b
4. Sending of prophets	21:34b-37	3-7a
5. Killing of prophets	21:35-39	7b-9
6. Vindication of prophet(s)	21:42	11-13
7. Transfer of kingdom	21:43	15
Saying it again:		
8. A reigning King	22:2	17
9. The wrath of the King	22:7	18a
10. Wedding feast/rewards	22:9-10	18b
11. Judgment of lost	22:11-13	18c

#### IV. Judgment - Genesis 11:7-9

As always, God judges the covenant breakers. The plural form "let Us go down" (Gen. 11:7) points to the presence of the angelic attendants of the heavenly divine council who are the customary agents of divine judgment (cf. Gen 8:2; 9:1; Ex 19:20; Rev 16).<sup>61</sup>

The fulfilling of the covenant would have been much easier if they had one language (Gen. 11:6). But because they refused to fill the earth, God confused their languages (Gen. 11:7-8). The Hebrew words for "make bricks" (Gen 11:3), "for stone" (Gen 11:3) and "let us build for ourselves" (Gen 11:4) all contain the consonants n, b, and l, letters used to spell "mix up" (Gen 11:7) and "Babel" (Gen 11:9). The Hebrew word for "let us confuse," *nebalah*, sounds very much like the Hebrew word *nebalah*, which means "the folly of the impious." The name "Babel" stands as a reminder of godless folly.<sup>62</sup>

God's confusing the language scattered them in judgment. What the people would not do in obedience, God accomplished in judgment.<sup>63</sup> Just as the age which began with creation ended with the offenders being driven into exile and diaspora existence, so the age which began with the re-creation after the flood ends with the curse of dispersion.<sup>64</sup>

When God the Son came as the final covenant witness to Israel, the judgment was also one of dispersal. The parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22:1-14 tells how God will declare war on the covenant breakers who rejected his messengers: "The king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire." (Matt 25:7). This is what literally happened in A.D. 70 when God sent the Roman armies to destroy and burn the city of Jerusalem. Jesus

<sup>61</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p. 169.

<sup>62</sup> Wenham, Genesis 1-15, pp. 234-35; 239.

<sup>63</sup> Spina, "Babel," 1:562.

<sup>64</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, p. 169.

prophesied of A.D. 70 saying, “There will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people, and they will fall by the edge of the sword and will be led captive into all the nations” (Luke 21:23-24). It was in judgment for the rejection of their Messiah that the Jews were scattered throughout the world.

The means which God used to scatter the citizens of Babel/Babylon was to give them different languages so they couldn't understand each other. Since the great day of salvation began following the crucifixion, the different languages which God gave on Pentecost were not given in judgment but for the salvation of people of every language (Acts 2:4-11; cf. Matt. 28:19). In the Septuagint version of Genesis 11, God decided to confuse (Greek: *sygchyno*) the people's language (Greek: *glossa*) so that they would not be able to understand one another's speech (Greek: *phone*). Conversely, on the day of Pentecost, the disciples “began to speak with other tongues” (Acts 2:4; Greek: *glossa*) producing a “sound” (Acts 2:6; Greek: *phone*) which caused the crowd to be “bewildered” (Acts 2:6, Greek: *sygchyno*). At Babel God changed one language into many in judgment. At Jerusalem he enabled many languages to be understood as one. At Babel God dispersed (Gen 11:9; Greek: *diaspeiro*) the people in judgment. From Jerusalem he dispersed (Acts 8:1, 4; Greek: *diaspeiro*) his people to spread the gospel which one day will have gone to every tongue (Rev 7:9).<sup>65</sup> At both Babel and Jerusalem, the giving of languages followed God the Son's visit as Covenant Messenger to the city and its temple.

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<sup>65</sup> Spina, “Babel,” 1:562.

# Chapter Seven

## The Abrahamic Covenant

### The Thematic Structure of Genesis

Prologue		1:1 - 2:3
I.	Generations of Heaven and Earth (Fallen Man)	2:4 - 4:26
II.	Generations of Adam (Elect Line)	5:1 - 6:8
III.	Generations of Noah (Major Covenant)	6:9 - 6:29
IV.	Generations of Sons of Noah (Fallen Man)	10:1 - 11:9
V.	Generations of Shem (Elect Line)	11:10-26
VI.	Generations of Terah (Major Covenant)	11:27 - 25:11
VII.	Generations of Ishmael (Rejected Line)	25:12-18
VIII.	Generations of Isaac (Elect Line)	25:19 - 35:29
IX.	Generations of Esau (Rejected Line)	36:1 - 37:1
X.	Generations of Jacob (Elect Line)	37:2 - 50:26

#### I. The Making of the Covenant

We have seen that covenants can contain two elements: law and promise. Law covenants and promise covenants can be distinguished by who takes the oath. If God swears to do certain things, it is a covenant of promise. If man swears to do certain things, it is a law covenant.<sup>1</sup> However, in the Abrahamic Covenant we find both promise and law as God first swears the oath (Genesis 15:9-17) and then Abraham swears the oath (Genesis 17:11-27).<sup>2</sup> The Abrahamic Covenant is thus a suzerainty treaty containing a royal grant.<sup>3</sup> A royal grant was a gift of land or some other benefit to a faithful servant. A royal grant was perpetual but the recipient's heirs only benefited from it if they continued their father's loyalty to the Suzerain.<sup>4</sup>

##### A. The Preamble - Genesis 15:7a, 17:1

The preamble of the Abrahamic Covenant found in Genesis 15:7a identifies the Great King making the covenant as "I am the Lord" and is repeated again in Genesis 17:1, "I am God Almighty."

##### B. Historical Prologue - Genesis 15:7b

The historical prologue is found in Genesis 15:7, "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it." God reminds Abraham of His redemptive initiative in bringing him from Ur to give him the promised land.<sup>5</sup> This is very

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<sup>1</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned*, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, published by the author, 1986, III:37-51.

<sup>3</sup> Meredith G. Kline, "Genesis," *New Bible Commentary: Revised*, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970, p. 94.

<sup>4</sup> *NIV Study Bible*, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 95.

similar to the Historical Prologue where God identifies Himself by saying, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Ex 20:2).

#### C. Stipulations

1. "Go forth" (Gen. 12:1)

God's call to Abraham is equivalent to Jesus' call to discipleship, the familiar "follow me" (Matt. 8:22; 9:9; 19:21; Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27; John 1:43; etc.). Abraham set out on a journey following the Lord as later did the disciples.<sup>6</sup>

2. "Walk before Me and be blameless" (Gen. 17:11)

This terminology matches that in ancient covenants of grant for the basic obligation to display integrity in allegiance and fidelity in service. This is the comprehensive expression of the law of the covenant.<sup>7</sup>

#### D. Promises

Just as the promises of the Noahic Covenant restated the promises of Genesis 1:26, 28, so once more the Abrahamic Covenant further defines the three-fold promise of Genesis 1:28 of a promised people, a promised land, and promised dominion.

The promises of the Abrahamic Covenant have both historical and messianic fulfillments. The historical fulfillment is a type of the Messianic eternal fulfillment in that it is a foretaste of what the ultimate fulfillment will be.<sup>8</sup>

1. The Promised People - "I will make you a great nation" (Gen. 12:2 cf. 1:28a)

The promise to Abraham that God will make of him a great nation is a restatement of the promise of Genesis 1:28 that God would enable His people to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. When this promise is repeated to Jacob, God says to him, "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 35:11), using the exact words of Genesis 1:28.

a. The Historical Fulfillment

The promise of the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15) now continues on in the form of the seed of Abraham. Of Abraham's seed, God promises "I will greatly multiply (cf. Gen 1:28) your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore" (Gen. 22:17 cf. 13:16; 15:5; 26:3; 28:3). Alluding to this promise God says in 1 Kings 4:20 in the time of Solomon, "Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance" (cf. 2 Sam. 17:11). God fulfilled His promise of a people historically in the reign of Solomon.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Kline, Kingdom, III:48.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 48-49.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., III:60-64.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., III:64-65.

b. The Messianic Fulfillment

We read of the Messianic fulfillment in Romans 9:6-8, "But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants (lit. "seed") will be named. That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants (lit. "seed"). In other words not all Israel is Abraham's seed. Physical descent is not enough."<sup>10</sup>

It is in the third chapter of Galatians that Paul spells out the ultimate fulfillment of Abraham's people-seed. Paul writes, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith that are sons of Abraham" (Gal. 3:6-7). He continues, "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'and to seeds,' as referring to many, but rather to one, 'And to your seed,' that is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). In other words there was a narrowing down of Abraham's seed. When Abraham first heard God make promises to him and his seed (Gen. 26:3), he undoubtedly assumed that it meant all of his children. But his seed turned out to be Isaac and not Ishmael. When Isaac heard the promise repeated to him, he no doubt thought that it meant all of his seed, but it turned out to be Jacob and not Esau (Rom. 9:13). There was this narrowing down of the seed until we come to the New Testament and find that the seed was Christ and all who are related to Him by faith.

It will be in the millennium that the promise of Genesis 1:28 of an earth filled with the sons of God will be fulfilled in history. "For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. Then it will come about in that day that the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and his His resting place will be glorious" (Isa 11:9-10; cf. vs. 12; 16:1-5; 18:1-3, 7; 19:18-24; 23:18; 42:1-4; 45:14; 49:6, 22-23; 60:1-14; 61:9; 66:18-21; Jer 3:17; 16:19-21; Ezek 38:23; Micah 7:16-17; Zeph 2:11; 3:9; Zach 8:20-23; 9:10; 14:16-19).<sup>11</sup>

The ultimate fulfillment of the promised people is the picture of the redeemed seen in heaven after the second coming. The apostle John says, "I looked and behold a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues standing before the throne" (Rev. 7:9).

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, III:65.

<sup>11</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, (Findlay, OH: Dunham, 1958), 507-8.

2. The Promised Land - "To your descendants (seed) I will give this land" (Gen. 12:7, cf. 1:28b)

The task of subduing the land of Canaan (cf. Gen. 15:16) was the outworking of the blessing mandate subduing of the earth of Genesis 1:28 for Abraham's seed.

- a. The Historical Fulfillment

The Promised Land was precisely that, a promised land.<sup>12</sup> The promise is found in Genesis 12:1, 7, "Go forth . . . to the land which I will show you" (Gen. 12:1). "To your descendants (seed) I will give this land"(Gen. 12:7). The area was bounded in the northeast by the river Euphrates and on the southwest by the river of Egypt (Eph 15:18) and comprising the territories of specified peoples (Eph 15:19-21).<sup>13</sup>

The appropriation of this land grant would be by force. Abraham's arrival in the Promised Land was confrontational. Prophetic word announced that Abraham's descendants would return from foreign exile to take possession of the royal grant when the iniquity of the Amorites would be complete (Gen. 15:16). To gain their inheritance Abraham's seed must conquer Canaan in fulfillment of Noah's curse on Ham-Canaan. What was unique about the promise was that the grant of the land was "forever" (Gen 13:15) as "an everlasting possession" (Gen. 17:18; 48:4).<sup>14</sup>

The fulfillment of the promise is recorded in Joshua 21:43, "So the Lord gave Israel all the land He has sworn to their fathers."

- b. The Messianic Fulfillment

The historical fulfillment was a foretaste of the eschatological fulfillment. Abraham will inherit not just the land of Canaan but the whole world. "For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir to the world was not through the Law but through the righteousness of faith" (Rom. 4:13).

When the seventh angel sounds his trumpet this inheritance of the world will be realized. Voices in heaven will announce, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). And following the millennial kingdom Christ, the seed of Abraham will dwell in the midst of his people for eternity in the New Jerusalem, the city of God. According to Hebrews 11:9-10, "by faith" Abraham "lived as a alien in the land of promise, as in foreign land,

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<sup>12</sup> Norman Shepherd, The Call of Grace, (Phillipsburg, NJ: P and R, 2000), 30.

<sup>13</sup> Kline, Kingdom, III:66.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city . . . whose architect and builder is God." Just a few verses later we read, "You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22).

Thus the ultimate fulfillment of the promised land to Abraham and his seed is the millennial kingdom and then the New Jerusalem on the new earth. Today, we like Abraham as the seed of promise are still awaiting the inheritance of the kingdom and the city of God.<sup>15</sup>

3. The Promised King - "Kings shall come forth from you" (Gen. 17:6 cf. 1:28c)

If Abraham would be the father of a great nation, he would number kings among his descendants. If Sarah was to be the mother to nations, "kings of peoples will come from her" (Gen. 17:16).<sup>16</sup> The promise to be the progenitor of kings (Gen. 17:6) was the restatement to Abraham of the original promise to Adam of dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:26).

a. Historical Fulfillment

When establishing vassal rulers in their kingship, ancient suzerains sometimes assigned them new dynastic names (cf. 2 Kings 23:24; 24:17). Likewise the Lord gave to Abram and Sarai the new names of Abraham and Sarah when presenting to them a promissory grant of royalty (Gen. 17:5, 15). Similarly, when renewing to Jacob the promise of royal descendants, God confirmed to him the new name of Israel (Gen. 35:10-11 cf. 32:28).<sup>17</sup>

The leadership over Israel assigned to Joseph in his generation would take a royal form through the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10) in the dynasty of David.

Jacob prophesies regarding his son Judah, "Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down to you. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion and as a lion, who dares rouse him up?" (Gen. 49:8-9). Animals show domination by placing their paw on the neck of their subordinates and Jacob is using this example to show how Judah will be dominate over his enemies. David's hand was on the neck of his enemies (Gen. 49:8) and his dynasty was made permanent by the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:16).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., III:68.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., III:63.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 113.

b. Messianic Fulfillment

Genesis 49:10 is a prophesy of the coming Messiah, "the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples." There are two primary possibilities as to the meaning of "Shiloh." It may be a Messianic title meaning "the one who establishes peace" (cf. 1 Chron. 22:9 margin). Another possibility is that it means, "he to whom it (i.e. the scepter or kingship) belongs." In Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5 cf. Gen. 49:9) and Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6) the promise of the future king shall be realized. To Christ "shall be the obedience of the peoples" (Gen. 49:10), the nations universally (cf. Ps 72:8-11; Isa. 11:10). Only His reign will produce the peace of the ultimate paradise (Isa. 9:6; 11:6-10).<sup>19</sup> Both possible translations point to Jesus as the Messiah.

In the first verse of the New Testament Christ is introduced as "the Son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1). Matthew also identifies Him as the one "born king of the Jews" (Matt. 2:2). He is the one who will be "a Ruler . . . who will shepherd My people Israel" (Matt 2:6). Luke identifies Jesus as the one to whom "the Lord God will give . . . the throne of His Father David" who will "reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end" (Luke 1:32-33).<sup>20</sup>

Ancient suzerains presumptuously named themselves "sons of God." But it is the true Son of God who received the name which belongs to no one but Him, "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16).<sup>21</sup>

E. Blessings and Curses

The blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant were in the nature of promises from God the Great King. (See above.) God said to Abraham. "I will bless you . . . and I will bless those who bless you . . . and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Gen. 12:2-3, etc.).

The curses of the Abrahamic Covenant are found in Genesis 15 and 17. In Genesis 15:13 "God said to Abram, 'Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.'" This is exactly what happened as a result of the covenant breaking of Jacob's sons. (Gen. 37:2-36).

As indicated below, the sign of circumcision is a self-maledictory oath symbolizing the curse of being cut off from God's people (Gen. 17:14).

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Kline, Kingdom, III:64.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

## F. Witness

God is both Suzerain and divine Witness in that the promises God makes as Suzerain are also the blessings with which He as divine Witness will reward the faithful Covenant servants (cf. Gen 12:3; 24:35).<sup>22</sup>

## G. Oath Ceremonies

In modern society, oaths are primarily verbal, although in court a person may be required to raise his right hand as part of the oath. However, in the Ancient Near East oaths were frequently performed through symbolic rituals. We find examples of this in the oath of the Abrahamic Covenant.

### 1. God's Ratification Oath - Genesis 15

Whereas God's commitments to Abraham were initially in the form of simple promises (Gen. 12:2-3), in Genesis 15 we have the formal ratification by oath ceremony. This development from promise to oath is reflected in Abraham's stating that God first "spoke" and then "swore" to him the promise (Gen 24:7).<sup>23</sup>

The promissory grant of the kingdom to Abraham is connected to Abraham's faithful service to the Lord. God's covenant ratification in Genesis 15 follows Genesis 14 which records Abraham's victorious military expedition against the kings from the east (Gen. 14:1ff.). In international treaties a customary treaty requirement was that the vassal king take prompt military action against any attack on the land of the suzerain. In Genesis 14 foreign suzerains had invaded the Promised Land to which Abraham claimed in the name of the Lord. Genesis 15 thus has the character of a royal grant given to an officer of the suzerain for faithful military service. In Genesis 15:1 when God says to Abraham, "Your reward shall be very great," the word "reward" is one used of compensation due to those who have conducted a military campaign (cf. Ezek. 29:19). The record of the Lord's dealings with Abraham contain many expressions which are paralleled in the ancient royal grants to loyal servants: such a servant is one who obeys, keeps the charge, serves perfectly and walks before his lord.<sup>24</sup>

In Genesis 15 we have God's oath by which the covenant was formally established. The fact that it is God who first takes the oath denotes this as primarily a covenant of grant-promise.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Kline, By Oath Consigned, p. 40.

<sup>23</sup> Kline, Kingdom, III:38.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., III:57.

<sup>25</sup> Kline, By Oath Consigned, p. 24.

For the kingdom promises to be fulfilled, Abraham needed an heir. Abraham asked God in Genesis 15:2-3, "O Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus? . . . Since Thou hast given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir." Abraham had fulfilled the custom well established in the Near East 2000-1500 B.C. whereby a childless couple would adopt an heir (often a former slave) who would be supplanted by a true son-heir.<sup>26</sup>

"Then behold the word of the Lord came to (Abraham), saying, 'This man will not be your heir; but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.' And He took him outside and said, 'Now look toward the heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be'" (Gen. 15:4-5). Then we read that Abraham "believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). The word translated "believe" here is the Hebrew verb *aman*. The statement here may refer to an actual "Amen" spoken by Abraham for this is what vassals said in covenant ceremonies to the setting forth of the blessings and curses (Cf. Deut. 27:15-26).<sup>27</sup>

Next, as previously noted, we read the Covenant Preamble and Historical Prologue in Genesis 15:7. And (God) said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it."

Next we read that Abraham asked, "O Lord God, how may I know that I shall possess it? And (God) said to him, 'Bring Me a three year old heifer, . . . female goat and ram and a turtledove and a young pigeon.' And he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds" (Gen. 15:8-10).

What we have here is a covenant sealed by a divine oath. To His verbal promise to Abraham, God added a second immutable thing, His oath (Heb. 6:17-18). The procedure described here was common in treaty ratifications. By passing between the divided bodies of the slain animals, God was invoking the curse of the oath upon Himself if He proved unfaithful to it. He was symbolically saying, "May I be cut apart like these animals if I break this covenant." This is termed a self-maledictory oath in that the person making the oath asks to have the curse fall on himself if he breaks it. In an eighth century treaty of Bar-ga'ayah with Mati'el, the symbolic meaning is set forth: "(Just as) this calf is cut to pieces, so may Mati'el be cut to pieces and his nobles cut to pieces."<sup>28</sup> This cutting ritual was so central to the

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<sup>26</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 94.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>28</sup> Kline, *By Oath Consigned*, pp. 16-17.

whole idea of covenant making, that the Hebrew expression translated to "make a covenant" (Gen. 15:18, etc.) is literally to "cut a covenant."<sup>29</sup>

Genesis 15:11 then states, "And the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses and Abram drove them away." A curse in the seventh-century vassal treaty of Esarhaddon says, "(May Ninurta, chief of the gods). . . feed your flesh to the eagle and jackal." By taking this oath, God was declaring that if He failed to fulfill the promises of this covenant, He was to be slain like these creatures and devoured by the birds of prey.<sup>30</sup>

Jeremiah 34:18-20 is a scene with the same themes as the covenant making of Genesis 15. There God says, "I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant. . . which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between its parts - the officials of Judah. . . and all the people of the land, who passed between the parts of the calf - and I will give them into the hand of their enemies. . . And their dead bodies shall be food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth."

The execution of the final curse upon covenant breakers at the second coming is to be eaten by birds of prey (Rev. 19:17-18).

In Genesis 15:17 God takes the oath: "And it came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces."

The darkness of the scene anticipates the darkness of Golgotha. Abraham was witnessing the self-malediction of the Lord who would Himself in His own body bear the curse of the covenant (Gen. 3:13).<sup>31</sup>

Though the Lord would not experience the curse of the Genesis 15 oath ritual as a covenant breaker, the only way for Him to keep His covenant with Abraham was to suffer the curse of the law so that He could redeem Abraham and his seed. Indeed, in taking this oath God was committing Himself to bear the cross for Abraham and his seed. God's oath passage was a commitment to walk the way of the cross.<sup>32</sup>

The Messiah's sacrificial death curse is symbolized in the animals which were sacrificed in the oath ritual. Omitted were animals such as donkeys and dogs which were used in international treaty ratifications. Chosen instead were the heifer, goat and ram, the primary animals of the sacrificial system of the later tabernacle and temple, along with the dove and pigeon which were used according to Levitical law

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<sup>29</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 95.

<sup>30</sup> Kline, By Oath Consigned, pp. 16-17.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>32</sup> Kline, Kingdom, III:40.

for private sacrifices. Indeed all the elements of the Genesis 15 oath ritual point forward to the cross - the darkness, the sword, the broken flesh, the accursed death. God's oath-commitment in Genesis 15 was a commitment to the cross.<sup>33</sup>

An oven and a torch are seen to pass between the divided carcasses. Ovens and torches were used in contemporary Mesopotamia oath rituals. Here God's presence was manifested in the two ascending columns, one of smoke rising from the oven and one of fire rising from the torch. Here we have an anticipation of the double-columned cloud and fire revelation of God at the exodus. In Genesis 15 the two pillars represent the legs of God walking between the split carcasses of the oath ceremony.<sup>34</sup>

In Genesis 15:18 we have the summary statement, "On that day God made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land. . .'" and then lists the geographical areas it included. Thus the meaning of this strange ritual was that God made a covenant with Abraham. Several non-Biblical treaties have geographical sections similar to Genesis 15:18-21 defining the boundaries of the land confirmed to the vassal.<sup>35</sup>

## 2. Abraham's Ratification Oath - Genesis 17

Genesis 17 is a narrative of the covenant ratification ceremony by which Abraham ratified the covenant. The words once again comprise the standard elements found in a vassal treaty.

Suzerainty Treaties begin with a Preamble including the titles of the great king. God identifies Himself by stating "I am God Almighty" (Gen. 17:1).<sup>36</sup>

Next comes the stipulations, "Walk before Me and be blameless" (Gen. 17:1). Abraham is to walk before God in loyalty and be unreservedly committed to His service.<sup>37</sup>

There are as well blessings in the form of promises (Gen. 17:4-8) as well as a curse (Gen. 17:14). Thus the form of the Abrahamic Covenant is a suzerainty treaty, an administration of divine lordship binding his servant to Himself under the dual sanctions of blessing and curse.<sup>38</sup>

The oath of the vassal was a central feature of the suzerainty treaty for it was by this oath that the vassal included himself within the sphere of his lord's

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., III:39-40.

<sup>34</sup> Kline, Kingdom, III:38.

<sup>35</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 95.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Kline, By Oath Consigned., pp. 40-41.

jurisdiction. Just as God's oath was seen to be a self-maledictory oath, likewise, in the vassal's oath Abraham invoked the covenantal curses upon himself if he should be unfaithful to the covenant. So central to the oath was the invocation of curse upon the oath taker, that curse became a synonym for oath (Gen 26:28; Deut 7:8-9; 29:12, 14; 1 Chron 16:15-17; 2 Chron 15:12, 15; Ps 105:8-10; Jer 11:3-5). The oath-curse was customarily dramatized in symbolic rites as was pictured in God's oath taking of Genesis 15. There the cutting apart of the animals was seen to give rise to the expression "cutting a covenant."<sup>39</sup>

In Genesis 17 the oath-curse ritual was that of circumcision. God says to Abraham, "Every male among you shall be circumcised. And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you" (Gen. 17:10-11). This means that circumcision was the rite by which the covenant was cut. It means further that circumcision was the oath-curse by which Abraham and his seed took their oath of allegiance to God. The curse itself is given in Genesis 17:14: "But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant." The cutting off of circumcision symbolizes the curse of being cut off from God's people.<sup>40</sup> Every male would be cut one way or another. Either he would receive the cutting of circumcision or the curse of being cut off from God's people. Stated another way, those who did not take the oath of the covenant were still considered of having broken it.

The oath was one of allegiance. As the oath sign which sealed this pledge of allegiance, it was a sign of consecration. Therefore Israel is commanded, "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord" (Jer. 4:4).<sup>41</sup>

The cutting rituals of the Abrahamic Covenant look forward to the mystery of what Paul called "the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 3:11). The circumcision of the infant Christ in obedience to Genesis 17, that partial and symbolic cutting off corresponded to the ritual of Genesis 15 as a passing of one who was divine under the curse threat of the oath of the covenant. But it was the circumcision of Christ in crucifixion which is a "putting off" not merely of a token part but "of the (whole) body of the flesh" (Col. 2:11). It was not a symbolic oath cursing but a cutting off of "the body of His flesh through death" (Col. 1:22).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 41-42.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

The good news of the gospel of circumcision is that believers are united with Christ in His crucifixion-circumcision. "In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith, in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Col. 2:11-12).<sup>43</sup>

#### H. Solemn Ceremony

The occasion of Genesis 18:1-15 is related to Genesis 18:16 ff., but its theme continues that of Genesis 17. The promise of an heir found in Genesis 17:21 is confirmed in similar language (Gen 18:10, 14) and the Covenant meal is eaten (Gen 18:5-8; cf. Ex 24:9-11). The solemn ceremony is then appropriately followed by a word of covenant confirmation, "I will surely return to you at this time next year, and behold Sarah your wife shall have a son" (Gen 18:10, 14).<sup>44</sup>

#### I. Sign

Circumcision was the sign of incorporation into the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 17:11).<sup>45</sup>

For Abraham his commitment to God came in two stages. He first "believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). This was an internal transaction between Abraham and God. The second step was the public oath sign of circumcision (Gen. 17:10-14, 26-27) in which he pledged his allegiance to his sovereign Lord and so formally entered into the covenant. This anticipates the New Covenant age where after believing in one's heart, one publicly pledges his allegiance to the Lord Jesus through the oath sign of baptism.

#### J. Covenant History

##### 1. Ishmael, Son of the Bondwoman - Genesis 16:1-15

In the days prior to Abraham's oath-sign of circumcision (Gen. 17), "Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children" (Gen. 16:1) in spite of repeated promises of a seed (Gen. 12:2, 7; 13:15-16; 15:13, 18). So Sarai said to Abram, ". . . Please go in to my maid (Hagar); perhaps I shall obtain children through her." Hagar "an Egyptian maid" (Gen. 16:1) had undoubtedly been initially given to Abram as a slave<sup>46</sup> by the Pharaoh (Gen. 12:16). Sarai's suggestion was in keeping with the practice of that day as indicated in contemporary legal codes and marriage contracts. All legal rights over the maid's child belonged to the wife. "So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>44</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 97.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>46</sup> K. A. Kitchen, "Slave, Slavery," *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed., p. 1122.



called the name of his son. . . Ishmael" (Gen. 16:15). Although Abram's hope of a seed would naturally be focused on Ishmael, his only child, this resort to natural means to bring God's promise to fulfillment would end in disappointment. In the matter of the crucial first heir, the covenant promise will be realized through supernatural divine intervention.<sup>47</sup>

2. Isaac, Son of the Free Woman and Heir of the Covenant - Genesis 17:15-22:19

As part of God's instructions to Abraham regarding the oath sign of circumcision, "I will give you a son by (Sarah)" (Gen. 17:16). "Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, 'Will a son be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?' . . . But God said, ". . . Abram your wife shall bear you a son and you shall call his name Isaac (meaning 'he laughs'); and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant. . . As for Ishmael, . . . I will bless him. . . But my covenant I will establish with Isaac" (Gen. 17:17-21).

When the Lord gave Abram and Sarai their new names of Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 17:5, 15),<sup>48</sup> He changed their names by adding the same sound "ah-ah," as though God were laughing with the parents to be. Combining a pun with His promise God put laughter in their very names. The union of Abraham and Sarah will produce Laughter-Isaac (Literally: "he laughs").<sup>49</sup>

God says, ". . . My Covenant I will establish with Isaac whom Sarah will bear you at this season next year" (Gen. 17:21). Legally, a natural born son replaced the son of a slave-wife as chief heir.<sup>50</sup>

Sarah apparently was physically rejuvenated as part of the divine comedy of Isaac's birth. This is intimated in the humorous episode of Abimelech, the king of Gerar, endeavoring to add the ninety year old damsel to his harem (Gen. 20:2ff).<sup>51</sup>

At Isaac's birth Sarah says, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me" (Gen. 21:6).

"Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old" (Gen. 21:4). But then when the boy grew up Abraham must go beyond circumcision's symbolic cutting off. God said to Abraham, "Take now your son. . . Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and there offer him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you (Gen. 22:2). In an ultimate consecration of Isaac to God, Abraham must

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<sup>47</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 96,

<sup>48</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, 3:63.

<sup>49</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 97.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

demonstrate the truth of his oath of allegiance to God. This demand on Isaac's life reaffirmed God's verdict on man as sinner and so proclaimed the need for deliverance. However, the demand seemed to cut off the possibility of deliverance, for the death of the divinely appointed seed of promise would end God's program of salvation.

Abraham overcame this conflict between obedience and hope by believing "that God is able to raise men even from the dead" (Heb. 11:20). He then takes Isaac to the top of Mount Moriah where later the temple would be situated (2 Chron. 3:1). When Abraham "took the knife to slay his son" (Gen. 22:10), God provided the ram "in the place of his son" (Gen. 22:8, 13). Here the vicarious curse-bearing of God's son, "the Son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1) was prefigured.<sup>52</sup>

"And it came about after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac" (Gen. 25:11). According to the promise of Genesis 17:21, the covenant inheritance was confirmed to the son born when Abraham was one hundred years old (Gen. 21:5) one hundred years after Abraham entered the land (Gen. 12:4; 25:7).<sup>53</sup>

The covenant is specifically renewed to Isaac in Genesis 26:3-4, "Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands and I will establish the oath which I swore to your Father Abraham. And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and will give your descendants all these lands and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed."

The parallels between Isaac, the promised seed of Abraham, and Jesus, the true, ultimate seed of Abraham, are striking. Their mothers were both told, to their surprise, that they would bear a son (Gen 17:16-19; 18:10-14; Luke 1:28-38). Both births were miraculous: Isaac was born to a ninety-one year old woman (Gen 17:17; 18:10, 14) and Jesus to a virgin (Matt 1:18, 23). Abraham was to sacrifice his "only son" of promise (Gen 22:1-18). The crucifixion was the sacrifice of God's only Son (Matt 27:54). Isaac bore the wood for his sacrifice (Gen 22:6). Jesus bore the cross (John 19:17). Isaac faced his fate in perfect obedience (Gen 22:6-9). Jesus was "obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8).<sup>54</sup>

### 3. Jacob, Heir of the Covenant - Genesis 25:20ff.

Isaac's wife, Rebekah, like Sarah, was barren, but God answered Isaac's prayer and Rebekah conceived (Gen. 25:20). Before the birth of her twins, the Lord said to her, ". . . the older shall serve the younger." The prenatal appointment of the son to

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>54</sup> Norman G. Cohen, Jewish Bible Personages in the New Testament, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989), p. 96.

the official position of firstborn irrespective of actually being born first is attested in the Ancient Near East.<sup>55</sup> According to Paul, "When (Rebekah) had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; . . . through the twins were not yet born, and had done nothing good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, 'The older will serve the younger'" (Rom. 9:10-12).

This divine prophecy began to be fulfilled in Esau's sale of his birthright to Jacob for some lentil stew (Gen. 25:27-34). This guaranteed Jacob the double share of the inheritance which went with the birthright.<sup>56</sup>

When patriarchs knew that their death was near, they were expected to summon all their sons and give each of them a blessing (cf. Gen. 48-50).<sup>57</sup> This had the force of a final testament. Legal evidence from Nuzi shows that oral wills delivered by a dying father and cited in court had decisive validity.<sup>58</sup> Lamely claiming that he does not know the day of his death (Gen. 27:2), Isaac summons only Esau, his favorite son. Rebekah who favored Jacob is incensed and devises a successful plot to masquerade Jacob as Esau and obtain the blessing for him (Gen. 27:5 - 28:4). Despite the underhanded way in which Jacob obtained the blessing, it was still valid. The nation of Israel would dominate Edom.<sup>59</sup>

To escape the anger of Esau, Jacob fled from Canaan to Haran where Abraham had lived prior to his coming to the Promised Land (Gen. 28:10). Patriarchal history thus reverted to its beginnings among the Terahites (cf. Gen. 11:26-32), thus requiring a new summons to Canaan (Gen. 31:3).<sup>60</sup>

It was on his way to Haran that God appeared to Jacob in a dream and renewed the covenant with him. God's covenant contained the standard treaty features. It begins with a preamble of self-identification, "I am the Lord" (Gen. 28:13a). This is followed by a virtual historical prologue recalling His mercies to the patriarchs (Gen. 28:13b). Then the covenant inheritance already conveyed through Isaac's testamentary blessing is now directly confirmed by the Lord (Gen. 28:13c-14). God then states, "And behold I will be with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I

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<sup>55</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 101.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> G. J. Wenham, "Genesis," New Bible Commentary, 21st Century Edition (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1994), p. 79.

<sup>58</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 102.

<sup>59</sup> Wenham, loc. cit.

<sup>60</sup> Kline, "Genesis," p. 103.

have promised you" (Gen. 28:15). The divine protectorate over Jacob extended beyond Canaan. Jacob then ratifies the covenant with a vow of allegiance, promising his tributary tithe (Gen. 28:20-22). This experience proved to be Jacob's Damascus road vision of the Lord. It turned him from seeking salvation by works to securing it through faith. He named the place Bethel, "house of God" (Gen. 28:19).<sup>61</sup>

Before returning to the Promised Land, Jacob had first to undergo an experience that sealed him as a man of faith. "Jacob was left alone and a man wrestled with him until daybreak" (Gen. 32:24). In the Near East law, cases were sometimes settled by an ordeal such as wrestling. In Abraham's case, the outward course of the wrestling was an indication of the concurrent spiritual encounter. According to Hosea 12:4, "he wrestled with the angel and prevailed; he wept and sought His favor." At the same time his adversary dislocated "the socket of Jacob's thigh" (Gen. 32:25). Since the thigh was regarded as the seat of reproductive powers, the smiting of Jacob's thigh looked forward to the smiting of the descendant of Jacob who would be smitten of God (Isa. 53:4) and who by His sufferings and overcoming would justify Jacob and all of God's people (Isa. 53:11). As a result of his prevailing, Jacob is told, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob but Israel" (Gen. 32:28).<sup>62</sup>

After Jacob's return to Canaan with his family, God once more summoned him back to Bethel to renew the covenant. Once again the traditional elements of treaty-making are present:

- a. Preamble: "I am God Almighty" (Gen. 35:11a)
- b. Stipulations: "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 35:11b)
- c. Promise: "A nation and a company of nations shall come from you and kings shall come from you. And the land which I give to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you (Gen. 35:11c-12).
- d. Blessing: "He blessed him. And God said to him, ' . . . Israel shall be your name" (Gen. 35:10).<sup>63</sup>

#### K. Covenant Summary - Psalm 105:8-10

Psalms 105:8-10 joins the successive renewals of the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob into a single oath-covenant: "He has remembered His covenant forever. . . the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac. Then He confirmed to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>64</sup> Kline, Kingdom Prologue, 3:42.

## L. Parity Covenants

Contained also in the Old Testament are Parity Covenants which were covenants between equals.<sup>65</sup>

	<u>Genesis 21:22-34</u> <u>(Abraham &amp; Abimelech)</u>	<u>Genesis 26:26-33</u> <u>(Isaac &amp; Abimelech)</u>	<u>Genesis 31:43-54</u> <u>(Jacob &amp; Laban)</u>
Existing Relationship	20:15	21:22-34	31:1-42
Terms of Covenant	21:25	26:29	31:49-52
Feast before the Oath		26:30	31:46
Animals for Covenant Cutting	21:27		
"Covenant Cut"	21:27, 32	26:28	31:44
Which is parallel to both parties taking the Oath	21:31	26:28, 31	31:44, 52-53
Witnesses:			
7 Ewe Lambs	21:30		
Tree	21:33		
God	21:33		31:49-50, 53
Pillar			31:46-48, 51-52
Sacrifice			31:54a
Feast after Oath			31:54b

## II. The Breaking of the Covenant

The core of the Abrahamic Covenant was that Abraham's seed were to possess the Promised Land as God's vassal people. What did they do?

Jacob had twelve sons and Joseph out of the twelve possessed the birthright. (It had initially belonged to Reuben, the first born son of Jacob's wife Leah, but because he had sexual relations with his father's concubine, the birthright was taken from him and given to Joseph, the first born of Jacob's wife Rachel, - 1 Chron. 5:1, Gen. 35:22-25). (Joseph's possession of the birthright with its double share of the inheritance (Deut. 21:15-17) was realized in Joseph's double portion of Jacob's inheritance for his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh [Josh. 16:4]).

As a result of his brothers' intense jealousy of Joseph, they sold their brother with the birthright as a slave into Egypt (Gen. 37:2-28), in direct disregard for their covenant responsibility to possess the royal grant of the Promised Land "forever" (Gen. 13:15).<sup>66</sup>

## III. The Sending of a Messenger

Joseph was the messenger God sent to convince his brothers of their sin. By stirring their consciences with the memory of how they had enslaved their brother (Gen. 42:21-22) and by imprisoning Simeon and thus recreating the situation once again of having to appear before their

<sup>65</sup> NIV Study Bible, p. 19.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Kline, "Genesis," p. 107.

father with a missing brother (Gen. 42:33-36), Joseph brought his brothers face to face with their sin (Gen. 42:21-22).<sup>67</sup>

#### IV. Judgment - Slavery in Egypt

A curse of the Abrahamic Covenant is found in Genesis 15:13 where "God said to Abram, 'Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved (cf. Deut. 28:41) and oppressed (cf. Deut. 28:29, 33, 53) four hundred years.'" As the eleven brothers had sinned by selling Joseph into slavery in Egypt (Gen. 37:27-28), God's judgment was to expel them from the Promised Land for 400 years as He had threatened and to enslave all of their descendants in Egypt (Ex. 1:11).

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

## Chapter Eight

### The Rest of the Old Testament

The Old Testament from the Mosaic Covenant on records the history of the kingdom of Israel (Ex. 19:6). By the end of this session you will be able to explain the history of the Old Testament Kingdom.

#### I. The Mosaic Covenant

##### A. Events leading up to the Mosaic (Old) Covenant

###### 1. Kingdom Update (Exodus 1)

Moses introduces the book of Exodus by stating, “Now these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob” (Ex. 1:1) and then proceeds to list the eleven sons other than Joseph. He then concludes by saying, “All the persons who came from the loins of Jacob were seventy in number” (Ex. 1:5). But then Moses goes on to indicate that the size of the family “increased greatly” (Ex. 1:7) while in Egypt into a mighty people. Exodus thus recounts how God took a family (Ex. 1:1-6) and made it into a kingdom (Ex. 19:6).

Specifically, Moses’ description that “the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly and multiplied and became exceedingly mighty” (Ex. 1:7) is a repetition of God’s blessing of Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” and of Noah in Genesis 9:1, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (cf. Gen. 9:7). Exodus 1:7 preserves the five verb structure of the Genesis verses with three of the verbs being identical in all three passages.<sup>1</sup> In other words, Moses is indicating the progress of God’s purpose of reestablishing His kingdom over the earth. As preparation for filling Canaan, the Promised Land of Blessing, God in judgment caused them first to fill Egypt, the Promised Land of Curse (Gen. 15:13)

###### 2. The Birth of Moses (Exodus 2)

Because of the perceived threat of the increased size of the Hebrew population, the Pharaoh decreed that “every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile” (Ex. 1:22).

Moses then records how after his mother had hidden him for the first three months of his life (Ex. 2:2) she put her son in a *teba*, the Hebrew word for ark. The New American Standard Version translates the word “chest” but in fact it means “ark.” The word is only used here and of Noah’s ark.<sup>2</sup> Genesis 6:14 reads “Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood and . . . cover it inside and out with pitch” (Gen. 6:14). Moses writes in Exodus 2:3, “She got him a wicker ark and covered it over with tar and pitch.” The

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<sup>1</sup> J. S. Ackerman, "The Literary Context of the Moses Birth Story (Exodus 1-2)" in Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives, ed. K. R. R. Gros Louis et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1974), 77.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles N. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon, p. 1061.

correspondence is striking. In both cases the person that the ark is to serve is indicated by the identical Hebrew expression *leka* “for yourself” (Gen. 6:14) and *lo* “for him” (Ex. 2:3). Both vessels are sealed twice “inside and out” (Gen. 6:14) and “with tar and pitch” (Ex. 2:3).<sup>3</sup> One cannot avoid the thought that Moses correctly perceived himself as a second Noah<sup>4</sup> whom God declared justified by bringing him safely through a water ordeal, just as He had Noah. Even though water ordeals have not been found in ancient Egyptian legal procedure,<sup>5</sup> nevertheless the Nile was personified in the Nile-god Hapi<sup>6</sup> and thus Pharaoh’s command to throw the male babies to the river-god has all the features of a river ordeal, the most common of all ordeals.<sup>7</sup> Regardless of whether or not the casting of the babies into the river was understood by the Egyptians as a water ordeal, clearly it was so understood by Moses, as his description of it in flood vocabulary indicates. As Noah was the savior of all living things, Moses was to be the savior of Israel.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. The Call of Moses (Exodus 3)

At Mount Horeb/Sinai, God calls Moses by means of a “(thorn) bush. . . burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed” (Ex. 3:2). The thorn bush in contrast to the more noble trees (Judg 9:15) represented Israel.<sup>9</sup> An understanding of the significance of the burning bush is possible by comparing it to the appearance of God on Mt. Sinai as recorded in Deuteronomy 4-5 at the institution of the Mosaic Covenant. Both events describe a theophany on Mt. Horeb (Ex 3:1; Deut 4:10; 5:23),<sup>10</sup> a synonym for Mt. Sinai (e.g. Horeb in Ex 17:6; Deut 1:6; 1 Kings 8:9; 19:8; 2 Chron 5:10, but Sinai in Ex 19:11; 2:16; 31:18; Lev 7:38; 25:1; Deut 33:2; Judges 5:5).<sup>11</sup> There may be a word-play on Sinai in *seneh*, the Hebrew word for bush in Exodus 3. Both the bush and Sinai are pictured as “burning with fire” (Ex 3:2; Deut 4:11; 5:23) and both passages speak of people “coming near this marvelous sight/Me” (Ex 3:3; Deut 4:11; 5:25). The fire in the burning bush is thus a manifestation of God who is a “consuming fire” (Ex 19:18; 24:17; Deut 4:24). This

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<sup>3</sup> Isaac M. Kikawada and Arthur Quin, Before Abraham Was (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), 85.

<sup>4</sup> Dale C. Allison, Jr., The New Moses (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 203.

<sup>5</sup> Tikva Simone Frymer-Kensky, "The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1977, p. i.

<sup>6</sup> T. O. Lambdin, "Nile," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, III:550.

<sup>7</sup> Frymer-Kensky, op. cit., p. 524.

<sup>8</sup> Allison, loc. cit.

<sup>9</sup> C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959), I:438.

<sup>10</sup> Meredith G. Kline, Glory in Our Midst: A Biblical Theological Reading of Zehariah’s Night Visions (Overland Park, KS: Two Age Press, 2001), p. 28.

<sup>11</sup> “Horeb,” Davis Dictionary of the Bible, p. 322.



is stated explicitly if Exodus 3:2 is translated “the angel of the Lord appeared to him as<sup>12</sup> a flame of fire.” The following chart shows the parallelism between these passages:

<u>Exodus 3</u>	<u>Deuteronomy 4</u>	<u>Deuteronomy 5</u>
1 Moses... came to <b>Horeb</b>	10 Remember the day you stood before the <b>LORD</b> God at <b>Horeb</b> , when <b>the LORD</b> said to me, " <b>Assemble</b> the people to me...."	22a These words <b>the LORD</b> spoke to all your <b>assembly</b> at <b>the mountain</b>
<b>the mountain</b> of God.	11b and stood at the foot of <b>the mountain</b> ,	
2 And the angel of the LORD appeared to him as a flame of fire and he looked ...and behold the bush <b>was burning with fire....</b>	11c and <b>the mountain</b> <b>burned with fire....</b>	23b while <b>the mountain</b> <b>was burning with fire</b> ,
4 ... <b>God</b> called to him <b>from the midst of</b> the bush....		23a ...when <b>you heard the voice...</b> 22b <b>from the midst of the fire....</b>
5 Then He said, "Do not <b>come near</b> here...."	11a <b>And you came near</b>	23c that <b>you come near</b> to me....

Deuteronomy 33:16 describes God as “Him who dwelt in the bush.” The Mosaic Covenant later to be given on this same holy mountain would bring the Lord of Glory, the Consuming Fire, to dwell in the midst of Israel. The fact that the bush representing Israel is not consumed by the Consuming Fire showed that God’s future presence in the midst of His people would not threaten them with fiery destruction. In God’s redeeming love and grace Israel, like the bush, would not be consumed.<sup>13</sup> At Sinai they exclaimed, “For who is there of all flesh, who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?” (Deut 5:26).

#### 4. The Plagues of Egypt (Exodus 7-11)

The plagues of Egypt are divided into three sets of triplets:

	<b>Exodus</b>	<b>Fore-</b>	<b>Time Indication</b>	<b>Instruction</b>		
<b>Plague</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>warning of Warning</b>		<b>Formula</b>	<b>Agent</b>	
<b>First</b>	1. Blood	7:14-24	yes	“in the morning”	“station yourself”	Aaron
<b>Series</b>	2. Frogs	7:25-8:11	yes	none	“Go to Pharaoh”	Aaron
	3. Lice	8:12-15	none	none	none	Aaron
<b>Second</b>	4. Insects	8:16-28	yes	“in the morning”	“Station yourself”	God

<sup>12</sup> Beth essentiae (Kline, Glory in Our Midst, p.28)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 28-29.

<b>Series</b>	5. Pestilence	9:1-7	yes	none	“Go to Pharaoh”	God
	6. Boils	9:8-12	none	none	none	Moses
<b>Third Series</b>	7. Hail	9:13-35	yes	“in the morning”	“Station yourself”	Moses
	8. Locusts	10:1-20	yes	none	“Go to Pharaoh”	Moses
	9. Darkness	10:21-23	none	none	none	Moses
<b>Climax</b>	Death of Firstborn	11:4-7 12:29-30	yes	none	none	God <sup>14</sup>

The initial plague in each triplet (numbers 1, 4, 7) has a purpose clause in which God sets forth His aim in bringing the hardships of that series:

**The first series:** “By this you shall know that I am the Lord” (Ex. 7:17), meaning that Pharaoh would come to know who the Lord was.

**The second series:** “That you may know that I, the Lord, am in the midst of the land” (Ex. 8:22), meaning that Pharaoh would realize that the Lord was at work in Egypt.

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<sup>14</sup> Allison, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

**The third series:** “That you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth” (Ex. 9:14), meaning that Pharaoh would learn that the scope of God’s power was beyond anything known to man in all the earth.<sup>15</sup>

Looked at from another perspective, the ten destructive plagues can be seen as a counterpoint to the ten creative words of God in Genesis 1 (vss. 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29). This can be seen in certain contrasting parallels:

**Ex. 7:19** Aaron lifted his staff over the “reservoirs (literally ‘gatherings’) of the waters”

**Ex. 8:31** “The Nile will swarm with frogs”

**Ex. 8:16-17** Aaron struck the “dust of the earth” and from it came gnats

**Ex. 9:3-7** “The hand of the Lord will come with a very severe pestilence on your cattle which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks”

**Ex. 10:15** The locusts “ate every plant of the land and all the fruit of the trees. . . thus nothing green was left on tree or plant of the field.”

**Ex. 10:22-23** “There was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt. . . but all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings.”

**Ex. 12:29** God “struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt. . . and all of the cattle”

**Gen. 1:10** God created “the gatherings of the waters”

**Gen. 1:20** “Let the waters swarm (NASV margin) with swarms”

**Gen. 2:7** “The Lord God formed man of dust from the ground”

**Gen. 1:25** “God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and every-thing that creeps on the ground after its kind”

**Gen. 1:11** “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them.”

**Gen. 1:2, 4** “Darkness was over the surface of the deep. . . God separated the light from the darkness”

**Gen. 1:25, 27** “God made. . . the cattle. . . And God created man.”

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<sup>15</sup> Walter G. Kaiser, "Exodus," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), II:348-49.

Moses is picturing that creation has been undone. The One who had brought order out of chaos now reduces order to chaos as a judgment on Egypt.<sup>16</sup>

In Exodus 12:12 God speaks of executing judgment on all the gods of Egypt, “Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments – I am the Lord.” Egypt’s gods were bound up with the forces of nature. Thus in the plagues Hapi the Nile-god had brought not prosperity but ruin. Frogs, the symbol of Heqit, a goddess of fruitfulness, had brought only disease and disaster. The hail, rain and lightning were considered heralds of awesome events but now they heralded judgment. The light of the sun-god Re was blotted out.<sup>17</sup> The Egyptians worshipped many animals and animal-headed gods, including the bull-gods Apis and Mnevis, the cow-god Hathor and the ram-god Khnum. As they were killed by the plagues, the Egyptian gods were shown to be defeated by the true God.<sup>18</sup>

#### 5. The Passover (The Cover-over) (Exodus 12)

In connection with the final plague of Egypt, the slaying of the first-born, God instituted the feast of Passover. As a background for understanding the Passover, it is helpful first to note use of bird imagery for God. In Exodus 19:4 in describing His leading of Israel by the Glory Cloud at the exodus, God says, “I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.” In Deuteronomy 32:10-11 again in speaking of the exodus, Moses writes of God, “He found him (Israel) in a desert land and in the howling waste (Hebrew: *tohu*) of a wilderness. Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that hovers (Hebrew: *rahap*) over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them in His pinions.” Significant to this description of God’s shepherding Israel through the wilderness by the Glory Cloud is that it is described in the distinctive language of Genesis 1:2 as birdlike hovering (Hebrew: *rahap*) over the unstructured world. Moses had written in Genesis 1:2, “And the earth was formless and void (Hebrew: *tohu*) and the Spirit of God was moving (literally “hovering,” Hebrew: *rahap*) over the surface of the waters.”<sup>19</sup>

Bird imagery is a natural way to describe the glory theophany of the exodus. God appeared in a cloud, and clouds and birds belong to the same sphere, the sky. Isaiah shows the parallel between the two, writing, “Who are these who fly like a cloud, and like the doves to their lattices?” (Isa. 60:8). Similarly, protective overshadowing is provided both by the outspread wings of birds (Deut. 32:11; Pss. 17:8; 91:4) and by clouds (Ps. 105:39; Ex.

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<sup>16</sup> Ziony Zavit, "Three Ways to Look at the Ten Plagues," Biblical Review 6 (1990) 23 quoted in Allison, op. cit., pp. 204-6.

<sup>17</sup> K. A. Kitchen "Plagues of Egypt," The New Bible Dictionary, p. 1003.

<sup>18</sup> NIV Study Bible, p. 98.

<sup>19</sup> Meredith G. Kline, “The Feast of Cover-Over,” Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, 37 (Dec. 1994) 497.

40:35LXX).<sup>20</sup>

Outside the Bible, pagan deities were commonly depicted by bird imagery. This was especially true in Egypt where the first Passover took place. Of special significance for interpreting the Passover was the appearance in Egypt of a winged sun-disk which was used as a symbol of divine glory<sup>21</sup> on door lintels.<sup>22</sup> The entryway formed by such lintels with their side posts parallels the gate of heaven imagery constituted by the cherubim flanked Glory in the Holy of Holies (Ex. 25:17-22).<sup>23</sup>

In the account of the Passover in the book of Exodus there are two different Hebrew words which are both translated “Passover” but in reality denote completely different actions. One verb is *‘abar* and “pass over” is an acceptable translation for it. This word is used when the Lord says that He is going to pass over (New American Standard Version: “go through”) the land on a mission of judgment (Ex. 12:12). The actual entering of the house is attributed to a “destroyer” who is distinguishable from God (Ex. 12:23b; cf. 13b). The destroyer would either be an angel or the messianic Angel of the Lord Himself (cf. 2 Sam. 24:16-17; 2 Kings 19:35; Isa. 37:36; 1 Chr. 32:21; Ps. 35:5-6) who though distinguishable from God is identified as God (Ex. 12:12, 13c, 23a; 29).<sup>24</sup>

The other Hebrew verb traditionally translated “pass over” is *pasah* (Ex. 12:13b, 23b, 27b). The traditional interpretation of this word has been to understand God to be the destroyer and the word *pasah* as picturing God’s passing over the houses of the Israelites.<sup>25</sup> However, Exodus 12:23b clearly distinguishes the Lord from the destroyer, “The Lord will pass over (Hebrew: *pasah*) and will not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to destroy you.” The destroyer is obviously not the one who passes over. This verse also makes clear that the specific purpose of this *pasah*-act is to deny the destroyer access to the blood stained doorway. *Pasah* does not denote taking a detour but pictures God stationing Himself as a guard.<sup>26</sup>

A better suggestion is that *pasah* means instead “cover/hover over”<sup>27</sup> in the sense of

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> George E. Mendenhall, The Tenth Generation (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), pp. 32-56; Kline, “The Feast of Cover-Over”, p. 498.

<sup>22</sup> Mendenhall, The Tenth Generation, p. 49; Kline, “The Feast of Cover-Over”, 498.

<sup>23</sup> Kline, “The Feast of Cover-Up,” p. 498; Meredith G. Kline, Images of the Spirit (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), p. 40.

<sup>24</sup> Kline, “The Feast of Cover-Up,” 498.

<sup>25</sup> Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 820; Victor P. Hamilton, “pasah,” Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, II:728; Kline, “The Feast of Cover-Up,” p. 499.

<sup>26</sup> Kline, “The Feast of Cover-Up,” 498-99.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 500.

“defend, protect.”<sup>28</sup> Isaiah 31:5 contains an insightful usage of the word *pasah*. The verse is Hebrew poetry where parallel terms are regularly used synonymously:<sup>29</sup>

Like birds hovering overhead,  
The Lord Almighty will shield Jerusalem;  
He will shield and deliver it,  
He will *pasah* it and will rescue it.

Here the first and last lines are parallel (as are lines 2 and 3) indicating that *pasah* is a parallel thought to “hovering overhead.”<sup>30</sup>

Further evidence that the root *pasah* means “hover over” is 1 Kings 18:21, “How long will you hesitate (Hebrew: *pasah*) between two opinions?” The word translated “opinions” is usually translated “branches” of trees (e.g. Ezek. 31:6). Once we give *pasah* the meaning “hover, flutter over,” and use “branches” instead of “opinions,” the verse says, “How long will you go on hovering like a bird fluttering over two branches? Land on one bough or the other.”<sup>31</sup>

In light of *pasah* meaning “hover,” the picture in Exodus 12 is not one of God’s passing over His people but of His coming to spread His protective wings over them to protect them from the angel of death. God hovered over His people just as the Spirit of God had earlier hovered over the earth at creation (Gen. 1:2) and as the Glory Cloud was about to hover over Israel (Ex. 13:21-22).<sup>32</sup> Specifically, at the Red Sea the pillar of Cloud, in a nighttime scene similar to that of the Passover with the Israelites under the threat of destruction, takes up a position between the camp of Israel and the camp of Egypt to protect Israel through the night (Ex. 14:19-20). As at the Passover, the Lord stations Himself to block the approach of the destroying power. The similarity of Exodus 12 and 14 argues that the Glory Spirit was the divine actor in Exodus 12 as well as in Exodus 14.<sup>33</sup>

Jesus as the Paschal Lamb interposes Himself between the wrath of God and those who are His own. While on earth Jesus was also the Paraclete-Guardian of His people from the evil one (John 17:12,15). During his last Passover meal with His disciples He promised that He would send another Paraclete-Guardian to be with them forever, the Spirit, who was the covering guardian of God’s people at the first Passover.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, “*pasah*,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, II:729.

<sup>29</sup> A. Berkeley Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), pp.324-28.

<sup>30</sup> Kline, “The Feast of Cover-Up,” 500.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 501.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 502.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 502-3.

In light of the evidence we have seen, a more accurate translation than “Feast of Passover” would be “The Feast of Cover-over.”<sup>35</sup>

Not only is the Lord pictured as a bird-like shield for His people but also as a tree-like shelter. The most likely etymology for the Hebrew noun *pesah* (commonly translated “Passover”) is the Egyptian word *pesech*, meaning “the booth,” with *pe* meaning “the” and *sech* meaning “arbor” or “booth.” It signifies the entry of a simple overarching structure with a central supporting pole. Such a shelter is the perfect nounal equivalent of the protective covering function attributed to the Glory Cloud. Here in the booth-shelter of the Passover is a model of the Bible’s familiar concept of God as our refuge, our dwelling place in all generations (Pss. 46:1; 49:11).<sup>36</sup>

In Egyptian hieroglyphics the sign for “booth” (Egyptian: *sech*) pictures not just a booth but the entry face of the structure. This corresponds to the focal paschal motif of the smearing of blood on the entryway (Ex. 11:7).<sup>37</sup>

Another link between *pesach* and the Egyptian *sech* is that both are used in combination with a word for deity. In Exodus 12 *pesah* is repeatedly used as belonging to the Lord (vss. 11, 27, 48). In Egyptian the expression *sech-neter* meaning “booth or shrine of deity” was written with the hieroglyphic sign depicting the frontal elevation of a shrine plus the emblem for deity. An additional correspondence between the paschal narrative and the hieroglyphic sign *sech-neter*, the façade of a shrine, is that both focus on the doorframe. In the hieroglyphic sign the whole façade of the shrine is in fact an expanded doorframe. So each Jewish home with its divine covering was a *sech-neter*, a divine sanctuary booth.<sup>38</sup>

In Exodus 12 it is the placing of the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintel that identifies the door as the central focus of the event. Similarly there are Egyptian funeral offering texts that speak of offerings being placed before the *sech-neter*. In fact, funeral offering texts were written on the doors and lintels of the certain *sech-neter* structures, identifying them as tomb shrines. Similarly in Exodus 12, every house in Egypt was turned into a house of death that night. In each Egyptian home there was the death of the eldest son (Ex. 12:12, 29-30). In each Jewish home there was the death of a lamb (Ex. 12:1-11), picturing the particular redemption of God’s people. The lamb’s blood placed on the lintel and doorposts rendered the Jewish homes to be houses of death and, like the Egyptian *sech-*

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 508.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 504.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 505-6.

*netter*, tomb shrines.<sup>39</sup>

This death-signifying blood of the lamb was at the same time the *pesah*, the covering which protected the occupants of the home from the death stroke. The death of the lamb was a sacrifice, a suffering of divine wrath in the place of others, which provided God's people a place of refuge from the wrath of God which was passing over the earth. The wonder of grace deepens when we recall that it was the Lord Himself who was their sheltering shield (Hebrew: *pesah*) as He hovered (Hebrew: *pasah*) over the Jewish homes. The lamb is the *pesah* and the Lord is the *pesah*. Both these statements are true because the Lord is the lamb. John bore witness to his Lord saying, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29).<sup>40</sup>

Because of the Lord-lamb covering, the Jewish house-tombs were sanctuary sepulchers, places of refuge in which those redeemed by the blood of the lamb were preserved until the night of judgment had passed. Though a sign of death, the blood on the doorframe was a symbol of salvation, for it was the blood of triumphing sacrifice. Just as the offerings that were the subject of the Egyptians' funeral notices on the tomb shrine doorframes were thought to be gifts for the ongoing life of the deceased, so the blood on the Jewish lintels spoke of life after death. The blood of the lambs on these sanctuary tombs was a guarantee of their becoming empty tombs the following morning. The blood-covered doors were opened and the redeemed emerged as children of the resurrection day.<sup>41</sup>

Calvary where the true paschal Lamb was slain reproduces the typological scene of the paschal doorway smeared with the blood of the lamb. Jesus' proper place was the throne above the Ark of the Covenant, above the lintel of the gate of heaven with the cherubim on either side framing the divine splendor. At Calvary the two cherubim were replaced by two criminals, the vertical posts of their crosses being the new side posts of the new paschal door frame. And in the center, the horizontal beam of Jesus' cross, the lintel of this doorway, was stained with the blood of the Lamb. And on the lintel was the name of the Lord-Lamb, "The King of the Jews" (Mark 15:26). The paschal door of Golgotha proves to be the very gate of heaven. All who are called and enter are welcomed into the true heavenly sanctuary to abide forever under the shadow of the Almighty.<sup>42</sup>

6. The Exodus (Exodus 13-14)
  - a. The Passage through the sea as a Baptism

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 506-7.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 507.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 510.



The exodus was an ordeal by cloud and water and is identified by Paul as a baptism.<sup>43</sup> Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:1-2, “For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” In the cloud when God was leading them through the Red Sea, which person of the Trinity would have been in the cloud? It is the Holy Spirit who has the function of leading God’s people. (“All who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” [Rom. 8:14].) Thus Israel was baptized both in water (“the sea”) and in the Spirit.

What is the function of the baptism of the Spirit? According to 1 Corinthians 12:13 it is to place believers into the body of Christ. It states, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks” (1 Cor. 12:13). Since this was the forming of God’s chosen family into a kingdom people (Ex. 19:6; 1 Pet. 2:9) and the first baptism of the Spirit, this was the initial formation of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). (It is important to note that Ephesians 3:4-6 assumes the existence of the body of Christ in the Old Testament. It reads “...the mystery of Christ which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles ... that the Gentiles are ... fellow-members of the body” [Eph. 3:4-6].) Since the New Testament equates the body of Christ with the church (Greek: *ekklesia*) (Eph. 1:22-23, etc.) it is interesting to note that the Hebrew equivalent of *ekklesia* (church) is *qahal* translated “assembly.” And the assembly of Israel at Mount Sinai is seen as the definitive Old Testament assembly. Moses writes in Deuteronomy 9:10, “And the Lord gave me two tablets of stone written by the finger of God; and on them were all the words which the Lord had spoken with you at the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly.” The Septuagint translates “on the day of the assembly” “on the day of the *ekklesia*” or “on the day of the church.” Thus God formed His church initially at the Exodus. Through the Baptism of the Spirit he placed them into the body of Christ and through the Mosaic Covenant formed them into “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6), just as He does with the Gentile church today (1 Cor. 12:13; Matt. 28:19; 1 Pet. 2:9). The assembly at the foot of Mount Sinai was significant in that it is the only occasion in redemptive history after the Garden of Eden where all of God’s people were gathered together in one place.<sup>44</sup>

The significance of the water baptism of Israel at the Red Sea is that by bringing them safely through a water ordeal God declared Israel accepted as the servant people of His covenant under the authority of Moses, God’s mediatorial vice-regent.<sup>45</sup> The Egyptian army

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<sup>43</sup> Kline, By Oath Consigned, p. 69.

<sup>44</sup> John M. Frame, The Doctrine of the Christian Life (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2008), 389.

<sup>45</sup> Kline, By Oath Consigned, p. 70.

was found guilty in the water ordeal as the ordeal waters brought them the curse of death. Regarding the meaning of the word “baptism,” it is interesting to note that at the Red Sea baptism only the Egyptians were immersed.

#### b. The Passage through the Sea as a Victory over the Dragon

In the epics of the Ancient Near East, the god who by virtue of a signal victory demonstrates himself to be a king among the gods then proceeds to build himself a royal house. For example, in both the Canaanite epic of Baal and the Babylonian Enuma-Elish, the theme of divine house-building follows that of victory over chaos.<sup>46</sup>

The same sequence of themes is found in Exodus. First God defeats Egypt and its gods (Ex. 12:12; Num. 3-4). To describe the triumph of God over Egypt in the sea, Scripture uses the figure of the slaying of the dragon (Ps. 74:12-14; Isa. 51:9-10; cf. Ezek. 29:3). For example, Psalm 74:13-14 states,

“Thou didst divide the sea by Thy strength;

Thou didst break the heads of the sea-monsters in the waters.

Thou didst crush the heads of Leviathan....”

Then after His victory over the dragon, God proceeds to build a house for himself.<sup>47</sup>

God’s house-building as described in Exodus is of two kinds. There is first the structuring of the people themselves into the formally organized house of Israel (Ex. 16:13; 19:3). The divine Artisan erected the Kingdom-house of Israel to be His eternal dwelling place.<sup>48</sup>

Exodus continues with an account of the building of the other, more literal house of God, the tabernacle (Ex. 23:19; 34:26). Though more literal than the living house of Israel, the tabernacle house was a symbol of it. The kingdom-people-house was the true house of God.<sup>49</sup>

The book of Exodus closes by bringing together these two covenant built houses in a summary statement concerning God’s abiding in the glory-cloud in His tabernacle-house “in the sight of all the house of Israel” (Ex. 40:34-38).<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Meredith G. Kline, The Structure of Biblical Authority (Grand Rapids, MI:

William J. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), p. 79.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.80.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

## B. The Mosaic (Old) Covenant

### 1. Introduction to the Mosaic Covenant

#### a. The Relation to the Abrahamic Covenant

Galatians 3:15-19 describes the relationship of the Mosaic Covenant to the Abrahamic Covenant, “Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man’s covenant, yet when it has been ratified no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. . . What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.” In other words the Mosaic law “was added” (Gal. 3:19) to the promise. The promises to Abraham remained in effect. The law was added to them.

#### b. The Significance of the Mosaic Covenant

The purpose of the Mosaic Covenant was to constitute Israel as a kingdom. God states, “You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6). In the Mosaic Covenant God made the seed of Abraham His vassal kingdom and the covenant document became its constitution.

Israel’s new relationship to God is illustrated by how God deals with their complaints. On the way to Sinai the complaining of the people regarding the lack of food and water characteristically induced a favorable response from God (Ex. 15:22-17:7). But at Sinai the status of the people changed. They now became God’s covenant people. Thus when they complained about the same things on the way from Sinai, God punishes them for violating their covenant obligations (Num. 11,14,16). Murmuring against a suzerain constituted a violation of a suzerainty treaty resulting in a curse.<sup>51</sup>

#### c. Israel Gives Her Allegiance to God (Exodus 19)

Upon Israel’s arrival at Sinai (Ex. 19:1), the first step in the making of the covenant was the people’s giving their allegiance to God. Immediately upon reaching the wilderness of Sinai, Moses had ascended the mountain and God had declared what He was about to do (Ex. 19:3-6). The form of God’s address to Moses and the response of Israel is cast in the form of a suzerainty treaty:

**Preamble:** “The Lord called to him (Moses) saying” (Ex.19:13)

**Historical Prologue:** “You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself” (Ex. 19:4)

**Major Stipulation:** “Now then if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant,” (Ex. 19:5a)

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<sup>51</sup> George E. Mendenhall and Gary A. Herion, “Covenant,” Anchor Bible Dictionary 1:1185.

**Blessing:** “Then you will be my possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:5b-6)

**Oath of Allegiance:** “And all the people answered together and said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do!” (Ex. 19:8)<sup>52</sup>

d. The Law of the Old Covenant

The total number of stipulations in the Pentateuch is 611 which is also the numerical value of the Hebrew title of the Pentateuch “Torah.” In Hebrew each letter has a numerical value and the numerical value of Torah” is 611. The traditional number of laws, 613, is obtained by treating both Exodus 20:2 (“I am the Lord your God”) and Deuteronomy 6:4 (Hear, O Israel! The Lord is your God, the Lord is one!) as stipulations. Likewise the 42 stipulations contained in the Covenant Code of Exodus 21:1-23:12 equals the numerical value of the opening words of the section, “Now these are the ordinances” (Ex. 21:1).<sup>53</sup>

d. The Ten Commandments and God’s Purposes

Just as the Adamic, Noahic and Abrahamic Covenants had all reflected the threefold purpose of Genesis 1:28, that one day man would fill the earth with children of God, subdue the earth and have dominion, so these same three purposes are reflected in the Ten Commandments:

**I Allegiance Commandment**

1 Have your allegiance to Me alone and to no other gods. (Ex 0:3)

**Allegiance Related Commandments:**

2 Having allegiance to me means that you must not make or worship any idols. (Ex 20:4-6)

3 Having allegiance to me means that you must not profane my name. (Ex 20:7)

**II Covenant Sign Commandment**

4 Carefully observe the Sabbath as the sign of the covenant. (Ex 20:8-11; cf. 30:17)

**IV Commandments Regarding Being Fruitful and Multiplying and filling the Earth (Gen 1:28)**

5 In being fruitful and multiplying, you must not forget to honor your own parents. (Ex 20:12)

6 To fill the earth assumes that murder is a heinous crime. (Ex 20:13)

7 In being fruitful and multiplying, must not commit adultery. (Ex 20:14)

**V Commandment Regarding Subduing the Earth (Gen 1:28)**

8 Subduing the earth doesn’t give you license to steal. (Ex 20:15)

**VI Commandments Regarding Having Dominion (Gen 1:26, 28)**

9 Exercising dominion for God assumes maintaining a just legal system. (Ex 20:16)

10 In exercising dominion, be careful not to covet. (Ex 20:17)

2. The Breaking of the Covenant

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. Richard J. Skiba, “The Redeemer of Israel,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 34 (1972) 3-4; Kaiser, “Exodus,” 2:415; Klaus Baltzer, *The Covenant Formulary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwood, 1971), pp.28-29.

<sup>53</sup> John H. Sailhamer, *An Introduction to Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1995), p.257

a. The Golden Calf (Exodus 32-33)

During the forty days that Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the law (Ex. 24:18), there was an extreme contrast between what was happening on the mountain and on the desert floor below.<sup>54</sup> “When the people saw that Moses delayed in coming down from the mountain, they assembled about Aaron and said to him, “Come, let us make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him” (Ex. 32:1). The verb “assembled” is the verbal form of the noun *qahal* which is translated by *ekklesia*, in the Septuagint. Thus just days after the initial assembly of God’s “church” at the foot of Mount Sinai (Deut. 9:10), there is the initial assembly of the apostate church (Ex. 32:1).

Aaron responds to the apostate assembly, by making a golden calf and announcing to Israel, “This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt” (Ex. 32:4). There had been bull-cults in Egypt in the areas surrounding Goshen where the Israelites had lived. Likewise in nearby Canaan, the bull or calf was the animal of Baal or Hadad, god of storm, fertility and strength and as in Egypt symbolized fertility and strength. Because of the many Semites in the Delta of Egypt besides the Israelites, the golden calf may have been a blending of contemporary bull and calf cults.<sup>55</sup>

Aaron announces, “‘Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord.’ So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings. . . and the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” The meaning of the Hebrew verb *sahaq* translated “play” includes conjugal caresses.<sup>56</sup>

“Then Moses . . . went down from the mountain with the two tablets . . . and it came about as soon as Moses came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing; and Moses’ anger burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain” (Ex. 35:15-19), the breaking of the stone tablets symbolizing the breaking of the covenant.<sup>57</sup>

b. The Renewal of the Covenant (Exodus 34)

Since the covenant had been broken, it needed to be renewed. When God’s people sin, there must be confession (Ex. 34:9). Then in response to the confession, God

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<sup>54</sup> Kaiser, *op. cit.*, 2:478.

<sup>55</sup> K. A. Kitchen, "Calf, Golden," *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed., p. 160.

<sup>56</sup> Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, p. 850.

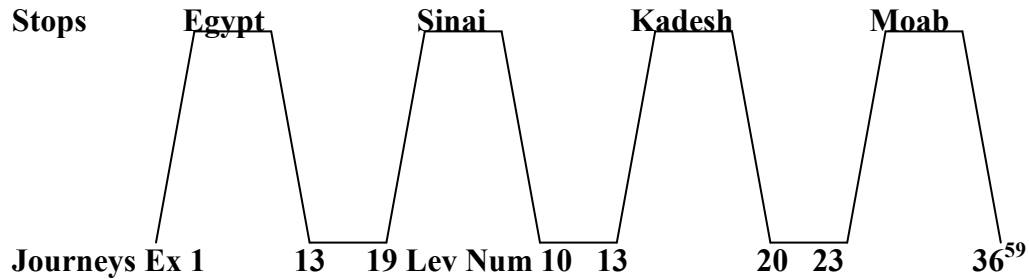
<sup>57</sup> Kaiser, *op. cit.*, 2:479.

renews the covenant (Ex. 34:10-28). In doing so he repeatedly emphasizes the major covenantal stipulation of absolute allegiance with a multiplication of caveats against compromise. He indicates the relationships they must avoid if they are not again to compromise their loyalty.<sup>58</sup>

c. The Continued Breaking of the Covenant

1) The Structure of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers

The history of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers diagrammed as follows:



The events of the three journeys and the three stops follow the same pattern:

Journeys			
Events	Red Sea to Sinai	Sinai to Kadesh	Kadesh to Moab
Led by cloud	Ex. 13:21	Num. 10:11ff.	---
Victory over Egypt	14	---	cf. Number. 21:21-35
Victory song	15:1-18	cf. 10:35ff.	21:14-15
Miriam	18:20-21	12	20:1
People complain	15:23-24	11:1	21:5
Moses' intercession	15:25	11:2	21:7
Well	15:27	---	21:16
Manna and quail	16	11:4-36	---
Water from rock	17:1-7	---	20:2-13
Victory over Amalek	17:8-16	---	cf. 21:1-3
Jethro	18:1-12	cf. 10:29-32	---

<sup>58</sup> John I. Durham, *Exodus* (Vol. 3 of *World Biblical Commentary*, Waco: Word Books, 1987), p. 463.

<sup>58</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers*, vol. 4 of the Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, ed., D. J. Wiseman (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1981), p. 16.

<b>Stops</b>			
<b>Event</b>	<b>Sinai</b>	<b>Kadesh</b>	<b>Moab</b>
Divine Promises	Ex. 19:5-6; 23:23ff.	Num. 13:2	Num. 22-24
40 Days	24:18	13:25	---
Rebellion	32:1-8	14:1ff.	25:1-3
Moses' intercession	32:11-13	14:13-19	---
Judgment	32:34	14:20-35	25:4
Plague	32:35	14:37	25:8-9
Laws of sacrifice	34:18ff.; Lev. 1-7, etc.	15:1-31	28-29
Trial	Lev. 24:10-23	15:32-36	27:1-11
Rebellion against priests	Lev. 10:1-3	16:1-35	---
Atonement through priests or Levites	Ex. 32:26-29	16:36-50	25:7-13
Priestly prerogatives	Lev. 6-7; 22	17-18	31:28-30; 35:1-8
Impurity rules	Lev. 11-16	19	31; 35:9ff.
Census	Num. 1-4	---	26 <sup>60</sup>

2) The Refusal to Invade the Promised Land (Numbers 13-14)

At long last it was time to claim God's word, believe in His power, march in His name and enter His land.<sup>61</sup>

“Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the Sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers' tribes, every one a leader among them” (Num. 13:1-2).

Two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua brought back a positive report, whereas the other ten brought back a false one (Num. 13:26-33). The false witnesses state, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us. . . the land. . . is a land that devours its inhabitants” (Num. 13:30-32).

Under ancient law those bearing false witness would receive the same sentence that those they falsely accused would have received, had they been convicted (Deut. 19:16-19). The ten spies had falsely accused the land of homicide, saying that it “devours its inhabitants” (Num. 13:32). As a result

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.16-17.

<sup>61</sup> Ronald B. Allen, “Numbers,” *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed., Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 2:803-4.

they immediately receive the death penalty (Num. 14:37).<sup>62</sup>

Moses reports that the people “grumbled in (their) tents and said, “Because the Lord hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us” (Deut. 1:27). Their perversity caused them to interpret God’s election of them as an expression of His hatred. He had delivered them from Egypt so the Canaanites could kill them.<sup>63</sup>

The divine verdict sentences them to exile from the homeland they refused to enter.<sup>64</sup> The fate they feared in Canaan will now overtake them in the wilderness. They say, “Would that we had died in the wilderness” (Num. 14:2) and God grants their request. Four times God announces to them, “Your corpses shall fall in the wilderness” (Num. 14:29, 32, 33, 35).<sup>65</sup>

In this announcement of judgment was also a display of God’s covenant mercy. Not only will the godly spies, Caleb and Joshua, take possession of the Promised Land but the second generation will as well (Num. 14:30-31).<sup>66</sup> The children whom the spies said would perish in Canaan will be the ones who will conquer it (Num. 14:3, 31, 33).<sup>67</sup>

3) Moses’ Disobedience (Numbers 20:2-13)

Israel’s rebelliousness became the occasion for failure by Moses. He failed to fulfill properly his high mediatorial calling as a type of the Messianic Mediator who is always perfectly submissive to His Father’s will (Num. 20:12; Deut. 3:26; 4:21; 32:50ff.).<sup>68</sup> At Meribah when Israel complains about the lack of water (Num. 20:2-5), God commands Moses to speak to the rock to provide water (Num. 20:8). Moses instead strikes the rock with his rod (Num. 20:11), taking credit for himself (Num. 20:10). As a result Moses as well will die without entering the Promised Land (Num. 20:12).

3. Further Renewals of the Mosaic Covenant

a. The Covenant Renewal before the Death of Moses: Deuteronomy

(1.) Introduction

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<sup>62</sup> Wenham, Numbers, p. 120.

<sup>63</sup> Kline, Treaty of the Great King, p. 53.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Wenham, Numbers, p. 123.

<sup>66</sup> Kline, Treaty of the Great King, p. 54.

<sup>67</sup> Wenham, Numbers, p. 123.

<sup>68</sup> Kline, Treaty of the Great King, p. 54.



An important concern in treaties between nations was the issue of dynastic succession of the suzerain's descendants. In fact, a vassal's oath of allegiance was directed both to the suzerain and his successors. Most significant in this regard is the Nimrud treaty of Esarhaddon since it is concerned exclusively with the issue of dynastic succession. It is the text of the covenant ceremony held shortly before the death of Esarhaddon in which his vassals were required to acknowledge by oath the succession rights of Ashurbanipal as crown prince of Syria and of his brother Shamash-shum-ukin as crown prince of Babylonia. There was a two stage procedure in such a covenant. After Esarhaddon's death and Ashurbanipal's accession to the throne, there was to be a second ceremony confirming his vassal's allegiance to him. Such is the relationship between the covenant ceremony conducted by Moses in Moab and documented by the book of Deuteronomy, to the ceremony conducted by Joshua at Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal and reported in Joshua 8:30-35. The first stage takes place when the death of Moses, God's representative, is imminent. Yahweh's continuing Lordship is affirmed in a ceremony in which is announced Joshua's appointment to be Moses' successor as his vice-regent (Deut. 31:3) and Joshua is divinely commissioned (Deut. 31:14, 23; cf. 31:7ff.). Accordingly Israel's renewal oath of allegiance to the Lord includes a commitment to follow Joshua (cf. 34:9; Josh. 1:16-18), that is, to submit to God's will regarding the dynastic succession. The second half of the ceremony was held at Shechem not long after Moses' death and Joshua's accession, when the Lord attested His presence with Joshua as with Moses by duplicating the Mosaic signs of victory over the waters and the hostile hosts. There Israel confirmed its consecration to the Lord according to all the words of the law of Moses and confirmed its recognition of Joshua as God's choice to succeed Moses (Josh. 8:30-35).<sup>69</sup>

Legal provision was also made in treaties to govern the dynastic succession in the vassal kingdom. So, for example, Suppiluliuma stipulates that the Mitannian throne succession shall go to the offspring of his daughter and the vassal king Mattiwaza. This is also a counterpart to the Moses-Joshua succession as a vassal dynasty. The dual character of their mediatorial role meant that they were not only God's vice-regents over Israel but also Israel's representatives before God as a dynasty of vassal kings.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Thus the book of Deuteronomy is the document of the covenant renewal just prior to the death of Moses.

The Deuteronomic Covenant replaced the Mosaic Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant contained stipulations for nomads. Now since they were about to settle the Promised Land, the new law contains provisions for land owners (cf. Deut. 19:14; etc.). A specific example of a law that was changed between the Mosaic law given at Mt. Sinai and its Deuteronomic renewal was the law regarding killing domesticated animals for food. Under the Mosaic Covenant, any domestic animal killed for food was to be slain as a peace offering at the doorway of the tent of meeting. Specific parts of the animal were to be offered to God and the rest then eaten by the offerer and his family (Lev. 17:3-6). However, once Israel was in the Promised Land, the distances were too great for animals to be taken to the tabernacle or temple to be killed. Thus Deuteronomy 12:20-22 states that they can be killed and eaten anywhere.<sup>71</sup>

The law of a new covenant document always replaced the law of the previous covenant. At all times of history, the law of a covenant is in effect until the next covenant is made. Thus the book of Deuteronomy was the authoritative covenant document in effect until Jesus instituted the New Covenant in the Upper Room. Although a new covenant document always replaced the previous one as authoritative, the covenant promises remain in place.

(2) Outline of Deuteronomy

(a) Preamble: Covenant Mediator - Deuteronomy 1:1-5

Ancient suzerainty treaties began with a preamble in which the speaker, the one declaring his lordship and demanding the allegiance of his vassal, would identify himself. The Deuteronomic preamble identifies the speaker as Moses (Deut. 1:1) but as the earthly mediatorial representative of the heavenly Suzerain and ultimate Covenant Lord.<sup>72</sup>

(b) Historical Prologue: Covenant History 1:6-4:49

Following the preamble came the historical prologue written in I-Thou style, the purpose of which was to give historical justification for the suzerain's continuing reign. When treaties were renewed, the historical prologue would be updated. All of these features

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<sup>71</sup> Noel Weeks, Gateway to the Old Testament (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1995), pp. 22-23.

<sup>72</sup> Kline, Treaty of the Great King, p. 50.

characterize Deuteronomy 1:6 - 4:49.<sup>73</sup>

The historical prologue of the Mosaic Covenant referred to the deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 20:2b). Deuteronomy begins at the scene of the Mosaic Covenant and continues the story up through the covenant renewal ceremony in Moab.<sup>74</sup>

(c) Stipulations: Covenant Life - 5:1 - 26:19

When international treaties were renewed, the stipulations would be repeated. However, they would also be updated to meet any changing situations.

i) Major Stipulation - 5:1 - 11:32

Just as the stipulations of suzerainty treaties began with the fundamental demand of absolute allegiance on the part of the vassal toward the suzerain, so Moses confronts Israel first with the primary demand of consecration to God. This is enunciated in chapters 5-7 and then enforced by divine claims and sanctions in chapters 8-11.<sup>75</sup> It is summarized in the words of Deuteronomy 5:7, “You shall have no other gods before me.”

ii) Minor Stipulations - 12:1 - 26:19

Having dealt with the inner spirit of total allegiance (Deut. 5-11), Moses goes on to indicate how this allegiance is to manifest itself outwardly, updating it to their new situation to be in the Promised Land (Deut. 12-26).<sup>76</sup>

(d) Curses and Blessings: Covenant Ratification 27:1 - 30:20

The fourth section of a suzerainty treaty was the curses and the blessings. In Deuteronomy this is found in chapters 27:1 - 30:20. The section begins with the curses and blessings to be used in the second stage of ratification after the death of Moses (chapter 27) and then returns to the initial stage of ratification and its solemn sanctions (chapters 28-30).<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

Some of the curses are noteworthy in the way they were literally fulfilled when God executed the curses of the covenant in A.D. 70 when God sent the Roman armies to destroy the city of Jerusalem and to take His covenant-breaking people away captive:

“So all these curses shall come on you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you would not obey the Lord your God by keeping His commandments and the statutes which He commanded you.... The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as an eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand.... And it shall besiege you in your towns until your high and fortified walls in which you trusted come down throughout your land.... Then you shall eat the offspring of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the Lord your God has given you, during the siege and the distress by which your enemy shall oppress you.... Moreover the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, a from one end of the earth to the other end of a from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth.... And among those nations you shall find no rest, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot..... In the morning you shall say, ‘Would that it were evening!’ And at evening you shall say, ‘Would that it were morning!’ because of the dread of your heart...”(Ex. 28:45-67).

The book of Deuteronomy is the covenant document which was in force for the Jews of Jesus’ day and its curses are those which God was executing upon Israel in A.D. 70. In Josephus’ account of the siege of Jerusalem, he reports that the famine induced by the siege was so severe that it even produced cannibalism<sup>78</sup> as threatened in Deuteronomy 28:53-57. The Jewish people remain under these curses today as they continue under the wrath of God (Luke 21:23-24; I Thess. 4:15-16) until the second coming of Christ when they will look on Him whom they pierced (Zech. 12:10-13:1; Rev. 1:7; Matt. 24:30; cf. Luke 21:24-27).

- (e) Instructions for the Disposal of the Text - 31:1-26a
  - i) Periodic Reading - 31:10-11

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<sup>78</sup> Josephus, Bellum Judaicum, VI. iii.4.

In suzerainty treaties between nations, directions were included for reading the treaty document to the vassal people at regular intervals, from one to three times a year. In Deuteronomy the law was to be read to Israel every seventh year in the sabbatical year at the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut. 31:10-11). This was to serve as a reminder at this time of Sabbath year consecration for the continuing self-consecration of all the servants of the Lord if they are to enjoy the consummation of the covenant's blessings.<sup>79</sup>

ii) Placement of the Document in the Temple - 31:24-26a  
As in international suzerainty treaties, the duplicate copies were to be deposited in the respective temples of the two parties in order for them to be under the surveillance of the oath deities, so the book of Deuteronomy was to be placed in the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle by the side of the ark of the covenant (Deut. 31:26a).<sup>80</sup>

(f) Witnesses - 31:26b - 32:47

i) The Book of the Law - 31:26b

The book of Deuteronomy itself was a covenant witness (Deut. 31:26b).<sup>81</sup>

ii) Heaven and Earth - 31:28 - 32:3

Moses announces that he is going to call heavens and earth as covenant witnesses (Deut. 31:28) in light of their foreseen disloyalty to the Lord (Deut. 31:27, 29). Moses' foreknowledge of Israel's unfaithfulness is a result of the revelation of the foreknowledge of God (cf. Deut. 31:21).<sup>82</sup>

iii) Moses' Song of Witness - 31:30 - 32:47

God appointed Moses' Song of Witness for Israel to "teach. . . to the sons of Israel in order that this song may be a witness for (God) against the sons of Israel" (Deut. 31:19). The song would place the promised blessing and threatened curse in

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<sup>79</sup> Kline, Treaty of the Great King, pp. 135-37.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 75-76, 138.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

proper perspective within the covenant.<sup>83</sup> By having Israel memorize the Song it would be a constant witness to everyone.<sup>84</sup>

(g) Moses' Testament - 32:48 - 33:29

In the ancient Near East, a dying father's last words spoken to his sons were an irrevocable legal testament. With Isaac (Gen. 27), Jacob (Gen. 49) and Moses (Deut. 33) the authority for their final blessings came from the Spirit of prophecy within them speaking in testamentary form. As the spiritual father of the twelve tribes, Moses pronounced his final blessings upon them just before he ascended the mountain to die (Deut. 33:1). His words constituted his testament. In as much as the Deuteronomic covenant was a dynastic guarantee, Joshua as Moses' successor was the heir of the covenant. Yet it is also true that all the Israelites as God's adopted children were heirs of the blessings of the kingdom being dispensed through Moses. Since the blessings of God's redemptive covenant are not inheritable apart from the death of the Promisor, the covenant is a will or testament.<sup>85</sup>

In terms of Joshua, it was the death of the covenant author which caused the covenant stipulations to become operative. For him the whole book of Deuteronomy was a testament. The dynastic succession became effective with the death of the testator. From the view point of the subject people, a treaty guaranteeing the suzerain's dynastic succession is an expression of their relationship to their overlord. But from the viewpoint of the royal son(s) of the suzerain, the arrangement is testamentary.<sup>86</sup>

Thus Deuteronomy 33 was a testament to which all Israel was heir. As Romans 9:4 tells us, Israel's election was unto adoption as children. The Israelites were sons as well as vassal servants (Ex. 4:22; Deut. 14:1). Moreover, as sons of the King of heaven, they were all heirs of the kingdom. Indeed the establishment of Israel as a royal priesthood over Canaan was symbolically reinstating man the Guardian-Priest and

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp. 135-44.

<sup>84</sup> Meredith G. Kline, The Structure of Biblical Authority (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), p. 123.

<sup>85</sup> Kline, Treaty, pp. 144-45.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

Gardener-King as vice-regent over Paradise.<sup>87</sup>

The succession of Moses by Joshua looks forward to Jesus who is both the dying Moses and the succeeding Joshua (the name Joshua being the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek Jesus). Jesus succeeds Himself in God's royal dynasty in resurrection power and ascension glory.<sup>88</sup>

(h) Moses' Death Notice - 34:1-12

A testament is only in force after the death of the testator (Heb. 9:16-17). Since the Deuteronomic Covenant in its testamentary aspect was not operative until the death of Moses, it is appropriate for the book to end with Moses' death notice (Deut. 34:1-12). This notarizes the treaty. That the testamentary significance of Moses' death is in view can be seen by the attention given in chapter 34 both to Israel's inheritance of the land and to Joshua's inheritance of the royal mediatorship of the covenant.<sup>89</sup>

(i) The Oaths

As has been mentioned, the ratification of a treaty of dynastic succession was in two stages. First, when death was imminent, the suzerain required his vassals to pledge obedience to his son. Then after the suzerain's death and the succession of his son, the vassal's commitment was repeated.

i) The Oath before Moses' Death - 29:10-12

The oath before the death of Moses is found in Deuteronomy 29:10-12. There Moses says, "You stand today, all of you, before the Lord your God; your chiefs, your tribes, your elders and your officers, even all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and the alien who is within your camps from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water, that you may enter into the covenant with the Lord your God and into His oath which the Lord your God is making with you today." The equation of the Lord's covenant with the oath He requires of Israel indicates the nature of the covenant as an instrument of God's rule whereby He secures the commitment

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

of a people to His service.<sup>90</sup>

- ii) The Oath after Moses' Death - 27:1-26  
The ratification ceremony is commanded in Deuteronomy 27:1-26 and carried out in Joshua 8:30-35.

- (j) The Solemn Ceremony  
The solemn ceremony is found also in Joshua 8-30-35: "And all Israel... were standing on both sides of the ark.... Half of them stood in front of Mount Gerazim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses... had given commandment.... (Joshua) read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law."

b. Covenant Renewal Before the Death of Joshua: Joshua 24

- (1) The Crossing of the Jordan River

The crossing of the Jordan River was a water ordeal under Joshua similar to that of the Red Sea under Moses. At this juncture the rightful ownership of Canaan was the legal issue at stake and God declared in favor of Israel by bringing them safely through the water ordeal. When the Amorite and Canaanite kings heard that Israel had come safely through a water ordeal, "their hearts melted and there was no spirit in them any longer" (Josh. 5:1), since they grasped the legal significance of what had happened. God's verdict in the Jordan was followed by the success of Israel's holy war. And as at the flood, the vindicated took possession of the estate of the guilty,<sup>91</sup> the Promised Land (Josh. 11:23).

- (2) The Conquest of Canaan

The book of Joshua consists of four main sections, each one characterized by a particular Hebrew word and concept:

- (a) "Crossing over" (Hebrew: *abar*) Joshua 1:1-5:12
- (b) "Taking" (Hebrew: *laqah*) Joshua 5:13-12:24
- (c) "Dividing" (Hebrew: *halaq*) Joshua 13:1-21:45
- (d) "Serving" (Hebrew: *abad*) Joshua 22:1-24:3<sup>92</sup>

The Promised Land had been described in Deuteronomy as Eden recaptured. Not only would it bring forth heavenly food (milk and honey were the foods

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>91</sup> Kline, *By Oath Consigned*, p. 56.

<sup>92</sup> Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Langman, III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervon Publishing House, 1994), p. 114.



traditionally offered to a deity, cf. Isa. 7:15) but it would be watered from heaven (Deut. 11:11). Not only would it be potentially rich, but supplied with “great and splendid cities which (Israel) did not build, and houses full of all good things which (she) did not fill, and hewn cisterns which (she) did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which (she) did not plant” (Deut. 6:10-11). It is “land for which the Lord. . . cares; the eyes of the Lord are always on it” (Deut. 11:12).<sup>93</sup> This is paradise recovered. The Promised Land was to be a sanctuary for God with everything unclean to be removed. As in Eden the occupants of the sanctuary would enjoy the blessing of God’s presence, and as in Eden there would be continued occupancy by God’s people if the conditions for life in the land were met. Like Adam, Israel was formed outside of the land (cf. Gen. 2:8); like Adam, Israel was then placed in the sanctuary of God; as with Adam, life in the sanctuary was governed by a covenant, and finally like Adam Israel was to be expelled from the land when the covenant was irretrievably broken.<sup>94</sup>

(3) The Covenant

Just as there was a renewal of the covenant just before the death of Moses, there is one likewise just before the death of Joshua.

(a) Joshua’s Testament - Joshua 23

As the dying father’s words spoken to his sons were his legal testament, in Joshua 23, Joshua delivers his testament. Just as Moses had done this as part of the covenant renewal ceremony (Deut. 32:48-33:29),<sup>95</sup> so Joshua’s last words (Josh. 23) precede the covenant renewal before his death (Josh. 24). The opening verse of the chapter connects it as well with the last words of Jacob (Gen. 48-49), Joseph (Gen. 50:22-26) and David (2 Sam. 23:1-7; 1 Kgs. 2:1-9) being covenant related<sup>96</sup>, the chapter follows the treaty model:

**Historical Prologue:** “And you have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the Lord your God is fighting for you”. (Josh. 23:3-5)

**Major Stipulation:** “Be very firm, then, to keep and do all that is

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<sup>93</sup> William J. Dumbrell, Covenant and Creation (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984), p. 120.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Kline, Treaty of the Great King, pp. 144-48.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

written in the book of the law of Moses”. (Josh. 23:6-8)

**Blessing:** “One of your men puts to flight a thousand.” (Josh. 23:9:10)

Major Stipulation Restated: “So take diligent heed to yourselves to love the Lord your God.” (Josh. 23:11)

**Curse:** “When you transgress the covenant of the Lord your God, and go and serve other gods, then the anger of the Lord will burn against

you, and you shall perish quickly off the good land which He has given you.” (Josh. 23:12-13, 115-16)

- (b) Preamble - Joshua 24:2a  
God is identified as the one making the covenant (Josh. 24:2a).
- (c) Historical Prologue - 24:2b-13  
Once again the historical prologue is brought up to date to include the events of the conquest (Josh. 24:11-13).
- (d) Stipulations - 24:14-15  
Israel must “fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth” (Josh. 24:14). In Hittite treaties all foreign alliances had to be rejected; so in this covenant Israel was to reject all foreign gods.<sup>97</sup> They are to “put away the gods which your fathers served. . . and serve the Lord” (Josh. 24:14).
- (e) Curses - 24:19-20  
Only curses are found in this covenant renewal. “If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you” (Josh. 24:20).
- (f) Instructions for Disposition of the Text - 24:26  
We read, “Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God; and he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of God” (Josh. 24:26).
- (g) Witnesses - 24:22, 26-27
  - i) The People - 24:22  
“And Joshua said to the people, ‘You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves the Lord, to serve Him.’ And they said, ‘We are witnesses’” (Josh. 24:22).
  - ii) The Stone - 24:26-27  
“And Joshua said to all the people, ‘Behold, this stone shall be for a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the Lord which He spoke to us; thus it shall be for a witness against you, lest you deny the Lord’” (Josh. 24:27).
- (h) Oath  
Just as in Exodus 24, Israel takes the oath twice. In Joshua 24:16 “the

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<sup>97</sup> Donald K. Campbell, "Joshua," The Bible Knowledge Commentary (Victor Books, 1985), I:369.

people answered and said, ‘Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods.’” Again they say in verse 24, “We will serve the Lord our God and we will obey His voice.”

### C. The Old Covenant and its Renewals

<b>THE OLD COVENANT AND ITS RENEWALS</b>			
	<b>Mosaic</b>	<b>Deuteronomic</b>	<b>Joshua</b>
<b>Preamble</b>	Ex. 20:1	Deut. 1:1-5	24:2a
<b>Historical Prologue</b>	Ex. 20:2	Deut. 1:6-4:49	24:2b-13
<b>Stipulations</b>	Major - Ex. 20:3 Minor - Ex. 20:4-17 Ex. 21-23, 25-31 Lev. 1-25	Major - Deut. 5:1-11:32 Minor Deut. 12:1-26:49	24:14-15
<b>Curses and Blessings</b>	Ex. 20:5-7, 12 Lev. 26:3-33	Deut. 27:1-30:12	24:19-20
<b>Disposal of Text</b>	Ex. 25:16	Deut. 31:24-36	24:26
<b>Witnesses</b>	Stones: Ex. 24:14	Book: Deut. 31:26 Heaven & Earth: Deut. 31:28	Stones: 24:26-27 Israel: 24:22
<b>Ratification by Oath</b>	Ex. 24:3-7	Deut. 29:10-12	24:16, 21
<b>Solemn Ceremony</b>	Ex. 24:8-11	Josh. 8:30-35	

## II. God’s Covenantal Dealings with David

### A. Introduction

When God rejected Saul from the kingship of Israel (1 Samuel 16:1a) David was revealed to Samuel as his successor (Isaiah 16:1b,13) Samuel then anointed David at Bethlehem (1 Samuel 16:13). The “the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. . . (and) the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul” (1 Samuel 16:13-14).<sup>98</sup>

Saul’s sins do not seem to have been much greater than David’s were to be. How can it then be said David was a “man after (God’s) own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14)? Israel had looked at Saul’s height and muscles - “There was no one like him among all the people” (1 Samuel 10:24). Although God had chosen Saul, He knew his heart. Men may look at the outward appearance but God saw David’s heart. David’s heart was such that he would triumph over Goliath by faith while Saul cowered in his tent (1 Samuel 17:1-58).<sup>99</sup>

<sup>98</sup> T.H. Jones, "David," New Bible Dictionary, 2nd ed., p.266.

<sup>99</sup> Dillard and Longman, An Introduction to the Old Testament, p.146.

But something happened to David along the way. As a youth he had killed a bear and a lion for the sake of the sheep (1 Samuel 17:34-35), but by the end of his life he decided that the sheep should die for him except this time his sheep were people (2 Samuel 24:14, 17). David would not be the good shepherd who gives his life for his sheep. We must await another (John 10:11).<sup>100</sup> But because David repented of his sins of adultery and murder, Messiah now sits on David's throne.<sup>101</sup>

## B. The Davidic Covenant

### 1. Type of Covenant

The Davidic Covenant was a Royal Grant to David the loyal servant of the Lord for his devotion to God as Israel's king and as the Lord's anointed vassal.<sup>102</sup> It is not called a covenant in 2 Samuel 7 but is elsewhere (2 Sam. 23:5; 1 Kings 8:23; 1 Chron 13:5; Ps. 89:3, 28, 34, 39; Jer. 33:21).<sup>103</sup>

### 2. Parties

The covenant is between God and David and David's descendants (2 Sam. 7:12).

### 3. Preamble - 2 Samuel 7:8a

The preamble is found in 2 Samuel 7:8a, "Thus says the Lord of hosts." "Lord of hosts" is a regal title stressing the Lord's function as covenant suzerain over his "servant" vassal David.<sup>104</sup>

### 4. Historical Prologue - 2 Samuel 7:8b-9

In a brief historical prologue, God next rehearses the benefits with which He has blessed David. He states, "I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be ruler over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you" (2 Sam. 7:8b-9b).<sup>105</sup>

### 5. Promises - 2 Samuel 7:9-16

God gives David an unconditional promise to establish and maintain his dynasty on the throne of Israel.<sup>106</sup> This was his royal grant to his faithful servant who had completed the conquest of his enemies. God by means of the covenant arranges for the erection of His temple-house on the holy mount. The dynastic house of David is also established and its

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> This insight was suggested by David Davidson.

<sup>102</sup> Dillard and Longman, An Introduction to the Old Testament, p.146.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 433.

<sup>104</sup> Ronald Youngblood, "1, 2 Samuel," Expositors Bible Commentary, ed., Frank E. Gaebelain, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 3:888

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

perpetuity guaranteed.<sup>107</sup> This is in keeping with suzerainty treaties which promise prolongation of dynasty to faithful vassal kings.<sup>108</sup>

When God says that He will “appoint a place” for Israel where “they may” not be disturbed again” (2 Samuel 7:10), His promise was very similar to that of ancient suzerain toward his vassal kingdom who would promise protection to all who maintained their faithful allegiance to him.<sup>109</sup> When the Lord states “I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me” (2Samuel 7:14), He is using treaty language. In Mesopotamia it was common to use familiar metaphors to express political ties. Thus “father” signified suzerain and “son” signified vassal.<sup>110</sup> It is instructive to observe how God’s promises are repeated through His covenants.

Repeated Covenant Promises													
Promise	Creation Cov.	Adamic Cov.	Noahic Cov.	Abrahamic Covenant					Re-newed	Re-newed	Re-newed	Re-newed	Davidic Cov.
Reference	Gen 1	Gen 3	Gen 9	Gen 12	Gen 13	Gen 15	Gen 17	Gen 22	Gen 25	Gen 28	Gen 35	Gen 48	2 Sam 7
Offspring	28a	15b	16b, 7	2a, 7a	16	4-5	2, 4, 6, 15a	17b	4a, 24b	3b, 14a	11a	4a, 15b	11-12a
Blessing				2b, d				17a	3a, 24a	3a			29
Great Name				2c								15a	9
Blessing for those who bless Curse for those who curse				3a, b									
Blessing for Gentiles				3c				18	4c	14c			19
Subdued earth land	28b	15a	3	7b	14-15, 17	7, 16, 18-21	8a	17c	3b, 4b	13, 14b, 15	12	4b, 21	10
Rule/Kingship	28c	15c	2								11b		12b-16
Lord will be God to people							6, 15b	7, 8b					24
Everlasting													13, 16, 24 25, 29

6. Witness - 2 Samuel 7:25

It was the role of the God/Witness to guarantee the covenant was carried out. According to Psalm 89:35, God swore by Himself as witness since there obviously was no other deity that could serve in that capacity<sup>111</sup>.

7. Oath - 2 Samuel 7:25-29

God’s Word is His oath. (Peter in commenting on 2 Samuel 7 says, “God had sworn to him

<sup>107</sup> Kline, Structure, p. 82.

<sup>108</sup> Philip J. Calderone, Dynastic Oracle and Suzerainty Treaty (Manila: Loyola House of Studies, 1966).

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 46

<sup>110</sup> Youngblood, op. cit., 3:892.

<sup>111</sup> George E. Mendenhall and Gary A. Herion, “Covenant,” Anchor Bible Dictionary 1:1189.

with an oath” [Acts 2:30; cf. Ps. 132:11].)

## 8. Fulfillment

Historically the Davidic Covenant found fulfillment in Solomon. But the full realization of the promises will be in David’s greater Son, the Lord Jesus. Peter says in his Pentecostal sermon concerning David, “Because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to Him with an oath to seat one of His descendants upon his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ” (Acts 2:30-31). He then continues on, “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says, ‘The Lord said to My Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand until I make Thine enemies a footstool for thy feet.’ Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ - this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2:32-36).

When will He put all His enemies under His feet? 1 Corinthians 15:22-26 gives the answer, “As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ, the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming, then comes the end when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. . . And when all things are subjected to Him then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.” Death is abolished at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:14). And according to Acts 2:30-34, the throne of David is where Christ is reigning at God’s right hand. Thus the ultimate fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant is the Son of David (Matt. 1:1), the Lord Christ to Whom all authority has been given (Matt. 28:18).

## C. The Covenant Renewal Before the Death of David 1 Chronicles 22-29

David’s appointment of Solomon to succeed him was in two stages. The first stage is found in 1 Chronicles 22. David summons and commissions Solomon (1 Chron. 22:6-16) in a similar way to which Moses commissioned Joshua:

Deuteronomy 31:7

Then Moses called to (Hebrew: *waq<sup>e</sup>ra<sup>></sup>*)

Joshua

and

said (Hebrew: *wayy<sup>></sup>omer*)

to him

1 Chronicles 22:6-7

Then he called for (Hebrew: *waq<sup>e</sup>ra<sup>></sup>*)

his son Solomon ...

and David

said (Hebrew: *wayy<sup>></sup>omer*)

to Solomon<sup>112</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Baltzer, op. cit., p. 73.

David concludes his address to Solomon by repeating almost word for word what Moses had said to Joshua in Deuteronomy 31:7 (which he repeats again in 1 Chronicles 28:20).

Deuteronomy 31:7-8

Be strong  
and courageous....  
Do not fear  
or be dismayed

1 Chronicles 22:13

Be strong  
and courageous,  
Do not fear  
nor be dismayed

1 Chronicles 28:20

Be strong  
and courageous....  
Do not fear  
nor be dismayed<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., pp. 73-74.



David then commands “all the leaders of Israel” to support Solomon (1 Chron. 22:17-19). Since it is “The Lord who will establish the throne of His kingdom” (1 Chron 22:10), the leaders of Israel are told to “set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God” (1 Chron 22:19).<sup>114</sup> The process by which David “made his son Solomon king over Israel” (1 Chron 23:1) is then continued in 1 Chronicles 28 where all the people are assembled, including at least all those able to bear arms (1Chron. 28:1)<sup>115</sup> David’s private statement to Solomon is repeated in the presence of the people:

	1 Chronicles 22	1 Chronicles 28
Note of the assembly	6	2
Formula of address	7	2
David’s desire to build the temple	7	2
David’s prior preparations	2-5	3
David forbidden to build	8	3
Solomon chosen to build	9	6
Dynastic promise	10	7
Exhortation to Solomon	11-13	9, 10, 20
Introductory “and now”	11	9
The vocative of “my son”	11	9
Designation of the task	11	10, 20
Concern for keeping the law	12-13	9(cf. 6)
Resulting prosperity	11b, 13a	9
The Lord’s presence assured	11	2b, 20
Formula of encouragement	13	10, 20 <sup>116</sup>

1 Chronicles 28-29 corresponds to the form of covenant renewal before the death of a king. 1 Chronicles 28:2b-7 is the historical prologue. It ends with the phrase “as is done now” (literally “at this day”) indicating that the historical prologue has been updated to the present day. This phrase ends historical prologues as well in Deuteronomy 4:38; 10:15; and Jeremiah 11:5.<sup>117</sup>

The historical prologue is then followed by the major stipulation first for the people (1Chron 28:8)

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>116</sup> Roddy Braun, *1 Chronicles* (vol 14 of *Word Biblical Commentary*; Waco, Word Books, 1986), p. 267.

<sup>117</sup> Baltzer, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

and then for Solomon (1 Chron 28:9), thus following the pattern of succession treaties.<sup>118</sup> The fact that the ceremony is said to take place not only “in the hearing of God” but also “in the sight of all Israel” seems to indicate that David first had the nobles swear allegiance to Solomon as representatives of the nation (1 Chron 28:8). David then state Solomon’s obligation to him (1 Chron 28:9). David follows this by giving Solomon instructions for the building of the temple (1 Chron 28:11-29:9).<sup>119</sup>

In 1 Chronicles 29:20, when “all the assembly ... bowed low and paid homage to the Lord and to the king,” this can be seen as a satisfaction of all that has taken place.<sup>120</sup> On the following day “they made sacrifices” (1Chron 29:21), “ate and drank that day before the Lord with great gladness” (1 Chron 29:22), and “anointed him as ruler before the Lord” (1 Chron 29:23). The significance of what has happened is summarized in 1 Chronicles 29:23-24, “All Israel obeyed him. And all the officials, the mighty men, and also the sons of King David pledged allegiance to King Solomon.” The succession of David and Solomon follows the pattern of the succession of Moses and Joshua in a number of ways.

1. Both Moses and David was disqualified by God from accomplishing their major goal - the one to enter the Promised Land; the other to build the temple. In both cases their successors achieve the goal (Deut. 1:37-38; 31:2-8; 1 Chron. 22:5-13; 28:2-8).
2. Numerous phrases are found in accounts of the installation of both Joshua and Solomon: a) “Be strong and take courage” (Deut. 31:7,23; Job 1:6,7,9; 1 Chron. 22:13; 28:20 cf. Deut. 31:6 and 1 Chron 28:10); b) “Do not be frightened or dismayed” (Deut. 31:8; Josh. 1:9; 1 Chron 22:13; 28:20; cf. Deut 31:6); c) “The Lord your God is with you” (Deut 31:6,8,23; Josh. 1:5,9; 1 Chron. 22:11,16; 28:20; 2 Chron 1:1); d) “He will never leave you nor forsake you” (Deut. 31:6,8; Josh. 1:5; 1 Chron 28:20); e) stress on prosperity through keeping the law (Deut 31:5; Josh 1:7-8; 1 Chron 22:12-13; 28:7-9).
3. Both Moses and David make double announcements regarding the appointment of their successors, first in a private meeting (Deut. 1:23; 1 Chron. 22:6), then in public (Deut. 37:2; 1 Chron 28:8).
4. Joshua and Solomon both received the wholehearted support of the people (Deut. 34:9; Josh. 1:16-20; 1 Chron. 29:23-24).
5. It is twice reported of both Joshua and Solomon that God “exalted” them (Josh. 3:7; 4:14; 1 Chron. 29:25; 2 Chron, 1:1).
6. Both Joshua and Solomon led the Israelites into “rest” (Josh. 11:23; 21:44; 1 Chron 22:8-9).
7. Both Joshua and Solomon receive a divine gift of wisdom (Deut. 34:9; 2 Chron. 1).

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., pp. 75-76.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., pp.75-76.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

8. Both Joshua and Solomon conscript alien labor in the building of a place of worship (Josh. 9:26-27; 2 Chron. 2:2,17-18; 8:7-10).<sup>121</sup>

## II. Covenant History

### A. Solomon

Solomon's reign developed into a ruthless display of oriental type kingship. It began with the elimination of all opposition and ended with a divided kingdom. Solomon's reign marked the high water mark of Israelite achievement. Yet instead of occupying a world position in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant, the kingship went into serious decline.<sup>122</sup>

### B. Rehoboam

Solomon's son Rehoboam was the last king of united Israel and the first king of the southern kingdom of Judah. The oppressive measures initiated by Solomon to raise taxes for his public and royal expenditures led to a confrontation between Rehoboam and the northern tribes. When his arrogance caused him to increase the tax burden, the northern kingdoms revolted and made Jeroboam king over the ten tribes of Israel (1 Kings 12:1-20; 2 Chron. 10).<sup>123</sup>

### C. The Kings of Israel and Judah

To understand the spiritual condition of the succeeding kings of Israel and Judah it is helpful to see how they kept the deuteronomic law which was the constitution of their kingdoms.<sup>124</sup>

#### 1. Centralization of worship in Israel

Whereas in the wilderness Israel worshipped in their portable tabernacle, once they entered the Promise Land, God would choose one place to dwell (Deut. 12:5) and the people were to bring their sacrifices there (Deut. 12:5-7). All other places of worship used by the previous inhabitants of the land were to be destroyed (Deut. 12:1-4).<sup>125</sup>

What happened? Almost the first act of Jeroboam, king of Israel, was to erect rival sanctuaries, at Dan and Bethel, in order to divert attention from Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:25-30). This sin at the beginning of the northern kingdom became the standard which the subsequent kings of Israel were measured. Almost all are condemned for following "the sins of Jeroboam." Even Zimri who only ruled for one week is condemned for "walking in the way of Jeroboam" (1 Kings 16:19). God was not concerned with kings military or political success but with their faithfulness to the word of God:

The Sons of Jeroboam and the Kings of Israel

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<sup>121</sup> Raymond B. Dillard, 2 Chronicles (vol 15 of Word Biblical Commentary; Waco, Word Books, 1987), pp.3-4.

<sup>122</sup> Dumbrell, op. cit., pp. 153-154.

<sup>123</sup> D.W. Baker, "Rehoboam," New Bible Dictionary, 2nd edition, p. 1016.

<sup>124</sup> Dillard and Longman, op. cit., p. 162.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

Jeroboam I (930-909)	1Kings 11:26,28,29,31; 12:26,31; 13:1,4,33,34; 14:16
Nadab (909-908)	1 Kings 15:29-30
Baasha (908-886)	1 Kings 15:34; 16:2-3, 7
Elah (886-885)	----
Zimri ((885)	1 Kings 16:19
Tigni (885)	----
Omri (885-874)	1 Kings 16:26
Ahab (874-853)	1 Kings 16:31; 21:22; 22:52
Ahaziah (853-852)	----
Joram (852-841)	2 Kings 3:3; 9:9
Jehu (841-814)	2 Kings 10:29, 31
Jehaohaz (814-798)	2 Kings 13:2, 6
Jehoash (798-782)	2 Kings 13:11, 13; 14:16
Jeroboam II (782-753)	2 Kings 14:24
coregent from 793	
Zechariah (753-752)	2 Kings 15:9
Shallum (752)	----
Menahem (752-742)	2 Kings 15:9
Pekahiah (742-740)	2 Kings 15:24
Pekah (740-732)	2 Kings 15:28
Hoshea (732-722)	
Summary Statement	2 Kings 17:21-23 <sup>126</sup>

## 2. Centralization of Worship in Judah

One would think that obedience to the command of centralized worship would have been easy in the southern kingdom of Judah since that was where Jerusalem was located. However, this was not the case. Although Deuteronomy 12 commanded the destruction of the high places and other worship centers of Canaanite worship, they continued to flourish. The high places stole the heart of Solomon himself (1 Kings 11:7-13) and eventually cost him his kingdom. Just as the rival altars of Jeroboam measure the kings of Israel, so the high places became the yardstick to measure the kings of Judah. Only two kings, Hezekiah and Josiah, not only were faithful to the temple and suppressed the high places. Another five did what was right in the eyes of the Lord (Asa, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah[Uzziah], Jotham) but the high places continued to flourish during their reigns.

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., pp. 162-63.

Most of the others participated in worship at the high places:

The High Places and Solomon and the Kings of Judah

Solomon (970-930)	1 Kings 3:2-4; 11:7
Rehoboam (930-913)	1 Kings 12:31-32; 13:2, 32-33
Abijam (913-911)	----
Asa (910-869)	1 Kings 15:14
Jehoshaphat (872-848)	1 Kings 22:43
Jehoram (853-841)	----
Ahaziah (841)	----
Athaliah (841-835)	----
Joash (835-796)	2 Kings 12:3
Amaziah (796-767)	2 Kings 14:4
Azariah/Uzziah (792-740)	2 Kings 15:4
(co-regent from 792)	
Jotham (750-735)	2 Kings 15:35
(co-regent from 750)	
Ahaz (735-715)	2 Kings 16:4
Mannasseh (697-642)	2 Kings 21:3; 23:5
(co-regent from 697)	
Amon (642-640)	----
Josiah (640-609)	2 Kings 23:8-9, 13, 15, 19-20
Jehoahaz (609)	----
Jehoiakin (609-597)	----
Jehoiachin (597)	----
Zedekiah (597-586)	----

Eventually God would take His temple away from his people.<sup>127</sup>

#### D. Covenant Renewals

There were few covenant renewals during the period of the monarchy.

##### 1. Elijah - 1 Kings 18:20-19:14

The most famous of these was Elijah's call to covenant renewal in his contest with the prophets Baal. There Elijah placed before Israel the Major stipulations of the covenant. Would they choose to serve the Lord or Baal (1 Kings 18:21)? By building a twelve

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., pp. 163-64.

stoned alter, he demonstrates his commitment to God's idea of a twelve tribe kingdom (1 Kings 18:31). The response of the people to the test between God and Baal was "The Lord, He is God; The Lord He is God" (1 Kings 18:39). The connection with the Mosaic covenant is emphasized when Elijah flees south to Horeb/Sinai (1 Kings 19:8). Since the Hebrew of 1 Kings 19:9 says that he came to the cave, it may very well be the same cave in which Moses hid when the Lord passed by him (Exodus 33:17-23). Similarly, as Elijah was in the cave, "The Lord was passing by" (1 Kings 19:11). However, was not in the earthquake, wind and fire that had been present at the original making of the covenant at Sinai (1 Kings 19:11-12; cf. Ex. 19:16-19; 24:17).<sup>128</sup> How God addressed him was through "a sound of a gentle blowing" (1 Kings 19:12). God does not always operate in the spectacular.<sup>129</sup> The outcome of the covenant renewal was that there were "7,000 in Israel . . . that (had) not bowed to Baal" (1Kings 19:21).

2. Asa 2 Chronicles 15:10-15

After Zerah, the Ethiopian had been defeated in holy war, "they entered into the covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and soul . . . Moreover they made an oath to the Lord with a loud voice, with shouting , with trumpets, and with horns. And all Judah rejoiced concerning the covenant for they had sworn with their whole heart and had sought Him earnestly, and He let them find Him" (2 Chron 15:12-15).<sup>130</sup> In accordance with Deuteronomy 13:6-10 and 17:2-7 those who "would not seek the Lord God" were executed.<sup>131</sup> As a result of the renewal of the covenant, "the Lord gave them rest on every side" (2 Chron. 15:15).

3. Joash 2 Kings 11:12, 2 Chronicles 23:11

The seven year reign of Queen Athaleal had been a determined effort to eliminate the Davidic dynasty. Jehoiada, the high priest, with his wife, the daughters of Athaleal frustrated Athaleal's attempt to destroy "all the royal offspring of the house of Judah" by rescuing Joash from his grandmother and hiding him in the temple for six years (2 Chron. 22:10-12).<sup>132</sup> When Joash is installed as king, the text speaks of two covenants which are made (2 Kings 11:17). In the first the king and people together pledge themselves to be "the Lords people" and in the second the people pledge their allegiance to the king. In Hittite treaties there is an oath taken to the suzerain or great king by the vassal king. Then

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<sup>128</sup> Dumbrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 159, 167.

<sup>129</sup> Patterson and Austrel, *op. cit.*, 4:150.

<sup>130</sup> Baltzer, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>131</sup> Dillard, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

<sup>132</sup> Dumbrell, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

another is taken by the people of the vassal.<sup>133</sup>

4. Hezekiah 2 Chronicles 29:5-11

Hezekiah's cleansing of the temple is pictured as a covenant renewal.<sup>134</sup> Second Chronicles 29:6-9 constitutes a historical prologue, indicating Israel's violation of the loyalty demanded by the covenant (vs. 6) and their refusal to maintain temple worship (vs. 7) resulting in the execution of the covenantal curses upon them (vs 8-9).<sup>135</sup> Hezekiah then states, "Now it is my heart to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel, that His burning anger may turn away from us" (2 Chron. 29:9).

5. Josiah 2 Kings 22-23

In the days leading up to the reign of Josiah, spiritual life in Judah was at such a spiritual low that the book of the law had been lost and forgotten. Then it was found in the temple (2 Kings 22:8-9) and read to the king (2 Kings 22:10). "And it came about when the king heard the word of the book of the law, that he tore his clothes" in despair (2 Kings 22:11). Repentance preceded the covenant renewal. The Lord speaks to Josiah through the prophetess Huldah, "Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn you clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you," (2 Kings 22:19).

The covenant renewal ceremony is found in 2 Kings 23:1-3, "The king went up to the house of the Lord . . . and all the people . . . ; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant . . . and the king . . . made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep His commandments with all his heart and with all his soul . . . and all the people entered into the covenant."

6. Zedekiah - Jeremiah 34:8-22

As Zedekiah the last king of Judah was beginning to be besieged by the army of Nebuchadnezzar, he declared he better renew the covenant (Jer. 34:8) thinking that God would be suitably impressed and lift the blockade of Jerusalem. Specifically, he induced slave owners to swear to release their Hebrew slaves.<sup>136</sup> Since this is dealt with in the verses immediately following the ten commandments, Exodus 21:1-3, one wonders if he began reading the law and this was the first thing he came to. They took the oath of the covenant by cutting a calf in two and passing between the parts (Jer. 34:18-19) in the same

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<sup>133</sup> Baltzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-80.

<sup>134</sup> Dillard, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

<sup>135</sup> Baltzer, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>136</sup> R.K. Harrison, *Jeremiah and Lamentations* (vol. 19 of *The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, ed., D.J. Wiseman; Downers Grove, IL; Intervarsity Press, 1973), p. 146.

manner that God took the oath of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 15:9-10, 17). They were symbolically stating, “May I be cut apart like these calves if I fail to keep my covenantal oath of allegiance.” They did fail to keep their oath because at this point news arrived that an Egyptian army was enroute to lift the blockade of Jerusalem. As a result the Babylonian army temporarily lifted its siege and as a result the slave owners “turned around and took back the . . . servants when they had set free and brought them into subjection” (Jer. 34:11). By breaking their promises, they not only were unfaithful to the covenant they had just made but also profaned the divine name by which oaths had been sworn.<sup>137</sup> As a result God says of those who had broken the covenant, “I will give them into the hand of their enemies . . . and their dead bodies will be food for the birds of the sky. And Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials I will give into the hand of their enemies” (Jer 34:20-21).

#### E. The Babylonian Captivity

God had prophesied through His covenant messenger Jeremiah, “This whole land shall be a desolation and a horror, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years”(Jer. 25:11). This was an execution of the covenantal curses of Deuteronomy. God had said, “If you will not obey the Lord your God . . . all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you . . . The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. . . .” (Deut. 28:15, 25). When Jeremiah threatened Zedekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem with the curse of being eaten by the birds of the sky, he was merely repeating the curse of Deuteronomy 26:26, “Your carcasses shall be food to all birds of the sky.”

The reason for the seventy year captivity was that every seventh year was a sabbath year in which the land was to lie fallow (Lev. 25:1-5) but for 490 years the sabbath year had not been observed. God was therefore saying, “if you aren’t going to rest the land, I will.” And so, the seventy year captivity was to rest the land for the sabbath years that had been ignored “until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of the desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete” (2 Chron. 36:21). There are two ways of dating the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity. (1) The exile ran from the first deportation in 605 B.C. until the decree of Cyrus in 539 B.C. If upon their return to the land, they obeyed the law of Leviticus 19:23-25, they would not eat any trees which they planted four years or until 535 B.C., seventy years after they had left the land. (2) The exile also can be dated from the destruction of the temple in 586 B.C. to the rededication of the temple in 516 B.C.<sup>138</sup>

#### F. The Return from Exile

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Dillard, op. cit., p. 301.



## 1. Historical Update - A Second Exodus

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which initially were seen as one book by Christians until Origen (c185-c254) and by Jews until the Middle Ages, record the return of Jews from the Babylonian captivity.<sup>139</sup> There were three major returns:

### a. Zerubbabel

The first return took place under the leadership of Zerubbabel; a descendant of David (1 Chron 3:19) and Sheshbazzar who was made governor of Judah by Cyrus, the king of Media-Persia.<sup>140</sup> Judah was thus a vassal kingdom of Media-Persia.

Nebuchadnezzar had plundered the Jerusalem temple in both 597 and 586 B.C. At the time it was customary for a conqueror to take the statues of the gods from the temples of his defeated enemy and place them in his own temple (Ezra 1:7; cf. 1 Sam. 5:2). Since the Jewish faith had no “graven images” (Ex. 20:4), the temple vessels were taken as a substitute and placed initially in the Babylonian temple. Cyrus was an enlightened king who reversed the repressive policies of the Babylonians and encouraged those taken captive by both them and the Assyrians before them to return to their homelands.<sup>141</sup> Not only did he issue a decree allowing the Jews to return and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-4) but also returned to Sheshbazzar 5400 temple vessels to bring back to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:7-11).

### b. Ezra

#### 1) History

In 458 B.C. Ezra was sent to Jerusalem by Artaxerxes I and was accompanied by a large number of exiles (Ezra 7). Ezra, a priest and scribe (Ezra 7:11) apparently held a position in Persia comparable to Secretary of State for Jewish Affairs. His task was to enforce the observance of the law and to make appointments within the Jewish state.<sup>142</sup> “Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel” (Ezra 7:10).

#### 2) Covenant Renewal - Ezra 9-10

Ezra 9-10 records a renewal ceremony. The specific sin triggering the

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<sup>139</sup> Dillard and Longman, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

<sup>140</sup> D.J. Wiseman, "Sheshbazzar," *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed., p. 1104.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. A.E. Cundall, "Ezra," *The New Bible Commentary* Revised Ed., D. Guthrie and J.A. Motyer, (Grand Rapids, MI; Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), pp. 395-99.

<sup>142</sup> J. S. Wright, "Ezra," *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed., p. 364.

covenant renewal is the intermarriage of the Jews with non-Israelites (Ezra 9:1-2)<sup>143</sup>

Foreign wives presented a grave threat to the integrity of the Covenant faith because of their unwillingness to repudiate their national deities. At this time it was largely the women who perpetuated religious traditions by teaching them to their children.<sup>144</sup> “Then everyone who trembled at the word of the God of Israel on account of the unfaithfulness of the exiles gathered to (Ezra)” (Ezra 9:4) who led them in a prayer of confession (Ezra 9:6-15). The penitential prayer of Ezra is then followed by the confession of Israel in response by Shechaniah as Israel’s representative (Ezra 10:2). Shecaniah ends his confession by stating, “So now let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law” (Ezra 10:3). “Then Ezra rose and made the leading priests, the Levites and all Israel take the oath that they would do according to this proposal; so they took the oath” (Ezra 10:5).

c. Nehemiah

1) History

Nehemiah was cupbearer to Artaxerxes I, king of Persia. The cupbearer’s responsibilities included not only tasting the wine for the king to make sure it was not poisoned but also administering aspects of the palace.

Cupbearers were often eunuchs and since Nehemiah was able to be present while the king and queen were together (Neh. 2:6) and is not reported to have a wife, it is not unlikely that Nehemiah was a eunuch.<sup>145</sup>

In 444 B.C. Artaxerxes granted Nehemiah permission to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall of the city. To give him the proper authority, Artaxerxes appointed him governor of Judah (Neh. 5:14) and under his direction the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt.<sup>146</sup>

2) Covenant Renewal - Nehemiah 9-10

The narrative regarding the building of the wall is interrupted by Nehemiah

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<sup>143</sup> Baltzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>144</sup> C. E. Armerding and Roland K. Harrison, “Nehemiah,” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., 3:514.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:513.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 3:514.

8-10 which deals with the spiritual restoration of the people. In order to secure Jerusalem, it was not enough to fill the city with just anyone (Neh. 7). Only with a people who had the word of God (Neh. 8) who recognized their dependence on him (Neh. 9) and who had given their allegiance to God (Neh. 10) could God's purposes be accomplished.<sup>147</sup>

Nehemiah 8 records how "Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women, and all who could listen with understanding. . . And he read from it. . . from early morning until midday. . . and all the people were attentive to the book of the law. . ." (Neh. 8:2-3). As a result of hearing God's word, "the sons of Israel assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dirt upon them" (Neh. 9:1) to renew the covenant.

Like the covenant ceremony following the golden calf, Nehemiah 9-10 records a renewal of the covenant. It is assumed that God keeps the "covenant and lovingkindness" (Neh. 9:32). Sinai is specifically mentioned (Neh. 9:13). The law was initially given long ago (Neh. 9:13-14). But Israel had had contempt for the land (Neh. 9:25, 35), had refused to serve God (Neh. 9:35), had been disloyal (Neh. 9:16-17, 26, 28, 29) and had broken the commandments (Neh. 9:29, 34). As a result the threatened curse has been visited. It was only because of God's great compassion that the curse had not been fully executed (Neh. 9:31). The only hope of deliverance is in turning back to God (Neh. 9:26). He alone as the Covenant Suzerain could lift the curse and re-institute the covenant.<sup>148</sup>

a) Preamble - Nehemiah 9:5b-6a

God is identified and addressed in the prayer of confession in terms of his uniqueness (Neh. 9:5b-6a). This formula in the tradition of the Deuteronomic Covenant characterizes prayers throughout the Old Testament.<sup>149</sup> Here, preceding the language of a historical prologue (Neh. 9:6b-37), it fits the pattern of a preamble, here identifying the One to whom confession is being made.

b) Historical Prologue - Nehemiah 9:6b-37

The confession of sin in the covenant renewal follows the pattern of

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<sup>147</sup> H. G. M. Williamson, "Nehemiah," New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition, eds. D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, G. J. Wenham (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1994), p. 437.

<sup>148</sup> Baltzer, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

<sup>149</sup> Moshe Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 32-45.

a historical prologue, reviewing the history of God's dealing with Israel and acknowledging the justice of the curse:<sup>150</sup>

Creation	vs. 6
Abraham	vss. 7-8
Exodus	vss. 9-11
Wilderness	vss. 12-21
The Land	vss. 22-31 <sup>151</sup>

The historical prologue is brought up to the very present, "Now. . . to this day" (Neh. 9:32).<sup>152</sup>

c) Stipulations

(1) The Major Stipulation - Nehemiah 10:29b<sup>153</sup>

"The rest of the people. . . are joining with their kinsmen, their nobles, and are taking on themselves a curse and an oath to walk in God's law, which was given through Moses, God's servant, and to keep and to observe all the commandments of God our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes" (Neh. 10:28-29).

(2) Minor Stipulations - Nehemiah 10:30-39<sup>154</sup>

i) A prohibition against mixed marriage (Neh. 10:30)<sup>155</sup>

This had been the specific issue in the Covenant renewal of Ezra 9-10. This stipulation carried to completion the reform initiated by Ezra in the covenant renewal of Ezra 9-10.<sup>156</sup>

ii) A regulation regarding commerce with the people of

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<sup>150</sup> Cf. Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Ezra-Nehemiah," Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed., Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 4:736; Baltzer, op. cit., p. 43, 46.

<sup>151</sup> H. G. M. Williamson, Ezra, Nehemiah, vol. 16 of Word Biblical Commentary, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Waco: Word Books, 1985), p. 307.

<sup>152</sup> Baltzer, loc. cit.

<sup>153</sup> Yamauchi, loc. cit.; Baltzer, loc. cit.

<sup>154</sup> Yamauchi, loc. cit.

<sup>155</sup> Baltzer, op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>156</sup> Cf. Armerding and Harrison, op. cit., 3:514.

the land on festivals (Neh. 10:31a)<sup>157</sup>

“As for the peoples of the land who bring wares or any grain on the sabbath day to sell, we will not buy from them on the sabbath or a holy day” (Neh. 10:31a).

iii) An obligation to observe sabbatical year (Neh. 10:31b)<sup>158</sup>

“We will forgo the crops the seventh year and the exaction of every debt” (Neh. 10:31b).

iv) Payment of tribute for the support of the Temple (Neh. 10:32-29)

In summary, they pledge not to “neglect the house of . . . God” (Neh. 10:39).<sup>159</sup>

d) Curses and Blessings - Nehemiah 10:29

The specific curses are not listed but are mentioned in Nehemiah 10:29: “(they) are taking upon themselves a curse.” In other words, they were invoking a curse upon themselves should they be unfaithful to the covenant.

No blessings are given.<sup>160</sup>

e) Witnesses - Nehemiah 9:38-10:29a<sup>161</sup>

It was not uncommon in treaties for witnesses to affix their seal to the treaty document. In this treaty with God the Great King, the leaders of Israel apparently signed the document by affixing their personal seals.<sup>162</sup> The witnesses were the “leaders, Levites, and priests” (Neh. 9:38).

f) Oath - Nehemiah 10:29

The oath mentioned in Nehemiah 10:29 is self-maledictory:

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<sup>157</sup> Baltzer, loc. cit.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Yamauchi, loc. cit.; Baltzer, loc. cit.

<sup>161</sup> Yamauchi, loc. cit.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Williamson, Ezra, Nehemiah, p. 332; Baltzer, loc. cit.

they were “taking on themselves a curse and an oath.”

g) Solemn Ceremony - Nehemiah 9:1-38

The solemn ceremony was their assembling together to fast (Neh. 9:1) and to confess their sins (Neh. 9:2ff.).

G. Summary of the Post Exile Community

Five major transformations took place in Judah following the exile:

1. Elite Leaders to Community

There was a shift from leaders to community. The Old Testament is replete with charismatic leaders: Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, etc. However following the exile, the leaders Ezra and Nehemiah are absorbed into the community. It is the community that accomplishes the tasks of rebuilding the temple and wall of Jerusalem. It is the people who return to the Lord in corporate allegiance.<sup>163</sup>

2. Narrow Holiness to Spreading Holiness

Following the exile, holiness was no longer perceived as being restricted to certain special places. When the temple is rebuilt (Ezra 6:15), it is not the completion of the house of God. Jerusalem itself is rebuilt. When the walls are finished, they too are consecrated to the Lord (Neh. 3:10), indicating they are part of a “Holy City” (Neh. 11:1). Once temple, city, and walls are rebuilt, the grand opening ceremonies commence (Neh. 8-13).<sup>164</sup>

3. Oral Authority to the Authority of Written Documents

Following the exile there is a shift from oral to written authority., Letters from kings initiate and stop action. Yet the most important written document is the written Word of God. It is to the authority of God’s written Word that the people rededicate themselves in their covenant renewal (Neh. 10:29).<sup>165</sup>

4. The Building of Two Walls

“Nehemiah’s wall” was built around Jerusalem to separate the people of God physically from their enemies. On the other hand, “Ezra’s wall,” the law of God which it was his mission to teach erected a spiritual boundary between Israel and all other peoples. In essence, Ezra’s law constituted a people fit to live within Nehemiah’s walls. As the Old Testament ends, we have a holy people living in a holy city.<sup>166</sup>

5. The Absence of God from the Temple

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<sup>163</sup> Dillard and Longman, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

Although the temple was rebuilt there is no hint that the glory cloud of God's presence (Ex. 40:34-38; Judg. 6:21; 1 Kings 8:10-11; 18:38; 1 Chron. 21:26; 2 Chron. 5:13-14; 7:1-3) ever returned to the second temple. God's visible presence would finally appear in the temple when Jesus, "the radiance of His glory" (Heb. 1:3) came "to His temple" (Mal. 3:1). John could testify, "the Word became flesh and tabernacled (NASV margin) among us and we beheld His glory" (John 1:14)<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 425.

## Chapter Nine

# The Lawsuit of the Old Covenant

As with every previous covenantal age, the era of the Old Covenant ends with God instituting a lawsuit against His disobedient people.

### I. The Breaking of the Old Covenant

The spiritual state of Israel can be seen in the words of John the Baptist, “When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, ‘You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?...and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father; for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham’” (Matt. 3:7-9).

The Pharisees, the proponents of legal righteousness through adherence to oral tradition, were the primary opponents of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> The Sadducees, were the religious liberals of their day, rejecting belief in the after life, the resurrection of the dead and a judgment following death.<sup>2</sup> Whereas the security of both Pharisees and Sadducees was in their physical descent from Abraham (Matt. 3:9), John tells them that they are the “offspring of vipers,”<sup>3</sup> another way of saying, “you are of your father the devil” (John 8:44; cf. vs. 33). John the Baptist was unequivocally repudiating their understanding of the Abrahamic Covenant.<sup>4</sup>

### II. The Sending of Messengers

To understand the role of John the Baptist and Jesus as covenant messengers, it is helpful to review the institution of the covenant lawsuit. In international treaties, when a vassal failed to satisfy the obligations of a sworn treaty, the suzerain would institute a covenant lawsuit against him. There were two distinct phases in such a lawsuit, the first of which was the sending of messengers to the covenant breaker. The messengers delivered one or more messages to the covenant breakers. They typically were given a form that reflected the language of the original treaty. The messenger would interrogate the unfaithful vassal. The latter would be reminded of the benefits which the suzerain provided the vassal and of the treaty stipulations. The messenger would demand an explanation of the vassal's offenses and would admonish him to mend his ways. He would also warn the vassal of the treaty curses which were now in the form of an ultimatum. The messenger would warn the vassal of the folly of turning to any other king for help. Then if the messengers were

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<sup>1</sup> Donald A. Hagner, Matthew 1-13, vol. 33A of Word Biblical Commentary, ed. By David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, Dallas: Word, 1993, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> D. R. deLacey, “Sadducees,” New Bible Dictionary, 3rd ed., pp. 1044-45.

<sup>3</sup> Hagner, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1988, I:305.



rejected and especially if they were killed, the lawsuit would go into its second phase, a declaration of war by the suzerain on the vassal. This was seen as an execution of the curses of the treaty upon the disobedient vassal by the oath deities and a trial by ordeal in which the just party would be vindicated and the guilty defeated.<sup>5</sup>

Thus when Israel broke the Mosaic covenant, God instituted a covenant lawsuit against His disobedient vassal kingdom. The prophets were the messengers which God sent to His covenant breaking people. Their purpose was to persuade Israel to return to the terms of the covenant God had made with them. The prophets' messages followed that of contemporary lawsuit messengers.<sup>6</sup>

### III. John the Baptist as Covenant Messenger

#### A. John the Baptist as Prophet

Who was the last of the prophets? In Luke 2:76 Zecharias prophesied regarding his infant son John the Baptist, "Your child will be called the prophet of the Most High" (Luke 1:76). Then in Luke 16:16 Jesus says, "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since then the gospel of the kingdom is preached and everyone is forcing his way into it." In other words John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets.

In Malachi 3:1 John the Baptist is called a messenger of the covenant. God says "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me" (Mal. 3:1). Malachi also spoke of a coming of Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord. In the next to the last verse in the Old Testament God says, "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5).<sup>7</sup>

Who is this Elijah that would come? Jesus says in Matthew 11:13-14, "All the prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you can accept it, he himself is Elijah, who was to come." Then in Matthew 17:10-13 Jesus says that there will be two Elijahs. "His disciples asked Him saying, 'Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?' And He answered and said, 'Elijah is coming and will restore all things; but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.' Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist" (Matt. 17:10-13). In other words there is one Elijah who will come and restore all things. This would be the Elijah like prophet of Revelation 11. The other "Elijah already came" (Matt. 17:12) in John the Baptist (Matt. 17:13). How was John the Baptist Elijah? The angel of the Lord said to John's father Zacharias before his birth, "It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1;17). In other words John the Baptist fulfilled the Elijah prophecy because he went forth "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1;17).

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<sup>5</sup> Meredith G. Kline, By Oath Consigned (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 51-52.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 53-54.

Why was John to come? The very last verse of the Old Testament states, "And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse" (Mal. 4:6). The angel of the Lord applies this prophecy to John the Baptist in Luke 1:17, "And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children." John was to warn Israel lest God smite them with a curse.<sup>8</sup>

What is narrated in the gospels of John the Baptist corresponds fully to the role of a messenger of the covenant. His purpose was to declare the Lord's ultimatum of judgment. His message was "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?'" (Matt. 3:7).<sup>9</sup>

John the Baptist placed two alternatives before the Jews of his day: they could repent and enter the kingdom or if they failed to repent they would experience the wrath to come. The word "wrath" is used in the Bible almost exclusively of the judgment of God's covenant lawsuits.<sup>10</sup> So Israel was given the choice of the kingdom or the wrath to come.

John showed the vanity of dependence upon any external relationships - even descent from Abraham.<sup>11</sup> John announced, "Bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance; and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father; for I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham'" (Matt. 3:8-9).

John goes on to say, "And the axe is already laid at the foot of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matt. 3:10). In the Mosaic law the fruit of the trees they planted was not to be eaten the first three years after Israel entered Canaan and then the fourth year all the fruit was to go to the Lord. Only beginning in the fifth year were they to eat the fruit. The Lord had spoken to Moses, saying, "When you enter the land and plant all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as forbidden. Three years it shall be forbidden for you; it shall not be eaten. But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, an offering of praise to the Lord. And in the fifth year you are to eat of its fruit, that its yield may increase for you; I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 19:23-25). In Leviticus 19:23 where the New American Standard Version translates the sentence "you shall count their fruit as forbidden," the word "forbidden" is literally "uncircumcised" as the marginal reading indicates. This is a picture of the trees John the Baptist is referring to. Just as the uncircumcised man was to be cut off from Israel (Gen. 17:14), so the uncircumcised trees were to be cut down and cast

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>10</sup> E. Michael Rusten, "A Critical Evaluation of Dispensational Interpretations of the Book of Revelation" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1977), p. 302-3.

<sup>11</sup> Kline, loc. cit.

into the fire (Matt. 3:10). Israel is here pictured as uncircumcised trees which are about to be cut down by the judgment axe of circumcision and cast into the fire.<sup>12</sup>

#### B. John's Baptism - A Water Ordeal

Since John's mission was one of declaring an ultimatum to Israel, one would expect to see in John's baptism a symbolic form of the threatened judgment ordeal. This turns out to be the case.<sup>13</sup>

We have seen earlier that appeal to the gods for a judicial decision was a standard feature in ancient legal procedure. This was accomplished by trials by ordeal. Varieties of trial by ordeal ranged all the way from an individual's self-maledictory oath with the curse to be executed by the oath deities to wars between nations to settle covenantal disputes with the verdict being rendered by the gods invoked as treaty witnesses. In fact, the principle of ordeal is found in almost every judicial intervention of God in history.<sup>14</sup>

As noted earlier, the most prevalent type of ordeal was by water, and among water ordeals the river ordeal was the most common. The accused would be cast into the river which was typically considered divine. If he began to drown, that indicated that the river god was issuing the verdict of guilty. However if he emerged safely from the river, that denoted his vindication by the river deity.<sup>15</sup>

We saw earlier how Noah's flood was a water ordeal and contained all the features of divine river trials: water was the ordeal element; there was a revelation of the divine verdict; the condemned were killed and the justified delivered; and the justified took possession of the estate of the guilty.<sup>16</sup>

The other memorable water ordeals of the Old Testament were those where Moses and Joshua led Israel through the Red Sea and the Jordan. At the Red Sea where Israel came through the ordeal safely and all the Egyptians drowned, the two-fold outcome of the ordeal process is strikingly exemplified. An even more relevant background to the baptism of John was Israel's passage through the Jordan River under Joshua. There God declared the Israelites the rightful owners of the Promised Land delivering them from the water ordeal. In Psalm 37 the legal pattern of the trial by ordeal of the Jordan with its judicial cutting off (vss. 9, 22, 28, 34, 38) and the inheritance of the land (vss. 9, 11, 22, 29, 34) is pervasive.<sup>17</sup>

Since the most memorable divine judgments in Israel's history were water ordeals and since John's purpose was to deliver God's judgment ultimatum, baptism was a symbolic water

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>15</sup> Tikva Simone Frymer-Kensky, "The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1977), pp. 67ff.

<sup>16</sup> Kline, op. cit., pp. 55-56.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

ordeal, an enactment of the coming Messianic ordeal of judgment. In the Jordan River where once God earlier had declared through a water ordeal that the Promised Land rightly belonged to Israel; He was now requiring the Israelites to declare that they had forfeited their rights to the blessings of the kingdom and their deserving of the wrath to come. Yet John's proclamation was "good news" (Luke 3:18). It was good news because John invited the repentant to avoid the coming divine judgment through a symbolic ordeal in the Jordan and so secure for themselves the verdict of remission of sins.<sup>18</sup>

Further support for the interpretation of baptism as a water ordeal is found in the use of the term "baptism" to describe historical water ordeals. Paul describes the Red Sea ordeal as a baptism (1 Cor. 10:2) and Peter describes Noah's flood as being similar to a baptism (1 Pet. 3:21).<sup>19</sup>

John the Baptist himself uses the term "baptize" of the impending ordeal when the Messiah will "baptize with. . . fire" when "He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:11-12). The One mightier than John would wield his winnowing fork to separate from the kingdom those of the circumcision who by want of Abraham's faith had become uncircumcision and who must therefore be cut off from the congregation of Israel and be cast into the ordeal element of eternal fire.<sup>20</sup>

Thus John's baptism was a symbol of the verdict of acquittal rendered in a judicial ordeal. This is the significance of John's message when "he came. . . preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Luke 3:3). His baptism was a declaration of the verdict of acquittal in the judicial ordeal, picturing that their sins were forgiven on the basis of repentance. John's purpose was through repentance and baptism to secure a remnant who would escape the wrath to come and enter the kingdom.<sup>21</sup>

#### C. Summary

John the Baptist was God's messenger of the Old Covenant to its final generation. His task was not to prepare the world at large for the coming of the Messiah but to summon Israel back to the Lord to whom they had sworn their allegiance at Sinai. He was to do this before God's wrath came and ended the Mosaic kingdom in the flames of judgment.<sup>22</sup>

From the perspective of repentance and faith, John's message was a gracious invitation to the marriage feast of the Suzerain's Son (Matt. 22:1-10).<sup>23</sup>

#### IV. Jesus as Covenant Messenger

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 56-57.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

#### A. The Sending of Messengers

We earlier saw that Malachi 3:1 prophesies the sending of John as Covenant Messenger. Actually two covenant messengers are predicted in Malachi 3:1. There God says, "Behold I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight; behold, he is coming" (Mal. 3:1). The first messenger as we have seen is John the Baptist referred to in the first half of the verse, "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me" (Mal. 3:1a). Then the second messenger is described. "And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple." Then the New American Standard Version reads, "And the messenger of the Covenant." However, as the reading in the margin indicates "even" is an equally good translation for "and." Thus the second half of the verse would read, "And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming" (Mal. 3:1b). In other words there are two covenant messengers prophesied: John the Baptist and Jesus, "the Lord who will suddenly come to His temple" and "in whom you delight" (Mal. 3:1).<sup>24</sup>

#### B. Jesus' Baptism with the Holy Spirit and with Fire

What does John the Baptist say about Jesus? In Matthew 3:11-12 John states, "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." John had offered the two choices of the kingdom (Matt. 3:2) or the wrath to come (Matt. 3:7). Jesus offers the two destinies of garner or Gehenna. Jesus' baptism with the Spirit was an ordeal in very element of divine power in which everyone who receives it is vindicated.<sup>25</sup> Christ's baptism with fire was with the common ordeal element<sup>26</sup> we have discussed before. Malachi had prophesied that the age would end with a fire ordeal with dual effects. Malachi 4:1 states, "'For behold the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze,' says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch." Fire will consume the covenant breakers. However, Malachi 4:2 continues, "But for you who fear My name the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall." To the obedient, the burning sun will bring healing.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>26</sup> Frymer-Kensky, *op. cit.*, p. 13ff.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

Malachi states further in 3:2-3, "Who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire. . . And He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness." The fire of the coming Covenant Lord will refine those who are His people.

All who have been vindicated in the baptism of the Spirit are forever in the ordeal element (Acts 1:8; John 14:16). All those who are found guilty in the fire ordeal spend eternity in the ordeal element, the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15).

### C. Jesus' Own Baptism

We read next in Matthew 3 of the baptism of Jesus. "Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?' But Jesus answering said to him, 'Permit it at this time for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he permitted Him. And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matt. 3:13-17). Jesus in undergoing baptism was offering Himself up to the curse of the covenant. By His baptism Jesus was consecrating Himself to His sacrificial death in the judicial ordeal of the cross where in combat with Satan "through death He . . . render(ed) powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14). The ordeal by combat between Jesus and Satan began with the wilderness temptation immediately after Jesus' baptism and culminated in the crucifixion and resurrection-vindication of Christ. This understanding of Jesus' baptism is seen in His own reference to His coming crucifixion as a baptism: "I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished" (Luke 12:50). Jesus' baptism was appropriately concluded with a divine verdict of justification expressed by God's voice from heaven.<sup>28</sup>

The sufferings of the Christ are pictured as a water ordeal in Psalm 69. In this Psalm, the Messiah prophetically states, "Save me, O God, for the waters have threatened my life. . . I have come into deep waters and a flood overflows me. . . May the flood of water not overflow me and may the deep not swallow me up. . ." (Ps. 69:1, 2, 15).<sup>29</sup>

Jesus' passing through the water ordeal in the Jordan with the others who were being baptized is similar to the Lord's presence with Israel in the pillar of cloud during the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14:19) and in the ark of the covenant during the crossing of the Jordan (Josh. 3:11). The meaning of all these acts of our Covenant Lord is expressed in the promise of Isaiah 43:1-3, "But now, thus says the Lord, your Creator, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel,

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 58-59.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

'Do not fear for I have redeemed you; I have called you by Name; you are mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you.' When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you."<sup>30</sup>

The Hebrew word Messiah and the Greek word Christ both mean "anointed." The coming of the Holy Spirit on Jesus at His baptism was God's anointing Him "with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10:38). The oil with which kings were anointed represented the Holy Spirit. Thus Jesus was anointed not with the symbol but with the Holy Spirit Himself.<sup>31</sup> It is shortly after Jesus' baptism-anointing (Luke 3:21-22) that Jesus begins His public ministry by announcing, "the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel" (Luke 4:18).

#### D. Jesus' Preaching

When Jesus began His public ministry, God's lawsuit with Israel was in its ultimatum phase.<sup>32</sup> Thus His message was the same as John's. John was preaching, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2) and "Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matt. 4:17).

Likewise, since Jesus too was a covenant messenger, He also baptized the repentant through His disciples. John 3:22 states, "After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea and there He was spending time with them and baptizing." The following verse connects this baptism with that of John by saying, "And John also was baptizing. . ." (John 3:23). John 4:2 adds that "Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were" (John 4:2). The significance of Jesus' baptizing was the same as John's. It was a sign of God's ultimatum to Israel. Both covenant messengers were inviting Israel to return to the Lord through repentance and the water ordeal of baptism.<sup>33</sup>

Christ's role as covenant messenger can be seen in who His ministry was to. John 1:11 states, "He came to His own (Israel) but His own received Him not." In Matthew 10:5-6 we read, "These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them, saying, 'Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'" What was their message to be to the lost sheep of the House of Israel? It is the same as covenant messengers John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2) and Jesus (Matt. 4:17). Jesus said to them, "Preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 10:7).

#### E. The Similarities of the Ministries of Jesus and John the Baptist

The ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus as covenant messenger are presented by Matthew as being parallel:

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>31</sup> Steven Barabas, "Anoint," *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 63.

<sup>32</sup> Kline, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

## John the Baptist

John said: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2).

John said to the Pharisees and Sadducees, "You brood of vipers" (Matt. 3:7).

John Said: "Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matt. 3:10).

The people regarded John as a prophet (Matt. 11:9; 14:5).

John was rejected by "this generation" (Matt. 11:16-19).

Herod the tetrarch was responsible for John's death (Matt. 14:1-11).

John was seized (Greek: *krateo*) (Matt. 14:3).

John was bound (Greek *deo*) (Matt. 14:3).

Herod feared the crowds because they held John to be a prophet (Matt. 14:5).

Herod was asked by another to execute John and was grieved to do so (Matt. 14:6-11).

John was buried by his disciples (Matt. 14:12).

## Jesus

Jesus said, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17).

Jesus said to the Pharisees, "You brood of vipers" (Matt. 12:34).

Jesus said: "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matt. 7:10).

The people regarded Jesus as a prophet (Matt. 21:11, 26, 46).

Jesus was rejected by "this generation" (Matt. 11:16-19).

Pilate the governor was responsible for Jesus' death (Matt. 27:1-26).

Jesus was seized (Greek *krateo*) (Matt. 21:46).

Jesus was bound (Greek *deo*) (Matt. 27:2).

The chief priests and Pharisees feared the crowds because they held Jesus to be a prophet (Matt. 21:46).

Pilate was asked by others to execute Jesus and was reluctant to do so (Matt. 27:11-26).

Jesus was buried by a disciple (Matt. 27:57-61).



## F. Jesus' Parables

Jesus gives several parables which illustrate the covenant lawsuit. Against the background of the rejection of John the Baptist, Jesus tells the parable of the vineyard. Jesus says, "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard and put a wall around it and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one and killed another, and stoned a third. Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them" (Matt. 21:33-36). The covenant messengers who were sent to Israel were the prophets.

"But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him." Jesus was of course the son of the lord of the vineyard who was slain. Because Israel had rejected His lordship and ignored His ultimatum, God would inflict on them the curses of the covenant. In fact Jesus as the final covenant messenger-son, was declaring the verdict on Israel as He was telling the parable.<sup>34</sup>

"Jesus asks, 'Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?' They said to Him, 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper season.' Jesus said to them, '. . . therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it' (Matt. 21:40-43).

Who was this "nation" to whom the kingdom taken from Israel would be given? Peter answers that question in 1 Peter 2:9 when he addresses the Gentile church saying, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation." Because of Israel's rejection of the son-heir, the kingdom has been taken from them during this age and given to the Gentile church (cf. Rom. 11:1-27). It is worth noting also that the Greek word for "nation" and "Gentile" is the same.

It is very possible in the parable of the vineyard to discern features of the covenant lawsuit. The discourse is set in the context of a legal conflict between Jesus and the officialdom of Israel over the specific issue of covenant authority. In Matthew 21:23 we read that "when He had come into the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came to Him, as He was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are you doing these things and who gave You this

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 52-53.

authority?" (cf. Mk. 11:28; Lk. 20:2). The parable served to remind them of the benefits bestowed upon them by their covenant Lord: he had planted the vineyard, built a hedge around it, dug the winepress and built the tower. The parable likewise confronted the vassals with the stipulations of the treaty and their failure to present tribute at the appointed time. There is even the interrogative element in Jesus' asking the leaders themselves their own verdict in the case (Matt. 21:40-42). The discourse ends with a declaration of a solemn decree of judgment (Matt. 21:42f.; Mk. 12:10f.; Lk. 20:17f.).<sup>35</sup> Jesus' hearers got the point because we read that "they understood that He was speaking about them" (Matt. 21:46).

Similarly the song of the vineyard in Isaiah 5:1ff. on which Jesus bases His parable is itself structured in the form of a covenant lawsuit. The judicial character of the song is plainly God's summons in verse 3, "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between Me and My vineyard."<sup>36</sup>

The following parable in Matthew 22:1-14 is another covenant lawsuit parable: "Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king, who gave a wedding feast for his son (Jesus). And he sent his slaves (the prophets) to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast (Israel) and they were unwilling to come. Again he sent out other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my oxen and my fatted livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast." But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them. But the king was enraged and sent his armies (the Roman armies in A.D. 67-70) and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire (Jerusalem in A.D. 70).'"

#### G. The Declaration of War on the Covenant Breakers

To read more of the war prophesied in the parable of the wedding feast, we must turn to Luke 21. (Luke 21:5-27 is parallel to Matt. 24:1-31 and Mark 13:1-27.) The previous chapter, Luke 20, contains the covenant lawsuit parable of the vineyard (Lk. 20:1-18). Luke 21 tells of the war which is now a certainty. Luke writes in 21:5-6, "While some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said, 'As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.'"

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

The disciples then asked the question, "Tell us, when will these things be (i.e. the destruction of the temple), and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (Matt. 24:3).

Jesus gave one answer to their two-fold question about the destruction of the temple and about the end of the age. Luke records Jesus' answer as it pertains primarily to the destruction of Jerusalem while Matthew and Mark record Jesus' answer as it pertains to the end of the age. Jesus was able to answer both questions at the same time because events similar to what occurred in A.D. 70 will occur again at the end of the age.

Jesus first describes in Luke 21:8-19 events which led up to A.D. 70. Then He states, "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, they recognize that her desolation is at hand. They let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart and let not those who are in the country enter the city" (Lk. 21:20-21). Luke, writing to Christians, warns them to flee when they see "Jerusalem surrounded by armies" (Lk. 21:20). The church historian Eusebius (c. 265 - c. 339) records that "the whole body. . . of the church at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety there before the war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella."<sup>37</sup> It is not unlikely that this divine revelation was Luke 21:20-21. When they saw Jerusalem surrounded by armies, they fled the city. In the early days of the Roman siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 67, the Roman general Vespasian surrounded the city for many months.<sup>38</sup> However the news of Nero's death resulted in a lifting of the siege.<sup>39</sup> Vespasian himself became Caesar in 69, leaving his son Titus to finish the task of conquering the city. Whether the Christians left before the first surrounding of the city or during the relaxation of the siege is a matter of conjecture.<sup>40</sup> It sounds from Eusebius' statement that they received the revelation before the war and then would have left the city after it had been surrounded the first time.

Jesus then continues, "Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people, and they will fall by the edge of the sword (the curse of being cut off [Gen. 17:14]) and will be led captive until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Lk. 21:32-24). In the parable of the wedding feast

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<sup>37</sup> Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, III.5.

<sup>38</sup> Josephus, War, 4.486-90.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 4.497-98, 501-76.

<sup>40</sup> John Nolland, "Luke," Word Biblical Commentary, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas: Word Books, 1993) 353c:1001.

"the king was enraged (in Greek the verbal form of "wrath")" (Matt. 22:7). As mentioned earlier, wrath speaks of God's judgment on covenant breakers.<sup>41</sup> Paul in writing about the Jews states, "Wrath has come upon them to the utmost" (1 Thess. 2:16). Thus the Gentile age in which we are living is a time of wrath for Israel in which "a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in (the completion of the Gentile church)" (Rom. 11:25).

The culmination of God's wrath upon Israel will be during the three and one-half years of the Great Tribulation for the church. Of that period the Lord says through Jeremiah "Alas for that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob's distress, but he will be saved out of it" (Jer. 30:7). Daniel prophesies of this same time in 12:1, "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued." What is interesting about both these verses is that both of them speak of a judgment on Israel which will be the worst ever. That means it will be worse than the judgment of the wilderness wanderings where all but two of the men over twenty years of age died under God's judgment. It will also be worse than the holocaust when six million Jews died.

What exactly will happen? According to Revelation 12:6 and 14, Israel will flee into the wilderness for three and one-half years before the second coming. The reason is that Satan is cast down to the earth (Rev. 12:9-10) and he gives his authority to the antichrist (Rev. 13:4) who then invades Jerusalem and desecrates a temple in existence at that time (Matt. 24:15; Dan. 9:27; cf. Rev. 12:13) causing the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea to flee (Matt. 24:16-20). Israel flees into the wilderness where God protects her "from the presence of the serpent" (Rev. 12:14).

Though protected by God from Satan, Israel is under God's wrath and He is executing the curses of the Old Covenant (Deut. 27:15-26; 28:15-68) upon His rebellious people. What will happen in the wilderness will be a repeat of Israel's first wilderness experience (Ezek. 20:10-13). There God says, "I resolved to pour out My wrath on them in the wilderness" (Ezek. 20:13). As a result only two, Joshua and Caleb, of those twenty years of age and older when they left Egypt entered into the Promised Land. God says of Israel in the future, "I shall bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered. . . and with wrath poured out;

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<sup>41</sup> Rusten, *loc. cit.*

and I shall bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there will I enter into judgment with you face to face. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I enter into judgment with you," declares the Lord God (Ezek. 20:34-36). He continues, "And I shall make you pass under the rod, and I shall bring you into the land of the covenant, and I shall purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I shall bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel" (Ezek. 20:37-38).

The Jews that survive this future wilderness experience will be converted at the Second Coming of Christ. Zachariah 12:10 is the great Old Testament prophecy of the conversion of Israel and Revelation 1:7 and Matthew 24:30 quote Zachariah 12:10 and apply it to the Second Coming.

Will the kingdom be restored to Israel? In Jesus' forty day post-resurrection ministry, he taught his disciples on two subjects, "the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3) and the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 1:5). The disciples, trying to understand the timing of these two events, asked Jesus, "Lord, is it at this time (the time of the baptism of the Spirit) You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) Jesus first answered their question regarding the time of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. In Acts 1:7 Jesus answers, "It is not for you to know the times or epochs which the Father has fixed in His own authority." What is the date which no one knows except God the Father? It is the Second Coming of Christ (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32) when the Jews will literally "look on me whom they have pierced and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son" (Zach. 12:10). In the language of Romans 11, this is when "the natural branches (will) be grafted into their own olive tree" (Rom. 11:25) and "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26a). The proof text for the salvation of all Israel? "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob" (Rom. 11:26b). All Israel will be converted at the Second Coming and the kingdom will be restored to them at that point at the beginning of the millennium.

In light of all this, let us return to our point of departure, the wedding feast parable of Matthew 22. This period of wrath began with the invasion of the Roman armies in A.D. 67. The result of the siege of Jerusalem was that the Roman "armies. . . set their city on fire" (Matt. 22:7). This was the baptism of judgment-fire upon Israel. Israel was found guilty in the fire ordeal and their city went up in smoke. Those who escaped were those baptized by the Holy

Spirit who had been declared justified in the fire ordeal of Pentecost when tongues of fire came upon their heads (Acts 2:3).

The parable of the wedding feast continues on as the parable of the vineyard by describing the kingdom being given to the Gentiles. The king says, "Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast. And those slaves went out into the streets, and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests" (Matt. 22:9-10).

#### H. Summary

Just as John the Baptist brought the ultimatum of god's judgment to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, so did Jesus. Just as John the Baptist was rejected and killed (Matt. 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29; Luke 9:7-9) so the Son-Covenant Messenger was also killed (Matt. 21:38).

When the final two covenant messengers were thus rejected and killed, God's covenant lawsuit went into its second phase, that of a declaration of war on the covenant breakers. God's wrath will continue to rest upon Israel until it is culminated in "the time of Jacob's distress" (Jer. 30:7).

# Chapter Ten

## Jesus as the New Moses

For the Jews of Jesus' day, Moses was the single most important figure in the history of Judaism.<sup>1</sup> It was Moses who had led Israel out of Egypt and had given them the law upon which all of life was based. It is very significant that a major theme of the New Testament is its presentation of Jesus as the New Moses.

### I. Matthew's Presentation of Jesus as the New Moses

#### A. Matthew 1:18 - 2:23 - The Birth and Infancy Narrative

##### 1. Introduction to the Theme: "Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Matt. 2:25)

Matthew's quotation of Hosea 11:1 suggests that in Jesus the exodus from Egypt is repeated and completed. This is to alert the reader to the parallelism between Jesus and Moses.<sup>2</sup>

##### 2. The Names of the Family

The personal names of Jesus' family draw the reader's attention to the first exodus story. Joseph, Jesus' father, shares his name with the patriarch who is referred to in Exodus 1:8, "Now a new king arose over Egypt; who did not know Joseph." Jesus' mother shares the name of Moses' sister Miriam. Jesus Himself has the same name as Joshua, Moses' successor, who like Jesus is presented as a second Moses:

Moses	Joshua
Moses sends spies into the land (Num. 13).	Joshua sends spies into the land (Josh. 2).
Moses' song predicts, "All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away; Terror and dread fall upon them (Ex. 15:15-16).	Rahab says, "The terror of you has fallen on us and. . . all the inhabitants of the land melted away" (Josh. 2:9).
Under Moses Israel celebrates the Passover and shortly thereafter eats manna (Ex. 12).	Under Joshua Israel celebrates the Passover and shortly thereafter the manna dries up (Josh. 5:10-13).
The angel of the Lord appears to Moses and says, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground" (Ex. 3:5).	The captain of the Lord's host appears to Joshua and says, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy" (Josh. 5:15).
Moses' successfully intercedes for sinful Israel (Deut. 9).	Joshua successfully intercedes for sinful Israel (Josh. 7).
When Moses, with the staff of God, holds up his hands, the victory goes to Israel (Ex. 17).	When Joshua stretches out his hand with his javelin, the victory goes to Israel (Josh. 8).
Moses delivers a farewell speech which includes reference to his old age (Deut. 31:2), promises future victory over peoples of the land (Deut. 31:3-5), calls for obedience to the Torah (Deut. 31:12-13) and sets forth the alternative of serving God or other gods and the consequent blessings and curses (Deut. 31:15-20).	Joshua delivers a farewell speech which includes reference to his old age (Josh. 23:2), promises future victory over the peoples of the land (Josh. 23:4-5), calls for obedience to the Torah (Josh. 23:6), and sets forth the alternative of serving God or other gods and the consequent blessings and curses (Josh. 23:6-16).
Moses mediates a covenant; the people say, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (Ex. 24:7).	Joshua mediates a covenant; the people say, "We will serve the Lord our God and obey His voice" (Josh. 24:24). <sup>3</sup>

### 3. ***Jesus' Flight to Egypt***

The birth of Jesus and the flight to Egypt is presented as being parallel to the birth of Moses:

#### **Jesus**

Jesus is born (Matt. 2:1).

“Herod is going to search for the Child” (Matt. 2:13) to “slay (Greek *anaireo*) Him” (Matt. 2:16) so Joseph “took the Child and. . . departed” (Greek *anachoreo*) (Matt. 2:14).

Herod sent to Bethlehem and slew all the boys of two years of age and under (Matt. 2:16).

Herod died (Matt. 2:19).

#### **Moses**

Moses is born (Ex. 2:1-2).

The Pharaoh sought to slay (Greek *anaireo*) Moses so Moses departed (Greek *anachoreo*) (Ex. 2:15 LXX).

The Pharaoh commanded that all the boys born to the Hebrews be cast into the Nile (Ex. 1:22).

The Pharaoh died (Ex. 2:23).<sup>4</sup>

### 4. ***The Return from Egypt***

The account of Jesus' return from Egypt is parallel to Exodus 4:19-20 in the Septuagint:

#### **Matt. 2:19-21**

But when  
Herod was dead  
behold an angel of  
the Lord appeared  
in a dream  
to Joseph in Egypt  
“Arise and take the child  
and His mother and  
go into the land of Israel for those who sought  
the Child's life  
are dead.”  
And he arose and took  
  
the Child  
and His mother  
  
and came into  
the land of Israel

#### **Ex. 4:19-20 (LXX)**

After these many days  
the king of Egypt died  
  
The Lord said  
  
to Moses in Median  
“Go back to Egypt,  
for all those seeking  
your life  
have died.”  
Moses, taking  
his wife  
and his children  
  
mounted them on asses,  
and returned to  
Egypt (Heb: land of Egypt).

- Particularly interesting is the plural in Matthew 2:20, “Those who sought the Child's life are dead,” since Matthew 4:1-11 Herod is the only apparent antecedent. It could be referring to Herod's henchmen (Matt. 2:16)



but it is also possible that Matthew retained the plural from Exodus 4:19 so that the parallel with Moses would be unmistakable.<sup>5</sup> In both passages, the redeemer returns from exile to his place of ministry.

- The overall parallel is as follows

Moses, then Jesus, went into exile.

Moses, then Jesus, was in exile until the king seeking his life had died, an event supernaturally communicated<sup>6</sup>.

Moses, then Jesus, returned from exile with his family.<sup>7</sup>

## ***B. The Temptation Story***

Jesus fasted for forty days (Matt. 4:1) just as Moses had (Ex. 34:28). The fact that Matthew records that Jesus fasted “forty days and forty nights” is also an allusion to Moses. In the Old Testament the expression “forty days and forty nights” is only used of Noah’s flood (Gen. 7:4), Moses’ time on Mount Sinai (Ex. 24:18; 34:28; Deut. 9:9, 11, 18, 25; 10:10), and Elijah’s fast (1 Kgs. 19:8).<sup>8</sup>

The temptation of Jesus recapitulated the experience of Israel in the wilderness. Jesus’ forty days in the wilderness were the typological equivalent of Israel’s forty years. Just as Israel was tempted by hunger (Ex. 16:2-8), was tempted to put God to the test (Ex. 17:1-3; cf. Deut. 6:16) and was tempted by idolatry (Ex. 32); so too was Jesus (Matt. 4:1-11). Where Israel failed, Jesus was victorious. All three of Jesus’ quotations in response to Satan are from Moses (Deut. 6:13; 6:16; 8:3).<sup>9</sup>

There is another allusion to Moses in Matthew 4:8 where “the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.” This is reminiscent of Moses going to the top of Mount Pisgah and seeing the kingdom land he would not enter (Num. 27:12-14; Deut. 3:27; 32:48-52; 34:1-4). In both scenes a supernatural figure (God/Satan) shows a hero (Moses/Jesus) the entirety of a realm (the Promised Land/all the kingdoms of the world) but the hero does not then enter or inherit it. There are also verbal parallels between Matt. 4:8-9 and the Septuagint of Deut. 34:1-4:

### **Matthew 4:8-9**

“And showed Him  
all the kingdoms” (vs. 8)  
“all these will I give You” (vs.9)

### **Deuteronomy 34:1-4**

“And. . . showed him  
all the land” (vs. 1)  
“I will give it” (vs. 4)

## **C. Matt. 10 - Jesus Choosing the Twelve and Giving them His Authority**

Jesus chose the twelve (Matt. 19:1-4) as Moses had chosen twelve leaders of the twelve tribes (Num. 13:2-3).<sup>10</sup>

As Jesus gives the disciples his authority and sends them out, it is interesting to note how the disciples experience is to mirror that of Jesus:

<b>Disciples</b>	<b>Jesus</b>
They are to heal every disease and every infirmity (Matt. 10:1)	He heals every disease and every infirmity (Matt. 4:23)
They are not to go to the Samaritans (Matt. 10:6)	He does not go to the Samaritans (Matt. 15:24)
They are to preach that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 10:7)	He preaches that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17)
They are to cast out demons (Matt. 10:5)	He casts out demons (Matt. 9:32-33, etc.)
They are to heal lepers (Matt. 10:8)	He heals lepers (Matt. 11:5)
They are to raise the dead (Matt. 10:8)	Jesus raises the dead (Matt. 11:5)
They will be handed over to the Sanhedrin (Matt. 10:12)	Jesus is handed over to the Sanhedrin (Matt. 26:57-68)
They will be dragged before governors (Matt. 10:18)	Jesus is taken before the governor (Matt. 27:1-2, 11-6)
They will be called Beelzebul (Matt. 10:25)	Jesus is called Beelzebul (Matt. 9:34; 10:25) <sup>11</sup>

## **D. Matthew 14:15-21 - Provision of Good in Wilderness**

Just as Moses went out into the wilderness (Greek *eremos*) and there through him God miraculously provided food for the multitudes (Ex. 16:13-36 LXX) so Jesus went into the wilderness (Greek *eremos*) (Matt. 14:15) and miraculously fed the multitude (Matt. 14:16-21).<sup>12</sup> The Greek word *eremos* translated “wilderness” is used in the Septuagint in Exodus 16:1, 3, 10, 14, 32 and also in the accounts of the feeding of the 5,000 (Matt. 14:13, 15; Mk. 6:31, 32, 35; Luke 9:12). Mark in particular emphasizes the wilderness theme, using *eremos* three times.

## **E. Matthew 11:25-30 - The Great Thanksgiving**

### **1. Deuteronomy 34:10-12**

Jesus' statement in Matthew 11:27, "No one knows the Son, except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son" is reminiscent of Deuteronomy 34:10, "No prophet has risen in Israel like Moses whom the Lord knew face to face." Obviously what is spoken of Moses is true of God the Son to an infinitely greater degree.<sup>13</sup>

### **2. Exodus**

Matthew 11:25-30 has several parallels to Exodus:

- a. In Matthew 11:25-30 Jesus; declaration of mutual knowledge is made in prayer, while in Exodus 33:12-13 it is likewise in prayer that Moses confesses God's knowledge of him and his desire to know God.<sup>14</sup>
- b. Both Matthew 11:25-30 and Exodus 33:12-13 introduce a promise of rest. In fact the end of Exodus 33:14 "And He said, 'My presence shall go with you, and I will give rest' (in the Septuagint: *kai katapauso hymas*) is the closest parallel in the Septuagint to the last clause of Matthew 11:28, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Greek: *kago anapauso hymas*).<sup>15</sup>
- c. According to Numbers 12:3, "Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth." Then in Numbers 12:8 God said to Aaron and Miriam of Moses, "With him I speak mouth to mouth, even openly and not in dark sayings, and he beholds the form of the Lord." This same joining of meekness with intimate knowledge of God is found in Matthew 11:25-30 where after speaking of His reciprocal knowledge with God, (Matt. 11:27) Jesus says, "For I am gentle and humble in heart" (Matt. 11:29).<sup>16</sup>
- d. Jesus' words in Matthew 11:27 "nor does anyone know the Father except the Son" are related to God's statement in Exodus 33:20, "No man can see Me and live."<sup>17</sup> Tertullian drew this connection, "With regard to the Father, the very gospel. . . will testify that He was never visible, according to the word of Christ: 'No one knoweth the Father, save the Son.' For even in the Old Testament He had declared, 'No man shall see me and live.'"<sup>18</sup> This is very similar to John 1:18, "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." The previous verse in John 1:17 contrasts Jesus and Moses, reinforcing the Mosaic interpretation of Matthew 11:25-30.<sup>19</sup>
- e. Since in Matthew 11:25 Jesus had said, "I praise Thee O Father. . . that Thou didst hide **these things** from the wise and intelligent and didst reveal them to babes," in Matthew 11:27 when Jesus says, "All things have been

handed over to Me by My Father,” the “all things” (Matt. 11:27) would refer to the knowledge of “these things” mentioned in verse 25. (Because the Son not only has the knowledge [Matt. 11:27a] but also the authority to choose to whom He will reveal the knowledge of the Father [Matt. 11:27b], the “all things” may include authority as well as knowledge.)<sup>20</sup> This would seem to be another allusion to the knowledge which Moses received when speaking to God “mouth to mouth, even openly and not in dark sayings” (Num. 12:8).<sup>21</sup>

- f. In Matthew 11:29 Jesus invites His hearers to “take My yoke upon you.” The ‘yoke’ was associated above all else with the Torah (Jer. 5:5; Acts 15:10; Gal. 5:1). The disciple of Jesus is invited not to take the yoke of the Torah of Moses but rather that of Jesus the second Moses (Matt. 5:21-7:6).<sup>22</sup> The yoke of Jesus is the fulfillment of the yoke of Moses (Matt. 5:17-18). Moses is Jesus’ prophetic forerunner and typological predecessor.<sup>23</sup>
- g. The two major clauses of Matthew 11:27 are in an unusual order: “No one knows the Son, except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son.” But in Exodus 33:12-13 the statement of God’s knowledge of Moses precedes Moses’ petition to know God. God’s statement to Moses, “I have known you by name” (Ex. 33:12) introduces Moses’ prayer, “Let me know Thy ways, that I may know Thee” (Ex. 33:13). In other words, Matthew’s order corresponds to that of Exodus 33:12-13, paralleling once again Jesus and Moses.<sup>24</sup>
- h. In Matthew 11:29b Jesus says, “Learn from Me.” In Judaism one “learned” Torah (Psalm 119:71, 73). In Matthew one takes Jesus’ yoke and learns from Him. Jesus was identified with His New Torah/commandments. The Greco Roman world was familiar with the idea of the king as living law. The concept of king as living law is very similar to what the Jews were doing with Moses when they used “Moses” as a designation for the Pentateuch (Luke 16:29; 24:27; Acts 15:21; 26:22; 2 Cor. 3:15) making Moses the living Torah. Once again Jesus is pictured as having a similar role to Moses.<sup>25</sup>
- i. In Matthew 11:28 Jesus addresses “all who work to exhaustion (NASV margin) and are heavy-laden.” The situation of the Israelites in Exodus 1:11-14 was that they were working to exhaustion and heavy laden until Moses delivered them. Thus Jesus in Matthew 11:28 is promising to do what Moses had done, to deliver the weary and heavy laden.<sup>26</sup>
- j. The verb used in Matthew 11:27 for the transmission of revelation from the Father to the Son is *paradidomi*, “all things **have been handed** to Me by My Father.” This verb and its simple form *didomi* were in certain contexts

technical terms for the transmission of Torah and were both used for the handing over of the law to Moses and his handing it on to others (e.g. the Septuagint of Deut. 10:4). In early Christian art, presumably based on the Jewish model, the giving of the law to Moses is regularly pictured as a hand with a scroll being extended from heaven.<sup>27</sup>

### **F. Matthew 12:15-21 - The Servant**

According to the longest quotation of the Old Testament in Matthew, Isaiah 42:1-4, Jesus is “My servant.” Jesus fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecies of the coming suffering servant.<sup>28</sup>

In the Old Testament the title “servant” is used of Moses more than any other individual. Forty times Moses is referred to by that appellation. For example, in Exodus 14:31 “They believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses.”

### **G. Matthew 12:38; 16:1 - The Demand for a Sign**

In Matthew 12:38 “some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign (Greek: *semeion*) from You.” In Matthew 16:1 “the Pharisees and Sadducees came up and testing Him asked Him to show them a sign (Greek: *semeion*) from heaven.” In both cases Jesus had performed earlier miracles and would do so again. However, the unbelief of His enemies continued and in the end judgment fell upon them (Matt. 12:41-42, 45).<sup>29</sup>

There is a similar situation in Moses’ interaction with Pharaoh. In Exodus 7:8-9 God said to Moses and Aaron, “When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, ‘Work a miracle (Septuagint; *semeion e teras*), then you shall say. . .” In fact Moses wrought many signs but Pharaoh’s heart was hardened. Pharaoh disbelieved his own eyes and as a result judgment fell on the first born of the land and on his army in the Red Sea.<sup>30</sup>

A few verses before Matthew 12:38, 12:27 records that Jesus challenged the Pharisees by referring to the exorcisms of others, “If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out?” Similarly several of Moses’ miracles were successfully imitated by Pharaoh’s magicians. The parallel is all the more interesting in that the ten plagues were attacks on the gods of Egypt (cf. Ex. 12:12)<sup>31</sup> and the gods of the nations are demons.<sup>32</sup>

Both Matthew 12:39 and 16:4 contain the phrase, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign.” The “generation” of Moses was “evil” (Num. 32:13; Deut. 1:35) and faithless (which is the sense of “adulterous” in the synoptic gospels, cf. Deut. 32:20). Likewise Jesus’ reference to “an unbelieving and perverted generation” (Greek: *genea . . . diestrommene*) in Matthew 17:17 (cf. Phil. 2:15) is based upon the “perverse and crooked generation”

(Septuagint: *genea*. . . *diestrommene*) of Deuteronomy 32:5. Jesus thus is comparing the rebellion of the Jews of His generation to the Jews of Moses' generation.<sup>33</sup> In both cases most of that generation were to die under God's wrath (Num. 14:29; Luke 22:20-24).

## **H. Matthew 14:13-21; 15:29-39 - The Multiplication Miracles**

There are several allusions in the multiplication miracles to Moses:

1. Jesus multiplied bread and manna was identified as a sort of bread (Deut. 8:3; Neh. 9:15; John 6:31-34).<sup>34</sup>
2. In Matthew 14:13-21 Jesus and the disciples cross the sea to a wilderness location and then the hungry are fed. In the Pentateuch Moses and the Israelites cross the Red Sea (Ex. 14:21-22), wander in the wilderness (Deut. 8:2) and there are fed (Deut. 8:3).<sup>35</sup>
3. Manna fell in the evening (Num. 11:9) and Jesus fed the crowd "when it was evening" (Matt. 14:15).<sup>36</sup>
4. Like Matthew's two similar bread feeding stories, the Pentateuch contains two separate accounts of the miracle of the manna (Ex. 16; Num. 11) which would not have been perceived by first century Jews as doublets.<sup>37</sup>
5. In both Matthew 14:21 and 15:38 we read, "And there were about five/four thousand men who ate, aside from women and children." According to Exodus 12:37 the number in the wilderness was "about six hundred thousand men on foot *lebad mittap*." The Hebrew meaning of these last two words is "besides women and children." Similarly in Numbers 11:21, an exasperated Moses wondering how he is going to feed the people observed that "the people among whom I am are numbered 600,000 (men) on foot. . ." Thus Matthew followed Moses' method of numbering the people in the wilderness by counting only the men.<sup>38</sup>
6. Matthew 15:29-39 contains allusions to the Septuagint of Psalm 107:4-9<sup>39</sup> which refers to the wilderness wanderings of Israel.<sup>40</sup> The Psalmist writes, "They wandered in the wilderness **in a desert region** (LXX<sup>41</sup>: *ente eremo*; cf. Matt. 15:33, "in a desolate place," Greek: *en eremia*). . . He led them also by a straight way (LXX: *gis odov*; cf. Matt. 15:32 "on the way," Greek: *en te odo*). . . For He has **satisfied** (LXX: *echortase*; cf. Matt. 15:37 "were satisfied," Greek: *echortasthesan*) the thirsty soul, and the hungry soul He has filled with good things" (Ps. 107:4-9).<sup>42</sup>
7. The prologue to the feeding of the four thousand is similar to that of the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 4:23 - 5:1

He went up on the mountain” (5:1)  
“after He sat down” (5:1)  
“great multitudes” (4:25)  
gathered for the following episode  
“and He healed them” (4:24)  
The distinction between the disciples and the  
crowd (5:1)

Matthew 15:29-32

having gone up to the mountain” (15:29)  
“He was sitting there” (15:29)  
“great multitudes” (15:30)  
gathered for the following episode  
“and He healed them” (15:30)  
The distinction between the disciples and the  
crowd (15:32)<sup>43</sup>

Since in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus is pictured as the New Moses who goes up on the Mountain as the first Moses had done on Mount Sinai, the similarity of the language between the prologues of these two incidents would be picturing Jesus as a Moses-like figure in Matthew 15 as well.<sup>44</sup>

8. In Matthew’s Hebrew Christian world the exodus from Egypt, the Lord’s Supper and the Messianic banquet were seen not as three isolated events but as interrelated. The exodus and the meal with God of Exodus 24 had been typologically recapitulated in the Lord’s Supper and the Lord’s Supper was a foretaste of the Messianic banquet following the second coming. They were superimposed images and all three reproduced a fundamental Jewish pattern of redemption, bread and covenant. Thus if Matthew 14:13 -21 and 15:29-39 which anticipate the Lord’s Supper and the messianic banquet also have points of contact with God’s giving manna in the time of Moses, this is but what would be expected. It was very natural for events which anticipated the Lord’s Supper and the messianic banquet to be linked also to the exodus.<sup>45</sup>

***I. Matthew 17:1-8 - The Transfiguration***

Eusebius (c. 265-c. 339), the first church historian, noted the parallel between Moses on Mount Sinai and Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration:

When Moses descended from the mountain, his face was seen to be full of glory; for it is written: “And Moses descending from the mountain did not know that the appearance of the skin of his face was glorified while he spoke to him. And Aaron and all the elders of Israel saw Moses, and the appearance of the skin of his face was glorified” (Ex. 34:29). In the same way, only more grandly our savior led his disciples “to a very high mountain, and he was transfigured before them, and his face shone as the sun, and his facegarments were white like the light” (Matt. 17:2).<sup>46</sup>

## 1. The Transfiguration in Mark and Exodus

As background to understanding the allusions to Moses in Matthew, it is interesting first to compare Mark's account of the transfiguration to Exodus. There are in fact a number of parallels between Mark 9:2-10 and Exodus 24 and 34. Both Exodus and Matthew refer to:

- a. a high mountain (Ex. 24:12, 15-18; 34:3; Mark 9:2 cf. Matthew 17:1),<sup>47</sup>
- b. a cloud descends and overshadows them (Ex. 24:12, 15-18; 34:5; Mark 9:7; cf. Matt. 17:5),<sup>48</sup>
- c. a voice from the cloud (Ex. 24:16; Mark 9:7; cf. Matt. 17:5),<sup>49</sup>
- d. the radiance of the central figure (Ex. 34:29-30, 35; Mark 9:2-3; cf. Matt. 17:2).<sup>50</sup>
- e. the fear of those who were witnesses (Ex. 34:29-30; Mark 9:6; cf. Matt. 17:6)<sup>51</sup>
- f. the presence of a special group of three (Ex. 24:1; Mark 9:2; cf. Matt. 17:1)<sup>52</sup>
- g. occurrence after six days (Ex. 24:15; Mark 9:2; cf. Matt. 17:1).<sup>53</sup>

The expression "Listen to him" (Mark 9:7 cf. Matt. 17:5) is an allusion to Deuteronomy 18:15 confirming that Jesus is the prophesied Prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15-18; cf. Acts 3:22-23; 7:37).<sup>54</sup> In addition, Moses and Elijah were the only individuals who spoke with God on Mount Sinai (Ex. 24:9-18; 34:2-28; 1 Kings 19:8-18). ("Horeb, the Mountain of God" [1 Kings 19:8] where Elijah met God is to be identified with Mount Sinai).<sup>55</sup>

## 2. The Transfiguration in Matthew and Exodus

Not only does Matthew include all of Mark's allusions to Exodus but adds to them: Moses is given the honor of being named before Elijah (Matt. 9:3; cf. Mark 9:4). Matthew indicates that Jesus' "face shone like the sun" (Matt. 9:2) like "the skin of (Moses') face shone" when He descended from Sinai (Ex. 34:29-35).<sup>56</sup> Only Matthew of the synoptic gospel writers indicates that the cloud was "bright" (Matt. 17:5), a detail alluding to the shekinah glory, the cloud of God's presence in which He appeared to Israel.<sup>57</sup>

Matthew adds the phrase "in whom I am well pleased" thereby citing Isaiah 42:1 identifying Jesus as the servant of the Lord,<sup>58</sup> the term "servant" being applied to Moses a total of forty times.<sup>59</sup> The



explanation of all these differences between Mark and Matthew is that Matthew was directing his readers' attention to Moses.

## **J. Matthew 21:1-17 - The Arrival in Jerusalem**

There are a number of factors identifying Moses with Jesus as He made His triumphal entry into the city:

1. In addition to being acclaimed as king at Jesus' triumphal entry (Matt. 21:5), He is also identified as "the prophet" (Matt. 21:11). "The multitudes were saying, 'This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee'" (Matt. 21:11). There is a Mosaic background to this expression. The definite article is used in Matthew 21:11 with the word "prophet." Jesus is not "a prophet," but "the prophet." He was "of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world: (John 6:14) who had been prophesied as a Mosaic-like prophet (Deut. 18:15, 18). Moses in many ways had a royal role (cf. Ex. 19:6) in addition to being a prophet.<sup>60</sup>
2. Matthew 21:4-5 states, quoting Zechariah 9:9, "Now this took place that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 'Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'" Rabbinic tradition drew a connection between Exodus 4:20 ("So Moses took his wife and his sons and mounted them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the staff of God in his hand.") and Zechariah 9:9 ("Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey").<sup>61</sup> In the Midrash on Ecclesiastes, the Midrash being textual interpretations on the Old Testament by rabbis between 100 B.C. and A.D. 300,<sup>62</sup> we read: Rabbi Berekiah said in the name of Rabbi Isaac: "As the first redeemer was, so shall the latter Redeemer be. What is stated of the former redeemer? And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass (Ex. 4:20). Similarly it will be with the latter redeemer, as it is stated, Lowly and riding upon an ass (Zech. 9:9) (Ecclesiastes Rabbah 1:9).

In light of this one can interpret Zechariah's prophecy as establishing Jesus as a Mosaic Messiah.<sup>63</sup>

3. Exodus 4:20 was alluded to in the infancy narrative of Jesus (Matt. 2:21) indicating a typological correlation between the Messiah and Moses.<sup>64</sup>
4. Matthew 21:5 describes Jesus as “gentle” or “meek” which along with the same description in Matthew 11:29 is an allusion to Moses, the most “humble. . . man who was on the face of the earth.”<sup>65</sup>
5. Matthew 21:1-17 is in many ways a similar passage to John 6 where the comparison between Jesus and Moses is explicit. There the people proclaim Jesus as “the prophet” (John 6:14) and try to make Him king (John 6:15) while Jesus acts in ways that remind one of Moses. Likewise in Matthew 21:1-17 the multitudes conclude that Jesus “is the prophet” (vs. 11) and shall be king (vs. 9 cf. vs. 15). Both John and Matthew interpret Jesus to be the prophet-king like Moses.<sup>66</sup>

## **II. Luke’s Presentation of Jesus as the New Moses**

In Luke-Acts, Luke presents Jesus as the Second Moses:

## Jesus

In Jesus God “visited” (Grk *episkeptomai*) the people of Israel (Lk. 1:69; 7:16)

Jesus the “Child” (Grk *paidon*) grew in “wisdom” (Grk *sophia*) (Lk. 2:40, 52)

Jesus was transfigured on a mountain as God spoke from a cloud (Lk. 9:28-36)

Jesus experienced an *exodus* (Lk. 9:31)

Jesus belonged to a generation that was “unbelieving” (Grk *apistos*) and “perverted” (Grk *diastrepho*) (Lk. 9:41)

Jesus chose seventy men to share His missionary burden (Lk. 10:1-17)

Jesus was sent (Grk *apostello*) by God (Lk. 10:16)

Jesus cast out demons by “the finger of God” (Lk. 11:20)

Jesus’ opponents accused Him, saying, “We found this man misleading (Grk *diastrepho*) our nation (Lk. 23:2)

Jesus came to “redeem (Grk *lutroo*) Israel” (Lk. 24:21)

“These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that all things which are written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled” (Lk. 24:44)

Forty days passed between Jesus’ exodus in Jerusalem and His departure which inaugurated the new age of the church (Acts. 1:3)

Jesus did “signs and wonders” (Grk *semeia kai terata*) (Acts 2:22; 4:30)

Jesus was “disowned” (Grk *arneomai*) by His own people (Acts 3:13-14)

Jesus was holy (Grk *dikaios*) and righteous (Grk *archegos*) (Acts 3:14-15)

Peter said, “Moses said, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brethren;” that prophet is Jesus (Acts 7:37-38)

## Moses

Moses determined to “visit” (Grk *episkeptomai*) his people (Acts 7:23)

Moses was “instructed” (Grk *paideuo*) in all the “wisdom” (Grk *sophia*) of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22)

Moses was transfigured on a mountain as God spoke from a cloud (Ex. 34:1-35)

Moses led the *exodus* from Egypt (Ex. 19:1 LXX)

Moses belonged to a generation that was “without faith” (Grk. *ouk estin pistis*) and “perverted” (Grk. *diastripho*) (Deut. 32:20 LXX)

Moses chose seventy men to “share the burden of the people” (Num. 11:16-17, 24-25 LXX)

Moses was sent (Grk. *apostello*) by God (Acts 7:34-35)

Moses did his miracles by “the finger of God” (Ex. 8:19 LXX)

Pharaoh spoke to Moses and Aaron: “Why do you draw the people away (Grk. *diastrepho*) from their work (Ex. 5:4 LXX)

Moses was a “redeemer” (Grk. *lutrotes*) (Acts 7:35)

“These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel across the Jordan. . .” (Deut. 1:1)

Forty years passed between the exodus from Egypt and Moses’ death after which Israel entered the promised land (Deut. 29:5, etc.)

Moses did “wonders and signs” (Grk *terata kai semeia*) (Acts 7:36)

Moses was “disowned” (Grk. *arneomai*) by his own people (Acts 7:35)

Moses was ruler (Grk. *archon*) and judge (Grk. *dikostes*) (Acts 7:27, 35)

Moses said, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brethren (Deut. 18:15)<sup>67</sup>

### III. John's Presentation of Jesus as the New Moses

John uses many Mosaic motifs in his gospel: Jesus is the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29), the passover sacrifice killed at the hour of the passover slaughter (John 19:14). Like the passover sacrifice, He pours out His blood (John 19:34) although not a bone of Him is broken (John 19:33, 36 cf. Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12). He is given sour wine "upon a hyssop" (John 19:29; cf. Ex. 12:22). Jesus is also identified with the miraculous gifts God gave to Israel in the wilderness, He is manna, water and guiding light (cf. Neh. 9:12, 15; Ps. 105:39-41). In John 6 He is the bread from heaven, in John 7 living water and in John 8, the light of the world. "The law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized in Jesus Christ. No man (not even Moses in Exodus 33) has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father He has explained Him" (John 1:17-18). "Moses in the law. . . wrote" (John 1:45) of a coming Prophet (Deut. 18:15, 18) and even the crowds recognized that Jesus was "the prophet who is to come into the world" (John 6:14-15 cf. 5:46; 7:40). "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3:14). "It is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven. . . for the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world" (John 6:32-33). According to the Septuagint of Numbers 16:28, Moses said, "By this will you know that (Grk *gnosethe hoti*) the Lord has sent me to perform all these works, that not myself (Grk. *ap emautou*) have I done them." Jesus similarly said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that (Grk. *gvosethe hofi*) I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative (Grk. *ap emautou*) (John 8:28-29).<sup>68</sup>

### IV. Hebrews' Presentation of Jesus as the New Moses

Hebrews 3 states, "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were spoken later; but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house" (Heb. 3:1-6). There is a twofold comparison: Jesus is like Moses and Jesus is greater than Moses. This is seen particularly in Hebrews 8 where the new covenant is compared to the old. "Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for 'See, He says, that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.' But now He (Jesus) has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant,

which has been enacted on better promises. For if the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second” (Heb. 8:5-7).<sup>69</sup>

## V. Peter’s Presentation of Jesus as the New Moses

First Peter 1:13-2:10 contains the main themes of the Exodus:

<u>I Peter</u>	<u>Exodus</u>
Therefore, <b>gird up the loins of your mind</b> (1:13 NASV Margin)	with <b>your loins girded</b> (12:11)
Do not be conformed to the to the former lusts (1:14)	Would that we had died by the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full. (16:3)
Knowing that you <b>were not redeemed</b> With perishable things like silver or gold from your futile life inherited from your forefathers, (1:18)	Thou hast led the people whom Thou <b>hast redeemed</b> (15:13)
but with <b>the precious blood</b> , as of a <b>lamb unblemished</b> and spotless, <i>the blood</i> of Christ (1:19)	When I see <b>the blood</b> , I will pass over you (12:13) Your <b>lamb</b> shall be an <b>unblemished</b> male (12:15)
And coming to Him as a living stone... Behold I lay in Zion a choice stone... The stone which the builders rejected... a stone of stumbling and a <b>rock</b> of offence.... (2:4-8; cf. 1 Cor 11:4)	You shall strike the <b>rock</b> , and water will come out of it (Ex 17:6)
<b>But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's own possession.</b> (2:10)	Yet on your fathers did the LORD set His affection to love them, and He <b>chose</b> their descendents after them (Deut 10:15) You shall be to me <b>a kingdom of priests</b> and <b>a holy nation</b> (19:16) You shall be <b>My own possession</b> among all the <b>peoples</b> (19:15) <sup>70</sup>

## VI. Conclusion

All of the references to Jesus as Second Moses have the purpose of showing Jesus to be the Mediator of the New Covenant, replacing the Old Covenant mediated by Moses.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> J. Jeremias, "Moses," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 4:849.
- <sup>2</sup> Dale C. Allison, Jr. The New Moses: A Matthean Typology, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), pp. 140-41.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 25-26.
- <sup>4</sup> Raymond E. Brown, The Birth of the Messiah (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1977), p. 113.
- <sup>5</sup> Allison, op. cit., pp. 142-43.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 144.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 168.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 165-66.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 97.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 138-39.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 97.
- <sup>13</sup> Allison, op. cit., p. 218.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 222.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 222-23.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 223.
- <sup>18</sup> Tertullian, Adv. Marc. 2:27.
- <sup>19</sup> Allison, Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> D. A. Carson, "Matthew," The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 8:277.
- <sup>21</sup> Cf. Allison, op. cit., pp. 223-26.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 226.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 232-33.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 228-30.
- <sup>26</sup> Cf. Ibid., p. 230.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 231.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 233-34.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 235-36.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 236.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 236; K. A. Kitchen, "Plagues of Egypt," The New Bible Dictionary, 2nd. Ed., p. 944.
- <sup>32</sup> Allison, loc. cit.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 237.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 239.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 240.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 240-41.
- <sup>40</sup> Mitchell Dahood, Psalms III (The Anchor Bible 17A): New York: Doubleday and Company, 1970), pp. 80-83.
- <sup>41</sup> LXX stands for the Septuagint.
- <sup>42</sup> Allison, op. cit., p. 241.

- <sup>43</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 241-42.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>46</sup> Eusebius, Demonstratio evangelica, 3:2.
- <sup>47</sup> Cf. Allison, op. cit., p. 243.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp. 243-44.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 244.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>54</sup> D. A. Carson, "Matthew," Expositors Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1984), 8:386.
- <sup>55</sup> Cf. Nancy L. Lapp, "Horeb, Mount," Harper's Bible Dictionary, p. 404.
- <sup>56</sup> Allison, op. cit., p. 244.
- <sup>57</sup> Carson, loc. cit.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 234.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 248-49.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 249.
- <sup>62</sup> Gleason Archer, Jr., A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, Rev. ed., (Chicago: Moody Press), pp. 69-70.
- <sup>63</sup> Allison, op. cit., pp. 249-50.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 250.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp. 252-53.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid., pp. 98-100.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 100-1.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 102-3.
- <sup>70</sup> Allison, *The New Moses*, 102-3.

## Chapter Eleven

### The Giving of the Law of the New Covenant with the Church

#### I. The Making of the Covenant

Our designations "Old Testament" and "New Testament" are very appropriate. "Testament" is a synonym for "covenant" and both documents are covenantal. The New Testament is the covenantal document of the New Covenant, the constitution of the Kingdom of God for this age. It replaces the Old Testament as authoritative treaty document.<sup>1</sup>

#### A. Preamble

The gospels fill the function of Covenant Preamble, identifying the Messianic Lord of the Covenant.<sup>2</sup>

#### B. Historical Prologue

The gospels and Acts also function as Historical Prologue, recording the benefits the Covenant Lord has heaped upon His people.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Meredith G. Kline, The Structure of Biblical Authority (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), pp. 74-75.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 72.



C. Parallelism of Matthew and Exodus

**The Parallelism of Matthew and Exodus**

<u>Exodus</u>			<u>Matthew</u>	
1:1-7	List of Moses Forbearers		1:1-17	List of Jesus' Forbearers
1:8-2:9	The birth of Moses and the saving of his life from the attempt of the Pharaoh to kill him		1:18-2:12	The birth of Jesus and the saving of His life from the attempt of Herod to kill Him
2:10-25	Moses' early life in Egypt		2:13-23	Jesus' early life in Egypt
3:1-22	God's self revelation		3:1-6	God raises up John as a spokesman to prepare the people for Jesus' ministry
4:1-31	God raises up Aaron as a spokesman to prepare the people for Moses' ministry		3:7-12	Declarations of judgment on the wicked
5:1-13:58	Declarations of judgment on the wicked		3:13-16	Baptism in water and Spirit
14:1-15:21	Baptism in water and Spirit <sup>1</sup>		3:17	God's self revelation
15:22-36	Moses goes into the wilderness		4:1-11	Jesus goes into the wilderness
15:27-18:27	The geography of Moses' ministry		4:12-16	The geography of Jesus' ministry
19:1-6	Announcing the Kingdom of Israel		4:17-22	Announcing the Kingdom of God
19:7-25	Moses ascends the mount		5:1-2	Jesus ascends the mount
20:1-23:33	The giving of the stipulations, blessings and curses of the Old Covenant		5:3-7:29	The giving of the stipulations and blessings of the New Covenant
24:1-4	Calling Israel to commitment to the Covenant		8:1-25:46	Calling Israel to commitment to the Covenant
24:5-8	The Covenantal Sacrifice		26:1-46	The elders of church eat and drink with God at the meal inaugurating the New Covenant
24:9-11	The elders of Israel eat and drink with God at the meal inaugurating the Old Covenant		26:47-27:66	The Covenantal Sacrifice
25:1-32:35	Instructions for the erecting of Israel's temple to contain God's presence		28:1-17	God shows proof of His glorious person
33:1-23	God shows proof of His glorious person		28:18-20	Instructions for the erecting of the temple <sup>2</sup> of the Gentiles <sup>3</sup> to contain God's presence <sup>4</sup>
34:1-40:38	The erecting of Israel's temple			

<sup>1</sup> In Israel's baptism at the Red Sea, the cloud represents the Holy Spirit and the sea represents water (1 Cor 10:1-2).

<sup>2</sup> According to Ephesians 2:20-21 the church, the body of Christ is God's temple for this age.

<sup>3</sup> The Greek word *ethnoi*, translated "nations" could better be translated "Gentiles," since this is the age of Gentile salvation (Luke 21:24; Rom 11:25) when the kingdom has been taken away from the Jews and given to the Gentiles (Matt 21:43).

<sup>4</sup> According to Ephesians 2:22 God's temple is his dwelling place in this age as in the previous age.

## E.Stipulations - The Ten Commandments of the New Covenant

### Matthew 5-7

1.The Ascension of the Mount by Jesus the New Moses to give the Law of the New Covenant.<sup>1</sup> (cf. Ex. 19:17-20:1)

Matt. 5:1-2 "And when He saw the multitudes, He went upon the mountain. . . and opening His mouth He began to teach them saying. . .

2.The Blessings of the New Covenant (cf. Deut. 28:1-14)

Matt. 5:3-16 "Blessed are. . ."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 5:1-2 is parallel to Exodus 19:17-20:1

Matthew 5

vs. 1 And when He saw the multitudes

He went up on the mountain

And after He sat down, His disciples came to Him

vs. 2 And opening His mouth, He began to teach them saying,

Exodus 19-20

Exodus 19-20

19:17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

19:19 And the Lord came down on Mount Sinai. . . and Moses went up (Jesus is both the "Lord" who "came down" and the "Moses" who "went up.")

19:24 "Come up. . . you and Aaron with you."

20:1 The God spoke all these words saying,

<sup>2</sup>Luke records both blessings and curses (Luke 6:20-26; cf. Lev. 26:3-39; Deut. 27:11-28:68). Matthew's curses are found in Matt. 23:13-36 and are parallel to the blessings of Matt. 5:3-12:

Matthew 5

Blessed are:

vs. 3 the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

vs. 4 those who mourn for they shall be comforted

vs. 5 the gentle for they shall inherit the earth

vs. 6 those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be satisfied

vs. 7 the merciful for they shall obtain mercy

vs. 8 the pure in heart for they shall see God

vs. 9 the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God

vss. 10-12 those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . Rejoice. . . for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 23

Matthew 23

Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because:

vs. 13 you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men

vs. 14 you devour widow's houses (causing mourning)

vs. 15 you travel about on sea and land (= earth)

vss. 16-22 . . . which is more important the gold or the temple that sanctifieth the gold. . .

vss. 23-24 you. . . have neglected mercy

vss. 25-26 you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish but inside they are full of robbery and self indulgence

vss. 27-28 you too appear righteous to men but inwardly are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness

vss. 29-36 you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous . . . You are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up then the measure of the guilt of your fathers. . . I am sending you prophets. . . some of them you will kill and crucify and some of them you scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city.

The blessings of Luke 6:20-23 are likewise parallel to the curses of Luke 6:24-26.



### 3. The Fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets

Matt. 5:17-19 "Do not think I came to abolish<sup>3</sup> the Law and the Prophets<sup>4</sup>; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.<sup>5</sup> For truly I say to you until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law<sup>6</sup> until all is accomplished."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament, not "abolish" it in the sense of "tearing it down." (The Greek word for "abolish" *kataluo* is often used for tearing down buildings. Cf. Matt. 24:2; 26:61; 27:40.) However, it can be stated that by His coming Christ was "abolishing" (Gr. *katargeo* 'to make invalid, ineffective, powerless, to abolish,' Arndt & Gingrich, 2nd Ed., p. 417) in His flesh, the enmity, which is the law of commandments contained in ordinances. . ." (Eph. 2:15). In other words, through the cross Christ abolished the Old Covenant Law which set Jew and Gentile at enmity and replaced it with the Law of the New Covenant (cf. Matt. 5:21-7:12; John 13:34).

<sup>4</sup>Matt. 5:17-18 is parallel to Matt. 26:54, 56b with "Law and the Prophets" being parallel to the (Old Testament) Scriptures:

<u>Matt. 5:17-18</u> Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets I did not come to abolish but to fulfill For I say to you till heaven and earth pass away not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the law until all  is accomplished  (Gr. <i>genetai</i> )	<u>Matt. 26:54</u> <u>Matt. 26:54</u> How then the Scriptures  shall be fulfilled    that it must happen this way (Gr. <i>dei genesthai</i> )	<u>Matt. 26:56b</u> <u>Matt. 26:56b</u> that the Scriptures of the Prophets  may be fulfilled    <u>Matt. 26:56a</u> all this has taken place  (Gr. <i>gegonen</i> )
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<sup>5</sup>One of the primary themes of Matthew is that Christ fulfilled the Old Testament (Matt. 1:22; 2:5, 15, 17, 23; 3:3, 15; 4:14; 5:17; 7:12; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 22:40; 24:15; 26:54-46; 27:9). "All the prophets and the Law prophesied until John" (Matt. 11:13) when Christ came "to fulfill. . . the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 5:17). The Law which the New Moses is about to give as the Law of the New Covenant is the fulfillment and culmination of the Old Covenant Law ("You have heard that it was said. . . but I say to you" [Matt. 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-34, 38-39, 43-44]. "Therefore however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" [Matt. 7:12].)

<sup>6</sup>The key to understanding Matt. 5:18 is to understand that Jesus is speaking of "the Law" in this verse in the context that He as the New Moses knows that He is "on the mountain" (Matt. 5:1) introducing the Law of the New Covenant.

<sup>7</sup>Matthew 5:18 is parallel to Matthew 24:34-35

<u>Matthew 5:18</u> For truly I say to you  until heaven and earth pass away not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the law until all is accomplished (Gr. <i>eos an panta genetai</i> )	<u>Matthew 24:34a</u> <u>Matthew 24:34a</u>  Truly I say to you this generation will not pass away <u>Matthew 24:35</u> Heaven and earth pass away but my words shall not pass away <u>Matthew 24:34b</u> until all these things take place (Gr. <i>eos panta tauta genetai</i> )
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It is important to observe that "my words" (Gr. *logoi*) in Matt. 24:35 are parallel to "not the smallest letter or stroke" in Matt. 5:18. Indeed, in the succeeding verses Jesus' fulfilling Laws of the New Covenant are preceded by "But I say (Gr. *lego*) unto you. . ." The Law Words spoken by Christ will not "pass away. . . until all is accomplished." The Law Words Jesus speaks are the culminating fulfillment of the Old Covenant Law.

The Greek *genetai*, translated "accomplished" in Matt. 5:18 and "take place" in Matt. 24:34, is frequently used for the fulfillment of prophecy (e.g. Matt. 1:22; 21:14; 24:6; 26:54, 56).

#### 4. Warning against Tampering with the Text (cf. Deut. 4:2)

Matt. 5:19 "Whoever then annuls<sup>8</sup> one of the least of these commandments. . ."

#### 5. The Ten Commandments (cf. Ex. 20:2-17; Deut. 5:6-21)

##### a. Commandments Relaxed<sup>8</sup> by Scribes and Pharisees

Matt. 5:18-20 ". . . Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Scribes and Pharisees you will not enter the Kingdom of heaven."

Commandments regarding:

(1) Community 5:21-26 (cf. Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17)

(2) Family 5:27-32<sup>9</sup> (cf. Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18)

(3) Reverence 5:33-37 (cf. Ex. 20:7; Deut. 5:11)

(4) Attitude 5:38-42<sup>10</sup> (cf. Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21)

Culminating in:

(5) Total Allegiance<sup>11</sup> 5:43-48 (cf. Ex. 20:3; Deut. 5:7)

##### b. Commandments Obeyed Ostentatiously by Pharisees

Matt. 6:1 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them: otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven."

Commandments regarding:

(6) The Needy 6:2-4<sup>12</sup> (cf. Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:18)

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<sup>8</sup>There is a play on words in Greek between "abolish" (Gr. *kataluo*) in verse 17 and "annul" (Gr. *luo*) in verse 19. *Luo* means "to annul, repeal, abolish, relax."

<sup>9</sup>"And" (Gr. *de*) in Matt. 5:31 confirms 5:31-32 as part of the preceding commandment (5:27-29) rather than a new one. (Carson, Expositor's Bible Commentary, 8:152-53).

<sup>10</sup>The exact opposite of coveting your neighbor's belongings (Ex. 20:17) is to give him your own (Matt. 5:40).

<sup>11</sup>The word *teleios* translated "perfect" in Matt. 5:48 (NASV) occurs rather infrequently in the LXX translating two common Hebrew words *tamin* (Gen. 6:9; Ex. 12:5; Deut. 18:13; 2 Sam. 22:26) and *shalem* (Judges 20:26; 1 Kings 8:61; 11:4; 15:3, 14; 1 Chron. 28:9).

All the usages of *teleios* as a translation for *shalem* (except Judges 20:26 where *shalem* is used of "peace offerings") connote "wholehearted allegiance to God." This relational dimension concurs with the usage of *teleios* translating *tamin* in 2 Sam. 22:21-27 and in fact in every usage except Ex. 12:5. Thus the term "wholeness" best renders the force of *teleios*. (Robert Guelich, The Sermon on the Mount, Dallas: Word Publishing, p. 236.)

Similarly Matt. 19:21 sets "wholeness" (*teleios*) as the requirement for eternal life (Ibid., p. 234). There Jesus tells the rich young man who asked "what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" (Mat. 19:17), "If you wish to be complete (*teleios*) to sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me" (Matt. 19:21). "Selling all and giving to the poor was not intended as a means of perfection and thus eternal life. . . Rather Jesus was summoning the young man to a relationship of total surrender and trust that would cut across the self-sufficiency of his righteousness and wealth." (Ibid., p. 236)

In Matt. 5:48 *teleios* is likewise not a call to radical obedience but to a new relationship with God, one of wholehearted allegiance. Instead of connoting legal perfection, the term indicates wholeness and total commitment in one's relationship with God and others. (Ibid.)

<sup>12</sup>The word "honor" used in the fifth commandment, "honor your father and your mother," (Heb. *kabed*) (Ex. 20:12) is the piel of the word *kabed* which means to "be heavy, weighty, burdensome, honored" (BDB, p. 457). In other words, it literally means to honor a person by weighing them down with gifts.

Likewise the Greek verb "honor" (*timao*) is the verbal form of *time* which in classical Greek meant "honor" or "compensation." In classical thought the gods "honored" men by giving them their earthly positions of fame and fortune. In the LXX *timao* is used of the needy, "He who is gracious to the needy honors him" (Prov. 14:31; cf. vs. 21) (Dictionary of New Testament Theology, III:49). Proverbs 3:9 (LXX) states "Honor (Gr. *tima*) the Lord with thy just labors and give him the first of thy fruits of righteousness."

In the New Testament *time* is used in the sense of "price" or "sum of money" as in I Cor. 6:20, "You have been bought with a price" (Gr. *times*). In other passages "honor" is used in the sense of honorarium (1 Tim. 5:17) (Ibid., pp. 49-50).

According to Mark 7:10-12 and Matt. 15:4-6 the command to honor parents includes the financial support of parents in need, nor can a son evade this by appealing to corban legislation. Likewise in 1 Tim. 5:3 ("Honor widows who are widows indeed") Paul is referring to those who had no one to care for them and who could not depend upon remarriage (vss. 5-6). "Honoring" indicates material provision (TDNT VIII:178-79).

Thus the commandment to provide for needy parents (Ex. 20:12) is expanded in the New Covenant to include all the needy (Matt. 6:2-4).

(7) Worship 6:5-15(cf. Ex. 20:4-6; Deut. 5:8-10)

(8) Self Denial 6:16-18<sup>13</sup> (cf. Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15)

c. Commandment regarding Property

Matt. 6:33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.

(9) Property 6:19-34(cf. Ex. 20:15; Deut. 5:19)

d. Commandment regarding Judgment

(10) Judgment 7:1-6<sup>14</sup> (cf. Ex. 20:16; Deut. 5:20)

e. Exhortation to seek the Kingdom<sup>15</sup> (cf. Deut. 4:29-32; 6:1-25)

Matt. 7:7-11 "Seek, . . . ask, . . . knock"

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<sup>13</sup>The fourth commandment enjoined abstinence from work (Ex. 20:9-10) the purpose of which was to provide food to eat (Gen. 3:17-19). The abstinence of Matt. 6:16-18 is from food itself rather than the work which produced it. The stipulation section of each of the law covenants of the Bible contains a stipulation requiring some form of abstinence from eating food:

Covenant Stipulation

Creation	Abstain from eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17)
Adamic	Abstain from eating meat (Gen. 3:18, cf. 9:3)
Noahic	Abstain from eating blood (Gen. 9:4)
Mosaic	Abstain from eating unclean food (Lev. 11:1-47)
New	Abstain from eating on occasion (Matt. 6:16-18)

<sup>14</sup>The content of the Ten Commandments of the Old and New Covenants corresponds to the phrases of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13):

<u>Lord's Prayer</u>	<u>Ten Commandments</u>
Our Father	Allegiance (Ex. 20:3, Matt. 5:43-48)
Who art in heaven	Worship (Ex. 20:4-6; Matt. 6:5-15)
hallowed be Thy name	Reverence (Ex. 20:7; Matt. 5:33-37)
Thy kingdom come	Property (Ex. 20:7; Matt. 5:33-37)
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven	Community (Ex. 20:13; Matt. 5:21-26)
Give us this day our daily bread	The Needy (Ex. 20:12; Matt. 6:2-4)
forgive us our debts	Justice (Ex. 20:16, Matt. 7:1-6)
as we also have forgiven our debtors	Attitude (Ex. 20:17; Matt. 5:38-42)
and do not lead us into temptation	Family (lust)* (Ex. 20:13; Matt. 5:27-32)
but deliver us from evil	Self Denial (Ex. 20:8-11; Matt. 6:16-18)

\*"Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust" James 1:14. Cf. "lust" in Matt. 5:27-28.

<sup>15</sup>All of the verbs in Matthew 7:7-11 are used elsewhere in contexts of the Kingdom.

"Ask" The previous usage was in Matt. 6 just prior to the Lord's prayer with its petition "Thy kingdom come" (Matt. 6:10).

"Given" Luke 12:31-32 "Your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. Cf. Matt. 6:33 Matt. 21:43 ". . . the kingdom of God will be taken from you and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it."

Luke 8:10 "He said, 'To you it has been granted (Gr. *didomi*) to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God."

"Seek" Matt. 6:33 "Seek first His kingdom"

Luke 12:31 "Seek for His kingdom"

Matt. 13:44 "The Kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls"

"Find" Matt. 13:45 "And upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, (cf. Matt. 6:19) and bought it."

"Knock" Luke 13:20-25a "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? . . . You begin to stand outside and knock on the door saying,"

"Open" Luke 13:25b-28 "'Lord, open to us!' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being shut out." Cf. vs. 29.

Matt. 25:1-11 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins. . . Those who were ready went in to the wedding feast and the door was shut. Later the other virgins came saying, 'Lord, Lord, open up for us.'"

"Receive" Matt. 13:19-20 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom. . . This is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it."

f. Final Maxim instead of multiplied case law (cf. Ex. 20:22; Lev. 27:33; Deut. 12-26)

Matt. 7:12 "Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the law and the prophets."

g. A Call to Commitment (Cf. Deut. 10:12-11:32; 30:15-20)

Matt. 7:13-27

(1) Two Ways

Matt. 7:13-14 "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction.

(2) Two Trees

Matt. 7:15-20 ". . . every good tree bears good fruit but the bad tree bears bad fruit. . . So then you will know them by their fruits."

(3) Two Claims

Matt. 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven."

(4) Two Builders

Matt. 7:24-27 ". . . everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house upon the rock. . . And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act upon them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand."

6. Jesus' Authority (Matt. 7:28-9:38)

a. Jesus' Authority Recognized by the Multitudes (Matt. 7:28-29)

b. Ten Incidents Demonstrating Jesus' Authority over the Spheres of the Ten Commandments<sup>16</sup> (Matt. 8:1-9:38)

(1) Jesus' Authority over Community: He heals the shunned leper<sup>17</sup> Matt. 8:1-4 (cf. Matt. 5:21-26)

(2) Jesus' Authority over Allegiance: The Roman Centurion has greater faith than any in Israel Matt. 8:5-13 (cf. Matt. 5:43-48)

(3) Jesus' Authority over Family: He heals Peter's Mother-in-law<sup>18</sup> Matt. 8:14-17 (cf. Matt. 5:27-32)

(Jesus' call to follow him [Matt. 8:18-22] and the results for those who followed [Matt. 8:23-27])

(4) Jesus' Authority over Judgment: He is the Judge who will render judgment at the proper time<sup>19</sup> (Matt. 8:28-34) (cf. Matt. 7:1-6)

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<sup>16</sup>In the miracles of Matthew 8-9 Jesus is first of all demonstrating that the prophecies of the Messianic Age were being fulfilled in His ministry (Matt. 11:45). But in addition, Jesus demonstrates His authority over the spheres of the ten commandments of the New Covenant (cf. Matt. 5:18-7:6). In each incident Jesus deals with an extreme case to illustrate His absolute authority. Even the anecdote of His disciples' not fasting (Matt. 9:14-17) is an extreme one. Certainly one would expect the disciples of Jesus to fast!

<sup>17</sup>In Matthew 8:1-4 the ostracized leper, the one whom everyone in Israel had "something against" (Matt. 5:23) is cleansed by Jesus so that he may present his offering (Matt. 8:4, cf. Matt. 5:23) and rejoin society.

<sup>18</sup>Jesus came to heal families.

<sup>19</sup>The question of the demons to Jesus "Have you come here to torment us before the time?" (Matt. 8:29) recognizes Jesus as the one who will discharge judgment at the appointed time (Carson, *op. cit.*, 8:218). Jesus is **the** judge who will render absolute justice. The actions of the swine in Matthew 8:32 is an illustration of why pearls should not be thrown before swine (Matt. 7:6).

(5) Jesus' Authority over Reverence: Rather than blasphemy, as God Jesus spoke God's Word of forgiveness<sup>20</sup> Matt. 9:1-8 (cf. Matt. 5:33-37)

(Jesus' call to follow Him [Matt. 9:9] and the results which followed [Matt. 9:10-13])

(6) Jesus' Authority over Self Denial: The Inappropriateness of the Bridegroom's Attendants Fasting in the Presence of the Divine Bridegroom<sup>21</sup> Matt. 9:14-17 (cf. Matt. 6:16-18)

(7) Jesus' Authority over Attitude: Raising the Daughter of the Synagogue Official From the Dead<sup>22</sup> Matt. 9:18-19, 23-26 (cf. Matt. 5:38-42)

(8) Jesus' Authority over the Needy: He Heals the Woman with the Hemorrhage<sup>23</sup> Matt. 9:20-22 (cf. Matt. 6:2-4)

(9) Jesus' Authority over Possessions: He Heals the Blind<sup>24</sup> Matt. 9:27-31 (cf. Matt. 6:19-34)

(10) Jesus' Authority over Worship: He Delivers the Demonized Dumb Men<sup>25</sup> Matt. 9:32-34 (cf. Matt. 6:5-15)

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<sup>20</sup>Against the evil (Matt. 9:4; cf. Matt. 5:37) charge that Jesus was blaspheming (Matt. 9:3) by assuming the role of God in forgiving sin (Isa. 43:25; 44:22), Jesus demonstrates that, since He has "authority on earth to forgive sins" (Matt. 9:6), it is not blasphemy for Him to speak God's Word of forgiveness (Matt. 9:2). The result rather than blasphemy was glory to God (Matt. 9:8).

<sup>21</sup>Carson, *op. cit.*, 8:227.

<sup>22</sup>Jesus illustrates what it means to go "the extra mile" (Matt. 5:41) as He follows the synagogue official to his house (Matt. 9:19) and there "gives to him who asks of Him" (Matt. 5:42) by raising his daughter from the dead (Matt. 9:25).

<sup>23</sup>The woman with the hemorrhage represents those in deepest need. According to Mark 5:26 she "had endured much at the hands of many physicians and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all but rather had grown worse." Not only was she destitute with a deteriorating incurable illness but she was also perpetually unclean (Lev. 15:25-30). This meant that not only could she not enter the Women's Court of the Temple, but any thing or person she touched became unclean (Lev. 15:20-25).

<sup>24</sup>Poverty and hardship was the inevitable lot of the blind in Biblical times (R. K. Harrison, "Blindness," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, I: 448). The covenantal curse of blindness was to ensure the recipient would "not prosper in (his) ways" (Deut. 28:28-29). On the other hand the corresponding blessing was that "the Lord will make you abound in prosperity (Deut. 28:11; 30:9). Thus the blessing of giving sight to the blind was to enable them "to abound in prosperity."

When Jesus discussed prosperity in the Sermon on the Mount, he compared those having the wrong attitude toward their possessions as being blind (Matt. 6:27-28). Thus Jesus' healing of the two blind men was a graphic illustration of His power to transform totally man's perspective on property. "If your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light" (Matt. 6:22).

<sup>25</sup>In the worship/prayer section of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructed His people to pray, "Deliver us from the evil one" (Matt. 6:13). Although the Greek word for "evil one" can also be legitimately translated "evil," the former is the more likely meaning as "deliver" with the preposition *apo* ("from") used here has the predominant meaning of deliverance from a person, whereas the preposition *ek* is always used of deliverance from things. Also, Matthew's first mention of temptation was connected with the devil (Carson, *op. cit.*, 8:174)

The man whom Jesus delivered in Matt. 9:32 is described as *kophos*. The word in classical, Hellenistic and Biblical Greek means "deaf or dumb;" the two maladies being commonly linked, especially in deafness from birth (Carson, *op. cit.*, 8:234).

The purpose of this miracle is seen in Matthew 11:3-5. There the response to the question from John the Baptist, "Are You the Expected One or shall we look for someone else?" is to report to John that the blind, lame, lepers and *kophos* are healed. In saying this, Jesus is indicating that Isa. 35:5-6 is being fulfilled in His ministry. There Isaiah prophecies of the Messianic Age, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped, then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy" (Isa. 35:5-6). The verb *ranan* translated "shout for joy" indicates the joyful worship of God (Isa. 12:5-6; 24:14-16; 42:11-12; 44:23; 49:13; 52:8-9; cf. 35:10). Thus in fulfillment of Isa. 35:5-6, the dumb man is pictured as being delivered from demons (cf. Matt. 6:13) to be able for the first time to shout for joy in worship.



## 7. Jesus Gives His Authority to the Disciples (Matt. 10:1 - 11:1)

The disciples are named and given authority over (Matt. 10:1-4):

- a. Allegiance: Preach the Kingdom<sup>26</sup> to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel<sup>27</sup> Matt. 10:5-7 (cf. Matt. 8:5-13<sup>28</sup>)
- b. The Needy: Heal the Sick Matt. 10:8a (cf. Matt. 9:20-22; 6:2-4)
- c. Attitude: Raise the Dead<sup>29</sup> Matt. 10:8b (cf. Matt. 9:18-19, 23-26; Matt. 5:38-42)
- d. Community: Cleanse the Shunned Lepers<sup>30</sup> Matt. 10:8c (cf. Matt. 8:1-4; 5:21-26)
- e. Worship: Cast out Demons<sup>31</sup> Matt. 10:8d (cf. Matt. 9:32-34; 6:5-15)
- f. Possessions: Do Not Acquire Gold Matt. 10:8e-10 (cf. Matt. 9:27-31; 6:19-34)
- g. Judgment: Do Not Throw Your Pearls Before Swine Matt. 10:11-15 (cf. Matt. 8:28-34; 7:1-6)
- h. Family: You are a Member of the Family of Your Father in Heaven<sup>32</sup> Matt. 10:16-33 (cf. Matt. 8:14-17; 5:27-32)
- i. Self Denial: Lose Your Life<sup>33</sup> Matt. 10:34-39 (cf. Matt. 9:14-17; 6:16-18)
- j. Reverence: He Who Receives a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet Shall Receive a Prophet's Reward<sup>34</sup> Matt. 10:40-42 (cf. Matt. 9:1-8; 5:33-37)

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<sup>26</sup>To delegate to the disciples the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 10:7) was to give them the authority to command men to give their allegiance to their Lord (1 John 3:23).

<sup>27</sup>Jesus as the final messenger of the Old Covenant to covenant breaking Israel sends His disciples not to the Gentiles or Samaritans (Matt. 10:5) but as covenant messengers to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:6).

<sup>28</sup>Matthew 8:5-13 anticipates the fact that "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:6) will not give their allegiance to their Covenant Lord and so "shall be cast out into the outer darkness" (Matt. 8:12), whereas "many" (Matt. 8:11) like the Roman centurion because of their "great faith" (Matt. 8:10) "shall come from the east and west and recline at the table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 8:11).

<sup>29</sup>Just as Jesus' raising of the daughter of the Synagogue official from the dead illustrated what it meant to go "the extra mile" (Matt. 5:41) and to "give to him who asks" (Matt. 5:42), so Jesus' giving His disciples authority to raise the dead enabled them to do the same. Cf. footnote 22.

<sup>30</sup>Since lepers were the most ostracized persons in Israel (Lev. 13:45-46; Num. 5:1-4), to cleanse them was the most radical example of creating community.

<sup>31</sup>Just as Jesus had demonstrated His authority over worship by casting the demon out of the dumb man (see note 25), so Jesus gives His authority to His disciples likewise to cast out demons.

<sup>32</sup>Our earthly father may deliver us up to death (Matt. 10:21) whereas our Father (Matt. 10:20, 29, 32, 33) in heaven (Matt. 10:32, 33) is concerned about every detail of our lives (Matt. 10:29-31).

<sup>33</sup>"He who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life shall lose it and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:38-39).

<sup>34</sup>Not only is there reward for revering the name of God (Ex. 20:7; Deut. 5:11; Matt. 5:33-37) but "he who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward" (Matt. 10:41). The phrase "in the name of a prophet" is a rabbinic expression meaning "just because he bears the name prophet" (Donald A. Hagner, Matthew 1-13, [Dallas: Word Books, 1993], p. 296). In other words not only is there reward for revering the name of God but also the name of a prophet, righteous man or disciple (Matt. 10:41-42) who has received Christ's authority (Matt. 10:1).

F. The Law of the New Covenant has replaced the Law of the Old Covenant

1. Hebrews 7:11-17

Hebrews 7:12 states that “when the priesthood changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.” The chapter then describes that with Christ’s sitting down at the right hand of the Father, following His ascension, the Father made him “a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 7:17). The change of priesthood that necessitated “a change of law” (Hebrews 7:12) was from the “order of Aaron” to the “order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 7:11). That this occurred at the ascension can be seen from the following comparison of Hebrews 7, Psalm 110 and Acts 2.

**Parallels Between Hebrews 7, Psalm 110 and Acts 2**

<u>Hebrews 7</u>	<u>Psalm 110</u>	<u>Acts 2</u>	<u>Acts 2</u>
vs 12 For when the priesthood changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.			
vs 13 For the one concerning whom these things were spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar.			
	vs 1 <b>The LORD said unto my Lord:</b> <b>"Sit</b> <b>at my right hand....</b>	vs 33 Therefore having been exalted to the <b>right hand</b> of God....	vs 34 And it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: <b>"The Lord</b> said unto my Lord, <b>'Sit</b> <b>at my right hand,...."</b>
vs 17 For it was written of Him ,  <b>"Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."</b>	vs 4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, <b>"Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."</b> vs 5 <b>The LORD</b> is at Thy <b>right hand....</b>		

Therefore the change of law (Hebrews 7:12) was from the law of Moses to the law of Christ.

2. Romans 7:4-6 and John 14-15

Paul writes in Romans 7:4, “Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you may be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God.” The themes of Romans 7:4-6 are repeated in John 14-15. See Chart I. From the comparison of Romans 7:4-6 with these chapters in John, it is clear that the Law of Moses that we “were made to die to” (Romans 7:14) is replaced by Christ’s commandments (John 14:15, 21; 15:10, 12, 14, 17) and his word(s) (John 14:23; 15:3, 7).

## Recurring Themes of Romans 7:4,6 in John 14-15

<u>Romans 7</u>	<u>John 14</u>	<u>John 14</u>	<u>John 15</u>
<p>vs 4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ,</p> <p>that you may be joined to another,</p> <p>to Him who was raised from the dead,</p> <p>that we might bear fruit for God.</p>	<p>vs 15 If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.</p> <p>vs 16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper...</p> <p>vs 17 <i>that is</i> the Spirit of truth... because he abides with you, and will be in you.</p>	<p>vs 20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father and you in Me and I in you.</p> <p>vs 19 After a little while the world will behold me no more; but you will behold me; because I live, you shall live also.</p> <p>vs 21a He who has</p> <p>vs 21c and keeps them,</p> <p>vs 21b My commandments</p> <p>vs 21d he it is who loves Me... and I will love him....</p>	<p>vs 23b and We will come to him, and make our abode with him.</p> <p>vs 1 I am the true vine and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me...</p> <p>vs 2 that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.</p> <p>vs 3 You are ...clean because of the word... I have spoken... and My Father will love him....</p> <p>vs 26b whom the Father</p> <p>vs 26c will send in My name...</p> <p>vs 26a But the Helper, the Holy Spirit,</p>
<p>vs 6 ...so that we serve in newness of the Spirit....</p>			

<u>Romans 7</u>	<u>John 15</u>	<u>John 15</u>	<u>John 15</u>
<p>vs 4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ,</p> <p>that you may be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead that we might bear fruit for God.</p>	<p>vs 4a,c Abide in me and I in you....unless it abides in the vine...</p> <p>vs 4b As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself,</p>	<p>vs 5 I am the vine, you are the branches he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit....</p> <p>vs 10a If</p> <p>vs 10b you keep my commandments,</p> <p>vs 12 This is my commandment that you love one another, just as I have loved you.</p> <p>vs 10c you will abide in My love....</p>	<p>vs 7a If you abide in Me,</p> <p>vs 8 ...you bear much fruit....</p> <p>vs 7b and my words abide in you...</p> <p>vs 16 ...I chose and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit....</p> <p>vs 14b if</p> <p>vs 14c you do what I command you.</p> <p>vs 17a This I command you, that you love one another.</p> <p>vs 17b that you love one another.</p> <p>vs 14a You are my friends</p> <p>vs 26c,e from the Father... who proceeds from the Father....</p> <p>vs 26b whom I will send to you</p> <p>vs 26a,d When the helper comes,...<i>that is</i> the Spirit of truth,</p>
<p>vs 6 ... so that we serve in newness of the Spirit....</p>			

Note: Since the chart was too wide to print, it had to be divided in two, with Romans 7:4,6 being shown twice.

It is important to note that “words” can be used as a synonym for “commandments.” The Ten Commandments are referred to as the “Ten Words” in Exodus 34:28 and Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:1. In poetic passages “word” is used in synonymous parallelism with law (e.g. Isa. 2:3; Mic. 4:2). Psalm 119 also uses “word” as a synonym for the Law of Moses (e.g. Ps. 119:16, 160, 172)<sup>35</sup> Therefore it is appropriate for Christ’s “word(s)” (John 14:23; 15:3, 7) to be parallel to his “commandments” (John 14:5, 21; 15:10,12,14,17).

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<sup>35</sup>R. B. Edwards, “Word,” International Standard Bible Encyclopedia rev. ed., 4:1103.

## Chapter Twelve

# The Institution of the New Covenant

### I. The Institution of the New Covenant

#### A. The Oath of Allegiance

The English word "believe" has several meanings. Many people say, "I believe in God" when what they really mean is "I acknowledge that God exists." When the New Testament speaks of saving faith, it means much more than acknowledging facts about Jesus. A very instructive verse on the meaning of saving belief is John 2:24, there we read that "Jesus was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men." The Greek word that is translated "entrust" is the common Greek word for believe, *pisteuo*. In other words saving faith is believing in someone so much that you commit or entrust yourself to the one in whom you are believing. It is believing in Jesus as Lord and Savior so much that you entrust yourself to Him. This total committal of oneself to Jesus is the oath of allegiance of the New Covenant.

#### B. Events Leading Up to the Solemn Assembly

##### 1. The Triumphal Entry

Four days before Passover as Jesus set out for Jerusalem from the village of Bethany on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, he sent two disciples on ahead. "Go into that village over there," he told them, "and as you enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it. Untie them and bring them here. If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will immediately send them." He did this to fulfill the prophecy of the prophet Zechariah, "Tell the people of Israel, Look, your King is coming to you. He is humble, riding on a donkey – even on a donkey's colt."

The two disciples did as Jesus said. They brought the donkeys to him and threw their garments over the colt, and he sat on it (Matthew 21:1-6 NASB)

As Jesus rode the donkey toward Jerusalem, the crowds spread their coats on the road ahead of him as a demonstration of honor. As they reached the place where the road started down from the Mount of Olives, all of his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen, "Bless the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in highest heaven!" But some of the Pharisees among the crowd said, "Teacher, rebuke your followers for saying things like that!"

But Jesus replied, "If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!" (Luke 19:36-40 NASB).

This was the official entry of the Messiah/King into Jerusalem. Just as David's physical son Solomon had ridden a donkey at his presentation as king to the cheering

crowds of Jerusalem just a little over a millennium earlier (1 Kings 1:33-46), so Jesus entered Jerusalem riding a donkey to claim publicly that he was the greater Son of David who would sit on David's throne.

Over five hundred years earlier God had revealed to the prophet Daniel that four hundred and eighty-three years after the command was given to rebuild Jerusalem the Messiah would come. The command to rebuild Jerusalem was given by King Artaxerxes of Persia in the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of his reign (Nehemiah 2:1). The Jews did not use a solar calendar as we do today and in Biblical prophecies the years are composed of 360 days (e.g. Revelation 11:2, 3; 12:6; 13:5). The exact day of the month is not given, but, if the command to rebuild Jerusalem was given on the first of Nisan, March 5, 444 B.C., it was 483 years of 360 days later to the day that Jesus entered Jerusalem on March 30, A.D. 33, the day of his formal entry into the city as Messiah. The prophecy likely was fulfilled to the day!

Something else also happened on that day. It was the day when the lambs were selected to be slain at Passover. In his triumphal entry, Jesus was presenting himself as *the* Passover Lamb.<sup>1</sup>

2. The Cursing of the Fig Tree and the Cleansing of the Temple

See Session Four, pages 10-12.

3. The Olivet Discourse

On April 1, 33 B.C. Jesus gave what is popularly called his Olivet Discourse. Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 all give Jesus' answer to a question asked by his disciples. Jesus had left the temple with his disciples when they pointed out the temple buildings to him. Jesus answered them, "Truly I say unto you, not one stone here shall be left upon another which will not be torn down" (Matt. 24:1-2), a prophecy of the destruction of the temple by the Roman armies in A.D. 70.

Later as Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives facing the temple across the Kidron Valley, his disciples came to him with a question, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matt. 24:3). In other words, they were asking two things: When would be the time of the destruction of the temple and what will be the sign of Christ's return and the end of the age.

Matthew and Mark record Jesus' answer as it pertains to the sign of his coming and the end of the age, whereas Luke records Jesus' answer as it prophetically describes the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Jesus could answer both questions simultaneously because at the destruction of the temple and the second coming similar things happen.

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<sup>1</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 115-139.

That Matthew and Mark are describing the end of the age whereas Luke prophecies of A.D. 70 can be seen in two primary ways. First of all Matthew and Mark contain eschatological language whereas Luke does not:

<u>Matthew 24</u>	<u>Mark 13</u>	<u>Luke 21</u>
vs 8 But all <b>these are <i>merely</i> the beginning of birth pangs</b>	vs 8 <b>These are <i>merely</i> The beginning of birth pangs</b>	—
vs 13 <b>But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.</b>	vs 13 <b>...but the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.</b>	vs 19 By your <b>endurance</b> you will gain your lives.
vs 14 <b>And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations,</b> and then the end shall come.	vs 10 <b>And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.</b>	vs 13 It will lead to an opportunity for your <b>testimony.</b>
vs 15 Therefore <b>when you see the abomination of desolation</b> which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, <b>Standing</b> in the holy place <b>(let the reader understand).</b>	vs 14 <b>But when you see The abomination of desolation</b>  <b>standing</b> where it should not be <b>(let the reader understand)....</b>	vs 20 <b>But when you see</b> Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then realize that her <b>desolation</b> is at hand.
vs 21 <b>for there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.</b>	vs 19 <b>For those days will be a <i>time of tribulation</i> such as has not occurred since the creation which God created, until now, and never shall.</b>	vs 23 <b>There will be great</b> distress upon the land and wrath to this people,
vs 22 <b>And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect</b>  those days shall be cut short.	vs 20 <b>And unless the Lord Had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; But for the sake of the elect whom he chose, He shortened the days.</b>	—
vs 23 <b>Then if anyone says to you, "Behold, here is the Christ," or "There <i>He is,</i>" do not believe <i>him.</i></b>	vs 21 <b>And then if anyone says to you, "Behold, here is the Christ," or "Behold <i>He is there,</i>" do not believe <i>him;</i></b>	—
vs 24 <b>For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show</b>	vs 22 <b>For false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show</b>	—

**great signs and wonders,**  
so as to mislead, **if possible,**  
Even **the elect.**

**great signs and wonders,**  
in order, **if possible,** to lead  
**the elect** astray.

vs 29 **But** immediately  
After **the tribulation**  
**of those days**

vs 24 **But in those days,**  
immediately after that **tribulation,**

vs 24 and they will fall by the edge of  
the sword, and will be led captive  
into all the nations... until the  
times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

**the sun will be darkened...**

**the sun will be darkened...**

vs 25 And there will be signs in the  
**sun,** moon, and stars....

vs 30 ...**they will see the Son of Man**  
**Coming on the clouds....**

vs 26 ...**they will see the Son of Man**  
**coming on the clouds...**

vs 27 ...**they will see the Son of Man**  
**coming on a cloud...**<sup>2</sup>

On the one hand, Matthew and Mark both describe “the abomination of desolation” which begins a period of “tribulation” which is the worst ever, followed immediately by the second coming (Matt 24:15-31; Mark 13:14-27). On the other hand, Luke 21 describes the entire age: events leading up to A.D. 70 (vss. 8-19), the events of A.D. 70 (vss. 20-24a), the period from A.D. 70 to the second coming called “the time of the Gentiles” (vs. 24b) and the second coming of Christ (vss. 25-27). According to Luke, the present age is a period of wrath, captivity and dispersion for the Jews while Gentiles trample Jerusalem under foot (Luke 21:24).

### C. **The Solemn Ceremony**

It is important to note first that the Last Supper was a Passover meal (Matthew 26:17-19).<sup>3</sup> When Jesus said at the Last Supper, "This is My blood of the covenant" (Matt. 26:28) the words (except for "My") are identical with the Septuagint translation of Exodus 24:8 where at the institution of the Old Covenant Moses said, "Behold, the blood of the Covenant which the Lord has made with you." Through blood Moses was the mediator of the Old Covenant. Through blood Jesus was the mediator of the New Covenant.<sup>4</sup> Luke quotes Jesus more fully as referring to the "New Covenant" in His blood (Luke 22:20).

Another question which can be asked is whether there is an Old Testament analogy to Jesus' phrase "for forgiveness of sins" when He states, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28). Exodus 24:8 says nothing about the forgiveness of sins. However, two targums do.<sup>5</sup> (Targums were Aramaic paraphrases of the Hebrew Old Testament which were given in the synagogue after Aramaic had replaced Hebrew as the language of the Jews. Originally oral, they were later

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Herman Ridderbos, The Coming of the Kingdom, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1962), 488-510.

<sup>3</sup> Dale C. Allison, Jr. The New Moses (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 257.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 257-58.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 258.



standardized and written down in several versions.<sup>6</sup>) Targum Onkelos on Exodus 24:8 says, "And Moses took blood. . . and sprinkled it upon the altar **to make atonement** for the people and he said: Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in all these words." Hebrews 9:19-22 shows that it was assumed in the first century that Moses' sprinkling of the blood was for the forgiveness of sins. There the author states, "For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood. . . and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.' And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with blood. And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed by blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." In light of this it can be said that Jesus' phrase "for the forgiveness of sins" reflects the first century understanding of Exodus 24:8.<sup>7</sup>

Another indication that Exodus 24 and the Last Supper are seen as covenant renewal ceremonies is the wording of Moses' statement in Hebrews 9:20, "This is the blood of the covenant." There is no "this is" in Exodus 24:8. Exodus 24:8 reads, "Behold, the blood of the Covenant." Whereas at the Last Supper, Jesus says, "This is My blood of the Covenant" (Matt. 26:28). The "this is" would indicate an assimilation of Jesus' words at the institution of the New Covenant to Moses' words at the institution of the Old Covenant. In other words the author of Hebrews saw both as covenant renewal ceremonies.<sup>8</sup>

A verse that links the institution of the New Covenant to the initial Passover is Matthew 26:19, "The disciples did as Jesus directed them; and they prepared the Passover." This is parallel to Exodus 12:28 regarding the Passover, "Then the sons of Israel went and did so; just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did."

**Matthew 26:19**

The disciples  
did  
as  
Jesus  
directed  
them

**Exodus 12:28**

the sons of Israel  
went and did so  
as  
the Lord  
had commanded  
Moses and Aaron.

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<sup>6</sup> D. F. Payne, "Targums," The New Bible Dictionary, pp. 1238-39.

<sup>7</sup> Allison, op. cit., pp. 258-59.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 260-61.

Just as Matthew 26:19 concludes Jesus' instructions regarding the Passover, so does Exodus 12:28 conclude Moses' instructions for the Passover.<sup>9</sup>

It was noted earlier that the feeding of the five thousand in Matthew 14:13-21 contained allusions to Moses. There are several parallels between Matthew 14:13-21 and 26:20-29 as well:

**Matthew 14:13-21**

vs. 15 "when it was evening" (Greek: *opsias de genomenes*)  
vs. 19 "to recline" (*anaklithenai*)  
"He took" (*labon*)  
"loaves" (*artous*)  
"He blessed" (*eulogesen*)  
"breaking" (*klasas*)  
"He gave them to the disciples" (*edoken tois mathetais*)  
  
vs. 20 "they. . . ate" (*ephagon*)  
"all" (*pantes*)

**Matthew 26: 20-29**

vs. 20 "when it was evening" (*opsias de genomenes*)  
He was reclining (*anekeito*)  
vs. 26 "took" (*labon*)  
"bread" (*arton*)  
"after a blessing" (*eugolesas*)  
"He broke" (*eklasen*)  
"gave it to the disciples" (*dous tois mathetais*)  
vs. 27 "He gave it to them" (*edoken autois*)  
vs. 26 "eat" (*phagete*)  
vs. 27 "all" (*pantes*)

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

It is important to note that these parallels occur in exactly the same order in the two passages. In other words two passages in which Jesus is Mosaic are parallel to each other.<sup>10</sup>

As part of a Jewish Passover meal four cups of wine were drunk during the meal. Bread was passed after the second cup. Then Jesus spoke His words of institution in connection with the third cup which was called "the cup of blessing" (cf. 1 Cor. 10:6) and taken immediately after supper (cf. 1 Cor. 11:25). Thus the third cup is the cup of the New Covenant (Matt. 26:27-28; Mark 14:24-25; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25).<sup>11</sup>

It is regarding the third cup that Jesus states in Luke 22:20, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood." These words take on more significance in light of the fact that since the time of Homer the pouring out of a cup of wine was the normal form of sealing a treaty. This was so central to treaty-making in Greek thought that the Greek word for "libation" (sponde) became the word for "treaty."<sup>12</sup> Similarly in the Greek world there was a tradition of treaties being made by drinking wine mingled with blood. This method was employed by the Scythians,<sup>13</sup> Arabs<sup>14</sup> and Romans.<sup>15</sup> Thus just as God had used contemporary treaty symbolism in the Old Testament, He does the same in the New. The point is to show that God was here making a treaty with His people.

The fourth cup is referred to in Jesus' statement, "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29) or "in the kingdom of God" (Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18). The fact that Jesus referred to the "fruit of the vine" shows that His was referring to the fourth cup which was drunk after a formal benediction, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who createst the fruit of the vine." Under Jewish law, non-liturgical drinking was permitted between the first and second cups, but not between the third and fourth. Thus Jesus' announcement that He will drink no more after the third cup until the liturgical drinking of the fourth cup in the kingdom is in accordance with rabbinic rules. Over the fourth cup, in New Testament times was recited "the blessing of the song" which consisted of an acknowledgment of God's universal reign. The principal theme is found in the clause, "and they shall assign kingship to Thy name, our King." In other words, the fourth and final cup of the Passover was to celebrate God's Kingdom. Thus, when Jesus says that He will drink no more until the kingdom, He is saying that the drinking of the fourth cup will be postponed until the consummation of His kingdom. When the gospel writers state that they went out "after singing a hymn" (Matt. 26:39; Mark 14:26), the implication is that

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 259-60.

<sup>11</sup> David Daube, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism (London: University of London, Athlone Press, 1956), pp. 330-31.

<sup>12</sup> Liddel and Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, p. 1629; Otto Michel, "spondomai," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, VII:528-30.

<sup>13</sup> Herodotus, Hist., IV, 70.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., III, 8.

<sup>15</sup> H. Clay Turnbull, The Blood Covenant (Kirkwood, MO: Impact Christian Books, 1975), p. 60.

they went out directly after the hymn after the third cup without drinking the fourth cup or "the blessing of the song." These are postponed until Christ's kingdom comes in its fullness.<sup>16</sup> The original Lord's Supper will be concluded following the second coming.

An additional question which can be asked about the solemn ceremony of the Old Covenant in which the elders of Israel "behold God and ate and drank" (Ex. 24:18) is which person of the Trinity did they most likely eat with? Since it is the function of the Second Person of the trinity to represent God visibly to man (John 1:14, 18; etc.) it no doubt was the pre-incarnate Christ. Thus at the institution of the Old Covenant, "the elders of Israel. . . ate and drank" (Ex. 24:9-11) with Christ. So at the institution of the New Covenant, the elders of the church (cf. 1 Pet. 5:1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1) eat and drink with Christ (Matt. 26:20-29).<sup>17</sup>

Just as the Passover was celebrated on a regular basis, so the Lord's Supper was to be repeated on a regular basis. Acts 20:7 intimates that they partook of the Lord's supper weekly.

The significance of the Lord's supper being repeated is the concept of covenant renewal. Since the first Lord's supper was a covenant renewal meal, that is also the significance of its repetitions. Covenant renewal is necessary when a vassal has violated the treaty.<sup>18</sup> Thus on a regular basis God's people are to renew the covenant by examining themselves, confessing their sin, renewing their allegiance to the Lord and then eating the covenant meal (1 Cor. 11:20-34).

The New Covenant thus, like the Old, was a declaration of God's lordship over His people, binding them to Him in a designated way of life. Just as law was part of the Old Covenant, so we have seen that there were commandments of the New Covenant as well. At the meal of the New Covenant Jesus summarizes the commandments of the New Covenant into one New Commandment. Jesus says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34). Jesus had summarized the Old Testament Law (Matt. 22:36) into two commandments, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. . . and you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37-39). Now Jesus summarizes the New Covenant commandments into one new commandment, love. An interesting corollary verse to this is 1 John 3:23, "And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us." We become a Christian by believing Christ and then love is a summary of the New Covenant commandments.

#### **D. Jesus' Passion in Light of Exodus 24-34**

##### **1. New Testament Background**

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<sup>16</sup> Daube, *loc. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> E. Michael Rusten, "A Critical Examination of Dispensational Interpretations of the Book of Revelation" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1977), pp. 273 -74.

<sup>18</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), p. 69.

In Mark 9:1 and parallels Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.” In Mark 9:2, the next verse (and the next verse in each of the synoptic gospels) is an account of the Transfiguration. In other words, the Transfiguration was a coming of the kingdom with power. Undoubtedly one purpose of the transfiguration was to show Peter, James and John what the kingdom would be like so that they would understand what Jesus meant at the Last Supper when he would say, “I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes” (Luke 22:16).

Apparently this made a great impression on James and John for a short time later they ask Jesus, “Grant that we would sit in Your glory, one on Your right and one on Your left” (Mark 10:37; cf. Matt. 20:20-28).

Jesus’ reply was, “You do not know what you are asking for” (Mark 10:38). The reason Jesus gave this answer is that the only place in Mark where “on His right and on His left” is found is in Mark 10:27 (cf. Matt. 27:37), “And they crucified two robbers with Him, one on his right and one on his left.” The crucifixion was His glory!

On the day of Jesus’ triumphal entry he said, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:23-24). Then in his prayer just before leaving for the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee” (John 17:1). Jesus’ glorification began at his death on the cross.

## 2. Exodus 24-34

Immediately after the institution of the Old Covenant and the covenant meal where God the Son ate and drank with the elders of Israel (Ex. 24:8-11), “The Lord said to Moses, ‘Come up to me on the mountain and I will give you stone tablets with the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction’” (Ex. 24:12). “And the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai and the cloud covered it for six days” (Ex. 24:16; cf. Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2). “And to the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the mountain top. And Moses entered the midst of the cloud...” (Ex. 24:17-18). Thus after the covenantal meal Moses entered the glory and was himself glorified as when he returned his face shone so much he had to wear a veil (Ex. 34:29-35). This was the pattern for the Second Moses who after the meal at which he instituted the New Covenant was glorified.

But something happened while Moses was in the glory cloud. “When the people say that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron, and said to him, ‘Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’” In response to their request, Aaron made the golden calf and the announcement was made, “This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.” Then Aaron built an altar in front of the calf and orchestrated a feast to the calf the following day (Ex. 32:2-6).

The glory of God was still visible on top of Mount Sinai throughout all of this. Therefore the idol was not replacing God, but rather was an image representing God. The people were to approach God through the golden calf instead of through Moses.<sup>19</sup> This apostate religion thus offered the children of Israel an alternate way to God, complete with altar and high priest.

This was parallel to the choice presented to the children of Israel of Jesus’ day. Jesus was the Messianic Mediator between God and man, the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). Alternative religions of Jesus’ day too had a high priest and an altar. When presented with their choice of religions, the crowds followed the lead of the chief priests shouting, “Crucify, Crucify!” (John 19:6).

When God saw the worship of the golden calf, he said to Moses, “Now let Me alone, that my anger may burn against them, and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation.” Moses interceded for Israel and God did not destroy them all (Ex. 32:10-14).

Exodus 32:10 is a very interesting verse because it is parallel to Matthew 22:7 and 21:43:

	<u>Exodus 32</u>	<u>Matthew</u>
vs 10	Now then let me alone that my <b>anger</b> (LXX Gr: <i>orge</i> )  may burn against them and that I may <b>destroy</b> them  and I will make of you a great <b>nation</b> .	22:7a But the king <b>was enraged</b> (Gr: <i>orgizomai</i> ) and sent his armies, 22:7c and set their city on fire. 22:7b and <b>destroy</b> those murderers, 21:43 ...the kingdom will be taken from you, and be given to a <b>nation</b> producing the fruit of it. 22:9 Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.

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<sup>19</sup> Scott J. Hafemann, Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel, (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1996), 196-97.

Thus at the apostasy of the golden calf, Israel's first rebellion against its Suzerain after becoming a nation (Ex. 19:6), God chose not to make a great nation under Moses. But after Israel's rejection of their Messiah, God the Father did make a new nation of the Messianic New Moses, the Gentile church (Matt. 21:43; 1 Peter 2:9).

Since Israel had broken the covenant (Ex. 32:19), God sends Moses as the covenant messenger to interrogate the leader of the rebellion (Ex. 32:21). Then God declares his first holy war on his people, with the Levites slaying 3,000 (Ex. 32:28), anticipating the day of the Lord upon his people when he sent the Roman armies in A.D. 70 to burn their city and scatter them among the nations (Matt. 22:7; Luke 21:23-24).

When Moses finally came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the renewed covenant and his shining face, the words are very similar to those of the Great Commission:

Matthew 28

vs 16 But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee,  
to the **mountain** which Jesus had designated.  
vs 17 And **when** they **saw** Him,  
they worshipped *Him*;  
but some were doubtful.  
vs 18 And Jesus came up  
and **spoke to them**, saying,  
vs 20 ...teaching them  
to observe all that I commanded you....

Exodus 34

vs 29 ...Moses was coming down from **Mount** Sinai....  
vs 30 **When** Aaron and all the sons of Israel **saw** Moses,  
behold, the skin of his face shown,  
and they were afraid to come near him.  
vs 31 ...and Moses  
**spoke to them**.  
vs 32 ... he commanded them  
to *do* everything the LORD had spoken to him on Mount Sinai.

E. **Covenantal Sacrifice**

At the institution of the Old Covenant, as we have seen, "they offered burnt offerings and sacrificial young bulls as peace offerings to the Lord" (Ex. 24:5). These sacrifices were part of God's ongoing program of redemptive grace, looking forward to the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. We have seen how the sacrifices of Exodus 24 were a divine promise of forgiving and purifying grace (Heb. 9:28ff.).<sup>20</sup>

To understand the significance of the Sacrifice of the New Covenant it is helpful to compare to the New Covenant to the Abrahamic Covenant.

1. The Abrahamic Covenant was instituted in three stages:
  - a) Genesis 12 - The Covenant Stipulation and Blessings
  - b) Genesis 15 - The Covenant is Ratified by God

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<sup>20</sup> Meredith G. Kline, By Oath Consigned (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), p. 18.

God passed between the divided carcasses of the slain animals, thus saying, "May the curse of the covenant fall upon Me if I fail to keep the covenant." He was saying, "May I be cut off as these animals have been cut off."

c) Genesis 17 - The Oath Sign of Circumcision is Given

In Gen. 17 Abraham was given the oath sign and was instructed as to who is to be brought into the covenant community.

2. The New Covenant is Similarly Given in Three Stages:

a) Matthew 5-7 - The Stipulations and Blessings of the New Covenant

In the Sermon on the Mount, God gave the stipulations (Matt. 5:21 - 7:6) and the blessings of the covenant (Matt. 5:3-12).

b) Matthew 27:33-54 - The Crucifixion

Just as God ratified the Abrahamic Covenant by symbolically stating, "may a death curse fall upon Me, if I fail to keep My oath, Christ ratified the New Covenant by actually undergoing the curse of the covenant through death. He bore the curse which sinners deserve because of their disobedience to God. He bore the curse as our substitute. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'" (Gal. 3:13). Christ's undergoing God's curse ratified the New Covenant.

In God's covenants there is both curse and blessing. Not only did Christ bear the curse for us, but He was obedient for us as well. He bore the curse for His people so that we are no longer under God's curse. He was obedient so that His righteousness is credited to our account. "Through the obedience of the One, the many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). Because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer, God can promise blessing to His people based on obedience. Therefore because of the obedience and death of Christ, we both escape the curse and enjoy the blessing.

At the Last Supper, Jesus quoted a prophecy found in Zechariah 13:7. He said to His disciples, "You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, I will strike down the Shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered" (Matt. 26:31). The full verse states, "Awake O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man, My Associate," declares the Lord of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered" (Zech. 13:7). Here we have an insight into the significance of the crucifixion as circumcision for Zechariah speaks of God's judgment sword against a God-man (i.e. "man My Associate"). This is no doubt the reason for including the piercing of Jesus' side by the soldier's



spear (John 19:34). Blessing is attained through the curse of the circumcision sword suffered by Christ.<sup>21</sup>

Paul gives us more significance of the death of Christ in Colossians 2. In 2:13-14 Paul writes that "when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." A legal setting is indicated in verse 14 by the statement that the curse claim was satisfied on the cross. A further legal element in Colossians 2 is the accusing role of Satan in the judgment of God's people which is suggested by the demonic hosts who face Christ in His conflict. Colossians 2:15 states, "when He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them. . ." It is by Christ's victory in this combat with Satan's hordes that the vindication of Christ and the acquittal of those who are united with Him are secured. What may be referred to in Colossians 2:14 is the well-attested ancient practice of belt wrestling as a combat-ordeal technique in court procedure. Victory and a favorable verdict were secured by stripping off the adversary's wrestling belt. It is probably significant that the principalities and powers of Colossians 2:15 appear in the closely related letter to the Ephesians in 6:12 as the opponents of Christians in their "wrestling." Thus Christ in His suffering of the circumcision-curse of crucifixion in which He was cut off from His people (cf. Gen. 17:14) accomplished the circumcision-stripping off of His demonic opponents. The divine verdict was registered in Christ's emergence from the domain of death as He was raised for our justification (Rom. 4:25. Jesus' death, burial and resurrection was a victory over His demonic accusers, exposing, overcoming and casting them out through the belt-grappling of a divine judicial ordeal.<sup>22</sup>

It is interesting to note how Luke compares the beginning and end of Jesus' earthly life in similar terms:

<u>Luke 2:7</u>	<u>Luke 23:53</u>
<b>...wrapped</b>	<b>...wrapped</b>
Him	(Jesus' body)
<b>in cloths</b>	<b>in a linen cloth</b>
<b>and laid</b>	<b>and laid</b>
Him	It

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 72-73.

in a                      in a  
manger                  Tomb<sup>23</sup>

F.     **Matthew 28:18-20 - The Sign of the Covenant**

Just as in Genesis 17 God gave Abraham the sign of the covenant and told him who was to be incorporated into the covenant community, so in Matthew 28 we find Jesus giving the covenant sign and indicating who was to be brought into the covenant community during the New Covenant age. In both cases the sign of the covenant was an oath ritual.

In Matthew 28:18 Jesus first declares His lordship, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

Next He gives the oath sign of the New Covenant - baptism. He says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

Baptism as the oath-sign of the New Covenant was different from the baptism of John the Baptist. As messengers of God's lawsuit against Israel, John the Baptist and Jesus' disciples had baptized those Jews who repented of their sins and thereby entered the Kingdom of God. Baptism was their oath sign of allegiance to God. The baptism itself symbolized the imminent judgment ordeal God's disobedient Old Covenant people were about to experience. The difference therefore between John's baptism and Christian baptism was the difference between two ages of covenant history. Christian baptism was the oath-sign of the New Covenant, not of the old lawsuit against Israel.<sup>24</sup>

Whereas there were differences between Christian baptism and the baptism of John, there are similarities as well. Both are signs by which a person is taking an oath of allegiance to the Lord of the covenant and both are water ordeals indicating the twofold possible outcome of eternal glory or eternal curse.<sup>25</sup>

Probably Peter best shows the significance of baptism in 1 Peter 3:20-22. Peter conceives of Christian baptism as a sign of judicial ordeal by likening it to the water ordeal of the flood. Just as the waters were the ordeal element by which God justified Noah, so through the water ordeal of baptism, God declares the believer justified.<sup>26</sup> Peter says, "And corresponding to that (i.e. the flood) baptism now saves you - not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience" (1 Pet. 2:21). Baptism like the flood is a water ordeal in which God declares His people justified. Baptism is not the mere putting away of the filth of the flesh through a water rite. The word translated "appeal" in the New American Standard Version of 1 Peter 2:21 is best translated "pledge" here. This is a meaning well attested in

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<sup>23</sup> Joel B. Green, The Gospel of Luke, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 124.

<sup>24</sup> Kline, By Oath Consigned, pp. 63-65.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-66.

Greek judicial texts. It means a solemn vow of consecration to God. In ancient covenant procedure, an oath of allegiance was accompanied by rites symbolizing the curse of the covenant. So here, where the believer in baptism takes an oath of allegiance to His Covenant Lord "for a good conscience" (1 Pet. 2:21). Conscience has to do with accusing or excusing; it is forensic. Baptism, then, is concerned with man in the presence of God's judgment throne and the outcome of his pledge of allegiance/water ordeal experience is "a good conscience" having been declared justified by God by coming safely through the water ordeal of baptism.<sup>27</sup>

Just as circumcision as the oath-sign of the Old Covenant symbolized the curse of the covenant, so baptism as the oath-sign of the New Covenant also symbolizes the curse of the covenant, in this case, the curse of drowning in the water ordeal as the wicked drowned in the "baptism" of the flood (1 Pet. 3:21) and as the Egyptian army drowned in the "baptism" of the Red Sea (1 Cor. 10:2; cf. Matt. 18:6). Both circumcision and baptism are oath-signs of allegiance to the Covenant Lord and both symbolize His ultimate judgment with its potential of both curse and blessing.<sup>28</sup> The New Covenant like the Old contains curses (Lk. 6:24-26) as well as blessings (Lk. 6:20-23). Similarly in Revelation 1-3 Christ who stands in the midst of the ordeal pillar of fire in the midst of the seven churches addresses curses to them as well as blessings. At the final judgment there will be those who will say, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" (Matt. 7:22). And God will answer, "I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" (Matt. 7:23). The wheat and the tares are to grow together in the kingdom until the time of harvest (Matt. 13:26-30). Therefore baptism like circumcision symbolizes the curse of the covenant.<sup>29</sup>

Since baptism symbolizes the curse of the covenant, we should baptize all who have a credible profession of faith. We should not worry that someone might slip through who really is not born again. Baptism symbolizes the curse of the covenant for people like that. Baptism brings a person into the New Covenant with its two-fold eventual outcome of blessing or curse. The Greek word for baptism, *baptizo*, means entering the waters, not emerging from them. Baptism does not prejudge the final outcome. It places a person under the authority of the Lord for judgment and tells him that as a sinner he must pass through the curse-waters. Yet it also calls him to union with his Lord, promising to all who are found in Christ safe passage through the water of the ordeal.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

Yet even when baptism is considered regarding the elect, judgment as curse and death remains at the core of its symbolism. Blessing for the elect arises only out of the Savior's accursed death.<sup>31</sup>

In summary, baptism as an oath-sign of allegiance is a sign of incorporation within the judicial sphere of God's covenant lordship for a final verdict of blessing or curse. In every instance to be baptized is to be consigned by oath to the Lord of redemptive judgment.<sup>32</sup>

As the oath-sign of allegiance to Christ the Lord, baptism is a sacrament in its original etymological relation to the idea of consecration and in particular in its employment for the military oath of allegiance.<sup>33</sup>

Baptism "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" is the equivalent of this military oath of allegiance. The idea is placing one under the authority or lordship of another. In this case it is under the covenant lordship of the Trinity. For example, heathen slaves upon entry into a Jewish household were compelled to be baptized "into the name of slavery." When they were set free, they were baptized "into the name of freedom." So to be "baptized into the name of something" means to enter into a definite relationship to it. In commercial and legal documents "into the name of" means "into the authority or ownership of." So just as circumcision brought men into the covenant community under the Lordship of Jehovah, so baptism brings men into covenant relationship under the Lordship of Christ.

To the Jews of the first century, the only baptism they knew anything about was proselyte baptism.<sup>34</sup> Gentile converts were baptized in order to join the synagogue.<sup>35</sup> Thus when we read in Acts 2:41, "So then those who had received his word were baptized, and there were added that day three thousand souls." In other words, just as a Gentile joined the synagogue through baptism, so it was through baptism that believers "were added" to the church. Just as through the baptism of the Spirit that one is placed in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13), the invisible church (Eph. 1:22-23), so through water baptism a believer is made part of the visible church (Acts 2:41).

Thus a person first makes the oath of allegiance to Jesus by faith and then publicly takes the oath-sign of baptism, consecrating himself to the Lord Jesus.

Just as in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 17), God not only gives the oath-sign of the New Covenant but also indicates who is to be brought into the covenant community. Most English versions indicate that we are to make disciples of all the "nations." However, in Greek the same Greek word *ethnoi* can be translated either "nations" or "Gentiles." Since this

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 102

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>34</sup> Richard N. Longnecker, "The Acts of the Apostles," The Expositors Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981) IX:286.

<sup>35</sup> W. F. Flemington, "Baptism," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, I:348.

is "the times of the Gentiles" (Lk. 21:24) leading up to "the fullness of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:25) when God has taken the kingdom from Israel and given it to the Gentiles (Matt. 21:33 - 22:14), it makes better sense to translate *ethnoi* as "Gentiles" in Matthew 28:19. Our responsibility in this age is to make disciples of all the Gentiles, consecrating them to our Covenant Lord through baptism.

The Moses motif is also found in Matthew 28:16-20. There are a total of twenty-seven commissioning stories in the Old Testament. In five of these the observance of all that God has commanded is mentioned. In four of these the wording in the Septuagint is similar to Matthew 28:20. These four instances are as follows:

Exodus 7:2: "But you (Moses) will say to him (Pharaoh) all that I command you"  
(*panta hosa soi entellomai*)

Joshua 1:7: "to observe and do as Moses My servant commanded you" (*enteilato soi*)

1 Chron. 22:13 "you will prosper if you are careful to do the ordinances and decisions which the Lord commanded (*enteilato*) Moses for Israel"

Jeremiah 1:7 "and whatever I command you (*kai kata panta hosa ean enteilomai soi*) you will speak"

The first three passages all allude to Moses.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, Jeremiah 1 has the same call narrative form as the call of Moses in Exodus 3:

	Jeremiah	Exodus
Commission	1:5	3:10
Objection	1:6	3:11
Reassurance	1:7-8	3:12
Sign(s)	1:9 (11-16)	3:12 (4:1-19) <sup>37</sup>

Thus whenever Old Testament commissioning stories contain the command to all that has been commanded and when the Septuagint uses *entellomai* the verb used for "command" in Matthew 28:20,<sup>38</sup> there is a Mosaic background.

Three of the Old Testament commissioning narratives are about God or God through Moses commissioning Joshua: Deuteronomy 31:14-15; 23; Joshua 1:1-9 and all three are related to Matthew 28:16-20. The command to go and disciple the Gentiles, the imperative to observe all Jesus commanded and the promise of perpetual divine presence all have parallels in Joshua 1:1-9. In Joshua 1:2 Joshua is told to "go" and cross the Jordan (cf. Matt. 28:19). In Joshua 1:7 Joshua is told to "observe and to do as Moses My servant commanded you" (cf. Matt. 28:20). And in Joshua 1:9, there is the promise of God's presence: "for the Lord your God is with you where you go" (cf. Matt. 28:20). In fact with the exception of 1 Chronicles

<sup>36</sup> Allison, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

22:1-16 where David is pictured as being like Moses and Solomon is pictured as Joshua and where Joshua 1 is imitated, the only two commissioning narratives in the Old Testament with the promise of the divine presence are Deuteronomy 31:23 and Joshua 1:1-9, both commissionings of Joshua as the successor to Moses. Only one Old Testament commissioning narrative has the four following elements in the Septuagint: *poreuomai* ("go," cf. Matt. 28:19); repetitive *pas* ("all," cf. Matt. 28:19-20); the instruction to do what is commanded (with *entellomai*, cf. Matt. 28:20) and the promise of the divine presence (with *meta*, "with," cf. Matt. 28:20). That passage is Jeremiah 1:1-10 which has been shown to be modeled after Mosaic traditions. The obvious conclusion is that Matthew 28:16-20 like 1 Chronicles 22:1-16 and Jeremiah 1:1-10 is a commission narrative based on a Mosaic model.<sup>39</sup>

The case for Matthew 28:16-20 being based on the commissioning of Joshua is bolstered by The Testament of Moses,<sup>40</sup> a Jewish writing probably from the early first century.<sup>41</sup> In this non-inspired book there is a glimpse into Jewish thought at the time of Jesus. In this book there is an account of Moses commissioning Joshua (1:6-18). The text clearly combines Deuteronomy 31:14-15 and Joshua 1:1-9 and has Moses commence by saying, "Go forward with all your strength, that you may do every thing which has been commanded." The words strongly resemble Matthew 28:18-20 and are part of a commissioning narrative at the end of Moses' life. In addition the passage emphasizes God's lordship (1:11-12; cf. Matt. 28:18); mentions "the nations" or "Gentiles" (1:13, cf. Matt. 28:19). focuses on Joshua's study preservation of the Mosaic Torah (1:16-17, cf. Matt. 28:20) and ends with a reference to "the consummation of the end of days" (cf. Matt. 28:20). This underscores how Jesus in commissioning His disciples followed Moses' pattern for commissioning Joshua.<sup>42</sup>

In light of the above evidence it can be concluded that just as Moses at the end of his life commissioned Joshua to go and extend God's kingdom in the land populated by Gentiles and to observe all the commandments of the law and then promised God's abiding presence, so Jesus at the end of His ministry commissioned His disciples to go into the Gentile world, extending God's kingdom and teaching observance of all the commandments of the New Moses and then promising His abiding presence.<sup>43</sup>

#### G. **The Disposal of the Document**

In the Old Testament the covenant lawbook was placed in the temple. What is the temple of this age? First Corinthians 6:19 asks the question, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. . .?" This then is where we would expect God to place His New

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 263-64.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 264.

<sup>41</sup> James H. Charlesworth, "Pseudepigrapha," Harper's Bible Dictionary, p. 838.

<sup>42</sup> Allison, op. cit., pp. 264-65.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 266.

Covenant Law and that is the case. God says in Jeremiah 31:33 in speaking of the New Covenant, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it" (cf. 2 Cor. 3:3). So in both the Old and New Covenant ages the law is kept in the temple.

In the New Testament itself we have the document of the New Covenant which we are to treasure in our heart (Ps. 119:11). All Scripture belongs to the formal literary category of authoritative treaty words.<sup>44</sup> "Testament" means "covenant" and so within the Scriptures we have two covenant documents, the old and the new, the New Covenant documents having replaced the Old Covenant documents as authoritative for this age.<sup>45</sup>

#### H. **Periodic Reading**

The believer is to read (Rev. 1:3) and study (2 Tim. 2:15) the covenant documents on a regular basis.

#### I. **Witnesses**

Believers are witnesses to the New Covenant. This was uniquely true of the New Testament Church (Lk. 24:48; Acts 1:8). But it is the responsibility of every believer to be a witness of what we have seen and heard (1 Jn. 1:3) of the New Covenant and the Lord of the Covenant (1 John 1:1-2).

## II. **The Beginnings of the Kingdom**

The book of Acts records the spread of the Kingdom from Jerusalem, God's capital city, (Acts 1:3, 8) to Rome the capital city of the Roman Empire (Acts 28:16, 31).

#### A. **The Numerical Growth of the Church**

Noteworthy to the history of the book of Acts is the record of the growth of the body of Christ. Luke describes this growth in two ways. First Luke gives editorial updates throughout Acts indicating the ongoing growth of the church:

On the day of Pentecost, "Those who received (Peter's) word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:42). After the arrest of Peter and John, "many who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand" (Acts 4:4). After the ordination of the first deacons "the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). Then on the day of the stoning of Stephen, "a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles" (Acts 8:2). However after the conversion of Saul (Paul), "the church throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase" (Acts 9:31). The first major Gentile preaching point was Antioch and there

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<sup>44</sup> Meredith G. Kline, The Structure of Biblical Authority, p. 75.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

“considerable numbers were brought to the Lord” (Acts 11:24, cf. vs. 21). Back in Jerusalem a persecution broke against the church being directed by King Herod Agrippa I, “but the word of God continued to grow and to be multiplied” (Acts 12:24). Then as a result of the missionary journeys of Paul, “the churches were being strengthened in the faith and were increasing in number daily” (Acts 16:5). Near the very end of Paul’s ministry the judgment is the same, “the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing” (Acts 19:20).

## **B. The Growth of the Body of Christ through the Baptism of the Spirit**

A second way of looking at the expansion of the Kingdom in Acts is by noting the growth of the body of Christ through the baptism of the Spirit.

### **1. Definition of the Baptism of the Spirit**

The baptism of the Spirit is the act by which God places the believer into union with Christ, gives him the indwelling Holy Spirit, and gives him a new nature.

### **2. The Purposes of the Baptism of the Spirit**

a. The baptism of the Spirit places believers into the body of Christ which is the invisible church.

1 Corinthians 12:13 states “For by one Spirit were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

Galatians 3:27-28 says “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is therefore neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

This truth is demonstrated by the four occurrences of the baptism of the Spirit recorded in Acts and two additional occurrences regarding Israel:

#### **(1) Hebrew Christians Placed in the Body of Christ - Acts 2**

The promise of the baptism of the Spirit is given in Acts 1:4-5, 8. In Acts 2 the baptism of the Spirit occurs when the Spirit is poured upon the Jewish believers (Acts 2:17). When they received the baptism of the Spirit, there was speaking in tongues and other signs (Acts 2:1-4). Peter then stood up to explain that people were witnessing the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. In the Old Testament there are four prophecies of a pouring out of the Spirit upon Israel (Zech. 12:10; Ezek. 39:29; Isaiah 32:15; 44:1, 3) and one prophecy of a pouring out of the “Spirit on all mankind” (Joel 2:28-32). It is very significant which of these verses Peter says was fulfilled on Pentecost. He states, “This is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind’” (Acts 2:15-17). Thus the day of Pentecost was the beginning of the age when individuals out of all mankind, not



just primarily Israel, are placed into the body of Christ. On the day of Pentecost Jewish believers were the first from "all mankind" to be placed into the body of Christ. In Matthew 16:17, 19 Peter was given the keys of the kingdom and so it is natural that he be the one to open the kingdom of heaven to Hebrew Christians.

(2) Samaritan Believers Placed in the Body of Christ-Acts 8

In Acts 8 the first Samaritans believe (Acts 8:5, 12) and Peter is sent to open the kingdom to them (Acts 8:14-15). (The Samaritans were a heretical Jewish sect who just believed in the first five books of the Bible.) The expression the Spirit "had not fallen upon" them of Acts 8:16 is synonymous with being "baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 11:15-16). Thus the first Samaritans believe, they receive the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 8:16-17) and so are placed into the body of Christ.

(3) Gentiles Believers Placed in the Body of Christ - Acts 10-11

In Acts 10 Peter is sent to open the kingdom to the first Gentile converts (Acts 10:1-5). The Holy Spirit once again falls upon them and they receive the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 11:15-16) and are placed into the body of Christ. There is also speaking in tongues as on Pentecost (Acts 10:46).

(4) Disciples of John the Baptist Placed into the Body of Christ - Acts 19

In Acts 19:1-6 disciples of John the Baptist, the only other category of "all mankind" in God's eyes besides Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles receive the baptism of the Spirit. "The Holy Spirit came upon them" (Acts 19:6) is a synonym for the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 1:8 = Acts 1:5). The result once again was that "they began speaking with tongues and prophesying" (Acts 19:6). Thus these disciples of John received the baptism of the Spirit and were placed into the body of Christ.

(5) Israel in the Old Testament

Israel received a baptism both of water and of the Spirit when God constituted Israel as a nation/kingdom at the exodus. What had been a family was constituted as the people of God and was the initial people composing the body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 Paul describes Israel's passage through the Red Sea as a baptism "in the cloud and in the sea." The baptism in the sea was water baptism. To what does baptism "in the cloud" refer? The cloud refers to God's leading His people "in a pillar of cloud" (Ex. 13:21). Which person of the Trinity leads God's people? It is the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14). Thus the baptism "in the cloud" was a baptism in the Spirit forming Israel as the body of Christ. Incidentally, Ephesians 3:6 assumes that the body of Christ existed before the inclusion of Gentiles into it.

(6) In the Future Israel will be placed into the Body of Christ at its conversion at the second coming.

In Zechariah 12:10 God prophecies, "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication, so that they will look on Me Whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him."

Zechariah 12:10 the major Old Testament prophecy of the future conversion to God is quoted in Rev. 1:7 and applied to the second coming. In other words at the second coming Israel will literally "look on Me (God is speaking) whom they have pierced" (Zech. 12:10), realize that Jesus was their Messiah, and be converted as a nation. Thus at the second coming Israel will receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Zech. 12:10) and be placed into the body of Christ.

#### (7) Conclusion

Each occurrence of the baptism of the Spirit recorded in the Bible is when a religious group first believes and is placed into the body of Christ. Just as water baptism places a believer into the visible church (Acts 2:41), so the baptism of the Spirit places a believer in the invisible church (1 Cor. 12:13, cf. Eph. 1:22-23).

#### b. Believers receive the indwelling Holy Spirit through the Baptism of the Spirit.

The baptism of the Spirit (Acts 1:5) is "when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

To "receive the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:15, 17) is to have the Holy Spirit fall upon you (Acts 8:16).

To "receive the Holy Spirit" (Acts 10:47) is to have the Holy Spirit poured out upon you (Acts 10:45).

To "receive the Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:2) is to have the Holy Spirit come on you (Acts 19:6).

Thus a believer receives the Holy Spirit through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

#### 3. The Time of the Baptism of the Spirit

The baptism of the Spirit occurs when a person believes.

In Acts 11:16-17 Peter states regarding the conversion of Cornelius and his family, "I remembered the word of the Lord how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If God therefore gave to them the same gift also when we believed (NIV, an aorist participle) in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I should stand in God's way?" Since believers receive the Holy Spirit through the baptism of the Spirit and since Romans 8:9 states that all believers have the Spirit, the baptism of the Spirit must occur at conversion. Likewise since 1 Corinthians 12:13 says that all Christians are baptized by the Spirit into Christ's body, the baptism of the Spirit must occur at conversion. The experience which many Christians have subsequent to conversion is the filling of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) which is also related to the exercise of spiritual gifts (Acts 2:4).

#### 4. The Relation of the Baptism of the Spirit to Water Baptism

##### a. Israel under the Old Covenant

Paul states that when Israel crossed the Red Sea, "all were baptized into Moses in the cloud (the Holy Spirit) and in the sea (water)" (1 Cor. 10:1-2). Israel had both water and Spirit baptism.

##### b. Jesus

Jesus' baptism was one of water (Matt. 3:16a) and of the Spirit (Matt. 3:16b). In His case the Spirit descended upon Him as a dove (Matt. 3:16c).

In undergoing water baptism Jesus was offering Himself up to the curse of the covenant. By His baptism He was consecrating Himself to His sacrificial death on the cross. Jesus' baptism with the Spirit was His anointing as Messiah. (The Hebrew word "Messiah" and the Greek word "Christ" both mean "anointed.")

##### c. The First Jewish Believers

On the day of Pentecost there was both water baptism (Acts 2:38, 41) and baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5, 8; 2:17). It is interesting to note that the baptism with the Spirit was a pouring (Acts 2:17).

##### d. The First Samaritan Believers

The Samaritan believers received both water baptism (Acts 8:12) and the baptism with the Spirit (Acts 8:16-17).

##### e. The First Gentile Believers

Cornelius and his family received water baptism (Acts 10:47-48) and the baptism with the Spirit (Acts 10:44-47).

##### f. Disciples of John the Baptist

The disciples of John the Baptist received water baptism (Acts 19:5) and the baptism with the Spirit (Acts 19:6).

##### g. Israel at the Second Coming

Israel receives a baptism with the Spirit at the second coming (Zech. 12:10; Rev. 1:7).

Although their water baptism is not mentioned, it is stated that "in that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and impurity" (Zeph. 13:1). In Ezekiel 36:25 in addition to the giving of the indwelling Spirit (Ezek. 36:27), God says, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you will be clean."

##### h. Creation

It is interesting to note in light of the correspondence between baptism of water and the Spirit that God created the world through baptisms of water and the Spirit.

God creates the heavens (Gen. 1:8) by having them emerge from the midst of the waters (Gen. 1:6-7) as in water baptism. Likewise God creates the dry land by having it emerge from the midst of the waters (Gen. 1:9) as in water baptism.

All of this occurs with the Spirit of God moving or hovering over the face of the waters (Gen. 1:2). The only other usage in the Pentateuch of the Hebrew verb here translated moving is in Deut. 32:11 where it describes God's hovering over Israel in the pillar of cloud. (The word "waste" in Deut. 32:10 is the same Hebrew Word as "formless" in Gen. 1:2 showing the connection between the two passages). In other words the Spirit of God is pictured in Gen. 1:2 as hovering over creation in the pillar of cloud that led Israel out of Egypt and is referred to as the baptizing cloud I Cor. 10:1-2.

Thus God created the heavens and earth by a baptism of water and the Spirit in the same way He would later create the kingdom of Israel (1 Cor. 10:1-2; Ex. 19:6).

## Chapter Thirteen

### The Lawsuit of the New Covenant with the Church

The New Covenant age that we are living in will end with a covenant lawsuit as have earlier ages.

#### I. The Breaking of the Covenant

In the gospels we have a record of the institution of the New Covenant. As in every other age, men break the covenant. Hebrews 9:28-29 is a passage speaking of covenant breaking in this age, "Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will receive who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?"

The Bible pictures a culminating of evil throughout the age. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 4:1-3 that "the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods." This rebellion against God will culminate in the Antichrist who will open "his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. And it (will be) given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation (will be) given to him. And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain" (Rev. 13:6-8).

#### II. The Sending of Messengers

As in every other age, God will institute a lawsuit against the covenant breakers. The first stage of a covenant lawsuit is the sending of messengers as new covenant prophets (Eph. 4:11; etc.). The purpose of prophecy to covenant breakers in this age is to "convict," to "call to account" (1 Cor. 14:24) and to "disclose. . . the secrets of his heart" so that the covenant breaker "will fall on his face and worship God" (1 Cor. 14:25).

In Revelation 2:3 the letters to the seven churches are addressed to the angel of each church (Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14). The English word for "angel" is a transliteration of the Greek word *aggelos* (pronounced "angelos") which means "messenger."<sup>1</sup> It can be used either of human or heavenly beings. Whichever are being referred to in Revelation 2 and 3, these are, no doubt, covenant messengers<sup>2</sup> as the letters to the churches in general follow the pattern of Old Testament treaty/covenants.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Christian Literature, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 7.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Meredith G. Kline, By Oath Consigned (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> Klaus Baltzer, The Covenant Formulary (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 164-65.

Just as in God's covenant lawsuit with Israel two final covenant messengers, John the Baptist and Jesus, were sent to Israel, so at the end of this age two final covenant messengers will be sent to the covenant breaking Gentiles (Rev. 11:3-13). Since Revelation 11:2 indicates that Jerusalem is under Gentile domination for three and one-half years and since Revelation 11:3-13 locates the two witnesses in Jerusalem (Rev. 11:8) and speaks of their time of testimony as being an identical length of time (Rev. 11:3), it can be concluded that the witness of these two prophets was directed to Gentiles. This is underscored by the fact that it is the antichrist who kills them (Rev. 11:7; cf. Rev. 13:1-10) and "those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations" who "look at their dead bodies" (Rev. 11:9) in Jerusalem (Rev. 11:8).<sup>4</sup>

It is significant that it is to the Gentiles that God sends these last two prophets,<sup>5</sup> for it was with the Gentile church that Christ made the New Covenant (Heb. 10:15-17; Matt. 21:43; 28:19; Acts 2:16-17). Therefore, just as God sent two final covenant messengers to the covenant breakers of Israel in the persons of John the Baptist (Luke 16:16) and Jesus (Matt. 21:33-38; Mark 12:1-8; Luke 20:9-14) before the day of wrath upon Israel (Luke 21:23; Mal. 4:5),<sup>6</sup> so in Revelation 11:3-12 God sends His two final covenant messengers to the Gentiles before the day of His wrath against them (cf. Rev. 6:15-17). These are the final two messengers in God's lawsuit against Gentile covenant breakers.<sup>7</sup> Just as the ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus lasted for approximately three and one-half years, the testimony of the final two covenant messengers lasts a similar length of time.<sup>8</sup> Just as Jerusalem was the capitol of the Jewish covenant breakers at Christ's first coming, so it is a center of activity for the antichrist prior to the second coming (Dan. 11:45; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:4; cf. Rev. 11:2). Just as John the Baptist and Jesus were both killed in the environs of Jerusalem by the governmental authorities, so will the final two covenant messengers be martyred there (Rev. 11:7-8) by the antichrist (Rev. 11:7). And even as Jesus was raised on the third day (Matt. 16:21; Luke 24:21; 1 Cor. 15:4) and subsequently was taken to heaven (Acts 1:9), so after three and one-half days God will raise the two witnesses from the dead (Rev. 11:11) and then take them to heaven (Rev. 11:12).<sup>9</sup>

There is no reason for not interpreting the number "two" literally. This can be seen in Revelation 11:4 where the two witnesses are compared to "the two olive trees." Since in Zechariah 4 the "two olive trees" represent two individuals, Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor, one would naturally expect them to represent two individuals in Revelation 11.<sup>10</sup> Also, according to the Old Testament law, "The testimony of two men is true" (John 8:17; cf.

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<sup>4</sup>. E. Michael Rusten, "A Critical Evaluation of Dispensational Interpretation of the Book of Revelation" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1977, p. 416.

<sup>5</sup>. Cf. Kline, By Oath Consigned, pp. 51-52.

<sup>6</sup>. Ibid., pp. 51-64.

<sup>7</sup>. Jannie duPreez, "Mission Perspective in the Book of Revelation," Evangelical Quarterly, XLII (July 1970), 152-67.

<sup>8</sup>. R. Govett, The Revelation of St. John Literal and Future (London: Hamilton, Adams and Company, 1843), p. 168.

<sup>9</sup>. Rusten, op. cit., p. 417.

<sup>10</sup>. John F. Walvoord, The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), p. 180; Martin Rist, "Revelation of St. John," The Interpreter's Bible, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdom Press, 1967), XII:445.

Deut. 19:15).<sup>11</sup> Jesus Himself had set the precedent of sending men in pairs to testify as covenant messengers (Mark 6:7; Luke 10:1).<sup>12</sup>

Since the three and one-half year testimony of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:3) is mentioned in the verse following the reference to the treading down of Jerusalem of the same length of time (Rev. 11:2), the natural conclusion is that both Revelation 11:2 and 3 are referring to the same period of time, the three and one-half years preceding the second coming. In fact it is in this final three and one-half years (Rev. 13:5) that the antichrist "make(s) war with the saints. . . and overcomes them" (Rev. 13:6; cf. Rev. 11:7).<sup>13</sup>

In Malachi 4:5 God had stated, "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord." And one of the two witnesses is described as an Elijah-like figure who "if anyone desires to harm, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies" (Rev. 11:3) and who has "the power to shut up the sky in order that rain may not fall during the days of their prophesying" (Rev. 11:6). Elijah was a prophet (1 Kings 18:22; cf. Rev. 11:3) whose enemies were devoured by fire (2 Kings 1:9-14; cf. Rev. 11:5) and who decreed a drought (1 Kings 17:1; cf. Rev. 11:6) of three and one-half years (Luke 4:25; James 5:17; cf. Rev. 11:3).<sup>14</sup> However, just as John the Baptist who came "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17) was the Elijah who came (Matt. 17:10-12) "before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5) upon covenant breaking Israel,<sup>15</sup> so Jesus indicates that another "Elijah is coming" (Matt. 17:11) who will be one of the two witnesses of Revelation 11, another prophet coming "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17).<sup>16</sup> This witness will be "Elijah the prophet" who is sent "before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5) upon the Gentile covenant breakers.

Whereas John the Baptist as covenant messenger was an Elijah-like figure, Jesus was a Moses-like figure. It was He that went upon the mountain to give the Ten Commandments of the New Covenant. Similarly the other witness of Revelation 11 is described in Moses-like terms. Moses also saw his enemies devoured by fire but also had "power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague" (Rev. 11:6; cf. Ex. 7:17 - 12:36). Thus the final two Covenant messengers of both Old and New Covenants are Elijah-like and Moses-like.

John the Baptist and Jesus both had come preaching, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2; 4:17). John the Baptist had specifically "warned" his hearers "to flee from the wrath to come"(Matt. 3:7). Similarly, the final two witnesses will have a message of ultimatum,

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<sup>11</sup>. Walter Scott, Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ 4th ed. (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.), p. 230; cf. Merrill C. Tenney, "the Revelation," Bible Knowledge, VII (July 1959) 555; David Edward Aune, "St. John's Portrait of the Church in the Apocalypse," Evangelical Quarterly, XXXVIII (July 1966), 145.

<sup>12</sup>. Tenney, loc. cit.

<sup>13</sup>. Rusten, op. cit., p. 418.

<sup>14</sup>. Cf. Louis Vos, The Synoptic Traditions in the Apocalypse (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1965), pp. 126-30.

<sup>15</sup>. Cf. Kline, op. cit., pp. 51-54; J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), pp. 312-13.

<sup>16</sup>. J. Dwight Pentecost, Will Man Survive? (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), pp. 151-52.

facing their hearers with the twofold alternative of repenting (Rev. 11:13) and entering the kingdom (Rev. 11:15; 20:4-6) or experiencing the wrath of God (Rev. 6:17; 14:19 - 16:21).<sup>17</sup>

### III. The Declaration of War

In a covenant lawsuit, when the messengers were rejected and especially when they were killed, the lawsuit went into its second and final phase, a declaration of war on the covenant breakers.<sup>18</sup> The war was understood to be an ordeal in which God as covenant witness would vindicate the righteous and bring defeat to the guilty.

#### A. The Second Coming

The second coming of Christ is pictured in Revelation 19:11 as His coming to make war. John writes, "And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. . . . And the armies which are in heaven clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses" (Rev. 19:11-14).

The day of the Lord begins at the second coming. This is the day when God executes the curses of the covenant upon those who have broken it. Since war is the primary method by which the curses of the covenant are executed,<sup>19</sup> a prominent theme of the day of the Lord is holy war.<sup>20</sup> Another prominent motif of the day of the Lord is the self-manifestation of the Lord.<sup>21</sup> Both of these themes of the day of the Lord come together in Revelation 19:11-16. Christ is manifested to all as He comes to make war with those who have broken His covenant.<sup>22</sup>

Christ is described in Revelation 19:11-16 in terminology taken from Revelation 1-3:

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<sup>17</sup>. Rusten, *op. cit.* p. 420.

<sup>18</sup>. Kline, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52; cf. Albert E. Block, "Early Israel as the Kingdom of Yahweh," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XLI (October 1970), pp. 580-81.

<sup>19</sup>. F. Charles Fensham, "A Possible Origin of the Concept of the Day of the Lord," *Biblical Essays: Proceedings of the Ninth Meeting of "Die Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika and Proceedings of the Second Meetings of Die Nuwe-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap van Suid Afrika*, 1966, p. 95.

<sup>20</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>21</sup>. Ralph E. Klein, "The Day of the Lord," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XXXIX (September 1968), pp. 517-25.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Charles H. Giblen, *The Threat to Faith* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967), pp. 89-96, 135-39.



### Revelation 1-3

Rev. 3:14b - the faithful and true  
Rev. 3:7b - He who is . . . true  
Rev. 2:16 - Repent therefore; or else I am  
coming. . . and will make war  
Rev. 1:14c - And His eyes  
were like a flame of fire

Rev. 2:17c - A new name  
written. . .  
which no one knows  
but he who receives it.

Rev. 1:5 – by his blood  
Rev. 1:2a - Who bore witness to  
the Word of God  
Rev. 3:5a - He who overcomes  
shall thus be clothed in white garments

Rev. 1:16b - And out of His mouth  
came a sharp two-edged sword

Rev. 2:27 - And He shall rule them  
with a rod of iron

1:15 - The ruler of the kings of the earth

### Revelation 19:11-16

Rev. 19:11 - And I saw heaven opened; and  
behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon  
it is called

Faithful and True

and in righteousness He  
judges and makes war.

Rev. 19:12- And His eyes  
are a flame of fire

And upon His head are  
many diadems.

And He has a name  
written upon Him

which no one knows  
except Himself.

Rev. 19:13 - And He is clothed  
with a robe dipped in Blood

And His name is called  
the Word of God

Rev. 19:14 - the armies which are in heaven  
clothed in fine linen, white and clean  
were following Him on white horses

Rev. 19:15 - And from His mouth  
comes a sharp sword

so that with it He may smite the nations.

And He will rule them  
with a rod of iron

and He treads the wine press of the fierce  
wrath of God, the Almighty

Rev. 19:15 - And on His robe and on His  
thigh He has a name written

King of Kings

and Lord of Lords<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>. Donald Eugene Cook, "The  
Christology of the Apocalypse,"  
(unpublished Ph.D. dissertation,  
Duke University, 1962), pp. 42-43.

Christ is identified in Revelation 19:11-16 as the author of the letters to the seven churches (Rev. 1-3) to show that it is He who will come to execute on the unrepentant the curses contained in the letters. Because Christ is portrayed in His second coming in terms taken from the letters to the churches and since He is also pictured as carrying out the threats contained in the letters, the only logical conclusion is that those who do not repent will be among those with whom Christ will make war at His return.<sup>24</sup>

One question over which Christian interpreters differ is the time of the rapture of the church, the time when living believers are taken to heaven. The main text on the rapture of the church is 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. What is determinative about the timing of the rapture is the fact that 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 is parallel to Matthew 24:29-31, Matthew's account of the return of Christ "immediately after the tribulation of those days" (Matt 24:29):

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

vs16 – For  
the Lord Himself  
will descend  
From heaven  
with a shout  
with the voice of the archangel  
and with the trumpet of God:  
and the dead in Christ shall rise first  
vs17 - then we that are alive and remain  
shall be caught up together with them  
in the clouds  
  
to meet the Lord in the air  
and thus we shall ever be  
with the Lord.

Matthew 24:30-31

24:30 - they will see  
the Son of Man  
Coming  
on the clouds of heaven  
With power and great glory  
24:31 - And He will send forth His angels  
With a great trumpet  
  
and they will gather together His elect  
From the four winds  
From one end of heaven to the other.  
25:6 - Behold the Bridegroom!  
come out to meet Him.  
Matt. 25:10 - Those who were ready went in  
with Him to the wedding feast.<sup>25</sup>

The only two eschatological uses in the New Testament of the fairly rare word "meet" are in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and Matthew 25:6.<sup>26</sup> Therefore it will be at the second coming of Christ after the great tribulation that believers dead and alive will be taken to meet the Lord in the air.

The situation at the second coming is parallel to that of Israel in Egypt. There the children of Israel were in tribulation under Pharaoh. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, uses *thlipsis* the Greek word for "tribulation" to describe their plight in Exodus 4:31 and the verbal form *thlibo* in Exodus 3:9; 22:21 and 23:9. But the Lord appeared in a cloud (Ex. 13:21; 14:19) and saved them from their tribulation (Ex. 14:20-31). On the other hand, his wrath fell upon those who had been the source of their tribulation and

<sup>24</sup>. Rusten *op. cit.* p. 577.

<sup>25</sup> G. W. Garrod, The First Epistle to the Thessalonians: Analysis and Notes (London: Macmillan, 1899), 199.

<sup>26</sup> J. B. Orchard, "Thessalonians and the Synoptic Gospels," Biblica XIX (1938), 24.

Pharaoh and his armies perished in the Red Sea (Ex. 14:24-28).<sup>27</sup> The wrath of God following the second coming is described in terms of the plagues upon Egypt (Rev. 16:1-21).

## B. The Wrath of God

We read next in Revelation 19:15, "And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God the Almighty." The word "smite" in Revelation 19:15 is used in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, for God's dealing with His enemies in the day of the Lord (Isa. 11:15 LXX; Mal. 4:6 LXX).<sup>28</sup>

The book of Revelation continually speaks of a period called "the wrath of God" (Rev. 14:17 - 16:21; 19:15) which immediately follows the second coming (Rev. 14:14-16; 19:11). This period of the wrath of God lasts at least five months (Rev. 9:5, 10).

The first five bowls of Revelation 16 describe the wrath of God (Rev. 16:2-11). Revelation 16:8-11 gives a graphic description of unbelievers' response to the wrath of God, "And the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues; and they did not repent, so as to give Him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds."

## C. The Battle of Armageddon

The wrath of God (Rev. 16:1-11) ends with the battle of Armageddon when "the kings of the whole world. . . gather. . . together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty" (Rev. 16:14). Realizing the source of their suffering the kings of the earth gather to try to defeat the Lord Jesus, the source of their problems.

In Revelation 19:19-21 John says, "And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet. . . these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh."

The sword (Rev. 19:15) with which Christ slays the armies of the antichrist (Rev. 19:21) is a symbol of the oath curse by which Abraham ratified his covenant with God. In suzerainty treaties the vassal incorporated himself in the sphere of the suzerain's jurisdiction by oath. The oath invoked the curses of the treaty and was customarily portrayed in symbolic rites. Thus, circumcision, a "cutting off," symbolized the curse of the covenant: "An uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant" (Gen. 17:14). In Ezekiel 31-32, the uncircumcised are repeatedly identified with "those who were slain by the sword" (Ezek. 31:18; 32:19-21,

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<sup>27</sup> W. J. Erdman, *A Theory Reviewed* (Philadelphia: Frederick Eerdmans, n.d.), 26.

<sup>28</sup> Roger David Aus, "Comfort in Judgment" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1971), pp. 144-45.

24-26, 28-30, 32).<sup>29</sup> Thus in the old covenant the uncircumcised were under God's wrath (Jer. 4:4)<sup>30</sup> and therefore would be cut off by the sword of God Almighty.

To fail to take the self-maledictory oath was in itself to break the covenant and to bring the curse upon one's self.<sup>31</sup> It was the unbaptized that John the Baptist threatened with the "wrath to come" (Matt. 3:7) and with "unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:12). Therefore when Christ wages war "with the sword from (His) mouth (Rev. 19:21), He is executing the curses of the covenant on the unbaptized Gentiles who have broken the covenant by never confessing allegiance to Him through the oath-sign of baptism,<sup>32</sup> as well as upon those who, though they have joined themselves to God's people, have broken His covenant. The New Covenant, like the Old, contains both curses and blessings. Thus there will be those who have entered the New Covenant who will yet experience its curse (cf. Matt. 7:21-23; 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-49; 25:1-30; Heb. 6:4-9; 2 Pet. 2:20-22).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>. Kline, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-43.

<sup>30</sup>. J. Barton Payne, "The B'rith of Yahweh," *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. by J. Barton Payne (Waco: Word Books, 1970), p. 355.

<sup>31</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 355-56.

<sup>32</sup>. Cf. Kline, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-83.

<sup>33</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

# Chapter Fourteen

## The New Covenant with Israel

### I. The Making of the Covenant

#### A. *Background - The Messianic Covenant between God the Father and God the Son*<sup>1</sup>

God made a covenant with Adam before the Fall.<sup>2</sup> If Adam were disobedient, he would receive the curses of the covenant (which he did). If he had been obedient, he would have received the blessing symbolized by the tree of life. If he had been obedient, God would have conferred upon him the eternal kingdom as a royal grant to God's faithful servant.<sup>3</sup>

Corresponding to the covenant between God and the first Adam was the covenant in eternity past between God the Father and God the Son, the second Adam.<sup>4</sup> Whereas the first Adam was disobedient, the second Adam was obedient. This is particularly seen in the account of Jesus' temptation in contrast to Adam's temptation.

#### *Sphere of Temptation*

##### 1 John 2:16

"The lust of the flesh"

"The lust of the eyes"

"and the boastful pride of life"

#### *Adam and Eve's Temptation*

##### Genesis 3:6

"The woman saw that the tree was good for food"

"and that it was a delight to the eyes"

"and that the tree was desirable to make one wise"

#### *Christ's Temptation*

##### Luke 4

"If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread" (vs. 4)

"(The devil) led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time and the devil said to Him, 'I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if you worship before me, it shall be yours'"

"And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge concerning you and guard you...'"" (vss 9-11).

Christ, the second Adam, was victorious over temptation in the specific areas where the first couple were not. Jesus could throw out the challenge, "Which one of you convicts Me of sin?" (John 8:46). The author of Hebrews states that He was "tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

Christ's whole life is pictured in the New Testament as the obedient servant that the first Adam failed to be. The mission of Jesus had originated with the Father. Jesus declared, "I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter Two.

<sup>2</sup> see Chapter Four.

<sup>3</sup> Meredith G. Kline, Kingdom Prologue (published by the author, 1985), II:1.

Him who sent me” (John 6:38). Jesus is pictured as being sent on a covenantal mission by the Father with covenantal oath-commitments from Him. The Father covenants to the Son a kingship in Zion with a reign over the whole earth (Ps. 2:6-9), and an eternal royal priesthood (Ps. 110:4; cf. Heb. 5:6; 17,21). Jesus, identifying Himself as the royal Son of the Messianic Psalms thus says to His disciples, “Just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:29-30). As noted earlier the Greek word translated “grant” is the verbal form of the word “covenant”. Thus Jesus’ statement can be paraphrased, “Just as My Father has covenanted to me a kingdom, I covenant to you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom.” Jesus speaks these words at the last supper in the context of His inauguration of the New Covenant (Luke 22:20). Thus we have in Luke 22:29-30 the next thing to the actual application of the word “covenant” to the agreement between the Father and the Son. Later that night in prayer the Son of God recalled the Father’s commitment to Him before the foundation of the world to grant Him as the obedient Messianic servant the glory He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5, 24). He presented His claim that He had met the terms of the eternal covenant as the servant who had obediently fulfilled His mission “I have glorified Thee on earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do” (John 17:4). He then makes His request that the grant of glory contained in the covenant now be conferred, “And now glorify Thou me together with Thee before the world was” (John 17:5). Jesus, the second Adam, standing before His judgment tree could declare that He had overcome temptation and could therefore claim the blessing of His covenant with the Father.<sup>5</sup>

The covenantal commitments from the Father to the Son are seen in the covenant promises given by God to man. In the Abrahamic Covenant God promised royalty and a mediatorship of blessing to all nations to Abraham and his seed. In the Davidic Covenant the royal seed of Abraham was identified as a future son of David whose throne God swore would endure forever (II Sam. 7; Ps. 89). Paul identifies the seed of Abraham to be Christ (Gen. 3:16). He was the “seed...to whom the promise had been made” (Gal. 3:19). Jesus Christ was the one to whom God’s covenantal commitments given in promise and oath had been directed. Thus in God’s eternal plan God the Son received not only the mission of redemptive suffering but also the Father’s covenantal commitment of the reward of kingdom glory.<sup>6</sup>

Because in God’s plan both the first and second Adams were federal representatives of corporate humanity, obedience to the covenant would for each of them have the result that all represented by them would receive the grant of the kingdom. If the first Adam had been obedient, all those descended from him and represented by him would have received the blessing of being co-heirs of kingdom glory with him. However, in the case of the second Adam, not all humanity was represented by Him in His covenant of works. It is by the obedience of the One that many are made righteous (Rom. 5:19). Therefore only those in Christ are heirs with Him of the kingdom blessings of His covenant with the Father.<sup>7</sup>

## **B. The New Covenant as Testament**

In Koine Greek, the language in which the New Testament was written, the primary meaning of *diatheke*, the word usually translated “covenant” in the New Testament was “testament.”<sup>8</sup> A secondary usage from Aristophanes (427 B.C.) has the meaning of “compact: or “covenant.” It is usually translated “covenant” in the New Testament since the translators of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament use *diatheke* to translate *berith*, the Hebrew word for covenant instead

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<sup>4</sup> See *Unlocking Bible History I, Session 3*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, II:2-3.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, II:3.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, II:4.

of *suntheke*, the normal Greek word for “contrast” or “covenant.”<sup>9</sup> *Berith* is translated by *diatheke* 268 times and by *suntheke* once. Thus the New Testament writers were using Greek word for “covenant” that the Septuagint readers were used to. However in Hellenistic times “last will and testament” was the sole meaning of *diatheke*<sup>10</sup>

The Deuteronomic Covenant is an excellent illustration of the coalescence of the concepts of covenant and testament.<sup>11</sup> Deuteronomy is the document of the covenant renewal just prior to the death of Moses. Its primary purpose was to guarantee the dynastic succession from Moses to Joshua.

The Nimrud treaty of Esarhaddon provides an illustration of this relationship. The essence is expressed in the statement, “when Esarhaddon, king of Assyria dies, you will seat Ashurbanipal, the crown prince, upon the royal throne, he will exercise the kingship (and) lordship of Assyria over you.” The whole covenant, since it was concerned with dynastic succession, took effect at the death of Esarhaddon. It was the death of the author of the covenant which made the stipulations of the covenant operative. That is the legal key for understanding the structure of Deuteronomy 33 and 34. When Moses, God’s mediator-king over Israel, died, an official affixed his death notice to the treaty document (Deut. 34:1-8) thus validating the document and triggering the succession of Moses by Joshua.<sup>12</sup>

From the viewpoint of a vassal people a treaty guaranteeing the suzerain’s dynastic succession is a statement of their covenantal relationship to their overlord. On the other hand from the viewpoint of the royal son(s), the arrangement is testamentary. Testament and suzerainty treaty are not simple synonyms for one another. However, to the extent that a suzerainty treaty is concerned with dynastic succession and inheritance, it is testamentary.<sup>13</sup> From Joshua’s point of view as divine appointee the book of Deuteronomy was testamentary, but Deuteronomy 33 contains Moses’ testamentary blessing on the twelve tribes and to this all Israel was the beneficiary.<sup>14</sup>

When we come to the New Testament, the themes of testament and covenant coalesce once again in the New Covenant. It must be remembered that the same word *diatheke* means both covenant and testament. In Hebrews 9 the author in discussing the New Covenant appeals to procedures governing testaments (Heb. 9:16-17). There the author writes, “For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.” (Heb. 9:16-17). When understood against the background of the dynastic-testamentary aspect of ancient suzerainty treaties, and of Deuteronomy in particular, Hebrews 9:16-17 can be understood. In fact one of the recurrent themes of Hebrews is dynastic appointment and perpetuity (Heb. 1:2 ff., 8:5:6 ff.; 6:20 ff.), the very area of covenantal administration where covenant and testament merge. Hebrews 9:16-17 suggests the picture of God’s children (cf. Heb. 2:13) inheriting His universal dominion as their eternal portion (Heb. 9:15b; cf. 1:14; 2:5 ff.; 6:17; 11:7 ff.). The wonder of the Messianic mediator-testator is that the royal inheritance of God’s children which becomes in force only through His death is one co-regency with the living testator. Jesus is both the dying Moses and the succeeding Joshua. Jesus succeeds Himself in resurrection power and ascension glory.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 182.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395.

<sup>10</sup> Arndt and Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 182.

<sup>11</sup> i.e. last will and testament.

<sup>12</sup> Meredith G Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), pp. 147-48.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

A second line of evidence from the Old Testament is also helpful in understanding the ideas of covenant and testament. The covenant of grant was a common legal procedure in the ancient Near East and serves as model for understanding God's covenants with Abraham and David. In a royal grant, a gift of land, dynasty or priesthood was given to an individual who had been especially faithful to his master. The master would adopt the man as his son and then would grant him the unconditional inheritance. The phrase, "I will be his father and he shall be my son" was an adoption formula and formed the legal basis for receiving the inheritance.<sup>16</sup>

### **C. The Book Sealed with Seven Seals (Rev. 5) as a Testament**

Revelation 5 contains another example of God using contemporary legal concepts to demonstrate the significance of His covenantal program. In Revelation 5 the Lamb comes to God the Father and receives a "book...sealed up with seven seals" (Rev. 5:1-7). In the Roman Empire, a book sealed with seals was a last will and testament.<sup>17</sup> Seven witnesses were required to sign and seal the document.<sup>18</sup> The seven seals were attached to the threads with which the document was tied together, so that all seven seals had to be broken before the will could be read.<sup>19</sup> After the death of a testator, a testament could not be opened until the living witness had been brought together and had acknowledged that their seals had not been tampered with. It would then be opened and executed. Thus in Revelation when the final seal is broken and the testament opened (Rev. 8:1), immediately John indicates the presence of "the seven angels who stand before God" (Rev 8:2) who no doubt are the required seven witnesses. John mentions them immediately following the opening of the testament to indicate that all legal requirements had been met.<sup>20</sup>

Christ is pictured in Revelation 5 both as the one who has died (Rev. 5:6) and as the succeeding heir "who is worthy...to take the book and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God and they will reign upon the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10). Not only did Christ die but through His death formed the kingdom people who will be His joint heirs.

The identification of the seven-sealed book as a testament is consonant with the rest of Scripture. The New Testament frequently speaks of the church gaining possession of its future blessings under the figure of an inheritance and, accordingly, uses the language of a testamentary disposition. In Roman law the appointment of an heir was the primary element in a testament.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, Hebrews 1:1-2 tells us that God has appointed His Son "heir of all things." Just as we make our children our heirs, so Romans 8:16-17 states, "The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and of children, heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ, of indeed we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him." Paul adds in Galatians 4:7, "Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and of a son, then a heir of God." As a matter of fact, every New Testament writer with the exception of Jude uses this figure of speech.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Meredith G. Kline, Treaty of the Great King. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1963), p. 41.

<sup>17</sup> Ferdinand Mackeldey, Handbook of Roman Law. (Philadelphia: I. and J. W. Johnson and Co., 1883), pp. 514-17.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 516.

<sup>19</sup> Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel publications, 1953), III:406.

<sup>20</sup> E. Michael Rusten, "A Critical Examination of Dispensational Interpretation of the Book of Revelation" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, New York University, 1977), pp. 278-79.

<sup>21</sup> Berger, Encyclopedia Dictionary of Roman Law, p. 733; J. A.B. O'Keffe, "Roman Law," The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, V:144.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Zahn, New Testament Introduction, III: 394.



What is the inheritance that God's people are pictured as receiving? In Daniel 7, a parallel passage to Revelation 4-5, the specific parallel to Christ's receiving the seven sealed book from God the Father (Rev. 5:8) is receiving a kingdom (Dan. 7:14) which is in turn is given to the saints (Dan. 7:27). In Matthew 25:34 Christ says, "Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (cf. Matt. 21:33-44; Luke 22:29-30; I Cor. 6:9-10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 1:14; 5:5; Col. 1:5,12-13; 3:24; Heb. 6:12; 9:15; James 2:15; I Peter 1:3-4; Rev. 21:7). Thus the inheritance contained in the testament is the kingdom.<sup>23</sup> This inheritance is still laid up in heaven (I Peter 1:4) and therefore the testament has not yet been opened and executed.<sup>24</sup>

#### ***D. Israel is Converted at the Second Coming***

The key Old Testament prophecy of the conversion of Israel at the second coming is Zechariah 12:10, "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born."

Both Revelation 1:7 and Matthew 24:30 quote Zechariah 12:10-14 and date it to the second coming (the Zechariah quotation is from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, abbreviated LXX):

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<sup>23</sup> James D. Hester, Paul's Concept of Inheritance (Edenborough: Oliver and Boyd, 1968), pp. 36-104.

<sup>24</sup> Zahn, op. cit., III:394.

Revelation 1:7

Matthew 24

Zechariah 12 LXX

Behold,  
 He  
**is coming**  
 with **clouds**,

and every eye  
 shall see  
 Him,  
 even those who  
**Pierced Him;**  
**and**  
**All**  
**the tribes**  
 of **the earth** (Gr: *ge*)  
**will mourn**

vs 30a And then shall appear the sign  
 of the Son of Man in heaven,  
 vs 30c and  
 they shall see  
 the Son of Man  
**coming**  
 on the **clouds**  
 of heaven  
 with power and great glory

vs 30b **and then**  
**all**  
**the tribes**  
 of **the earth** (Gr: *ge*)  
**will mourn,**

vs 10 They  
 will look on  
 Me  
 (Hebrew: whom they  
**have pierced;)**

vs 14 **And**  
**All**  
**the tribes**  
 vs 12 **the land** (Gr: *ge*)  
**will mourn**<sup>25</sup>

Clearly both Revelation 1:7 and Matthew 24:30 are based on Zechariah 12:10.<sup>26</sup> In other words, Revelation 1:7 and Matthew 24:30 place the fulfillment of Zechariah 12:10 at the second coming of Christ.<sup>27</sup> At the return of Christ, Israel will literally “look on” Him “whom they pierced” (Zech. 12:10) and be converted when the Spirit is poured out on them as it was on “all mankind” (Acts 2:17) on the day of Pentecost. The pouring out of the Spirit upon Israel (Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 39:29; Zech. 12:10) awaits the second coming. Just as the pouring out of the Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2:17) was the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 1:5; cf. Acts 1:8) placing believers from “all mankind” (Acts 2:17) into the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13), so the pouring out of the Spirit upon Israel (Zech. 12:10) will be the baptism of the Spirit placing Israel into the body of Christ (cf. Rom. 11:24) when the kingdom is restored to Israel (cf. Acts 1:6).

Who specifically is converted at the second coming? Revelation 7 is a picture of the situation immediately after the second coming (Matt. 24:29-30; cf. Rev. 6:12-17) answering the question in the day of wrath “who is able to stand?” (Rev. 6:17). The redeemed who are pictured on earth are 144,000 saved Jews (Rev. 7:3-8) who receive a seal on their foreheads (Rev. 7:3) to protect them from the judgments God is about to bring on the earth (Rev. 7:12-). Why just 144,000? In Ezekiel 20:35-36 God states that in the future wilderness experience of Israel when she flees into the wilderness from the antichrist (Matt. 24:15-20) for the final three and one-half years just prior to the second coming (Rev. 12:6, 14), He will enter into judgment just like He did during their earlier forty year wilderness experience when they came out of Egypt. What happened the first time? Every male twenty years of age or older who left Egypt died under God’s judgment except Joshua and Caleb (Num. 14:28-30). Jeremiah 30:7 and Daniel 12:1 both speak of this future experience of Israel as being the worst judgment ever upon her. What that means is that it will be worse than the holocaust when six million Jews died. Yet Jeremiah 30:7 speaks of Israel’s being saved at the end of this experience.

<sup>25</sup>.Cf. Robert Horton Gundry, The Use of the Old Testament in Saint Matthew's Gospel with Special Reference to the Messianic Hope (London: E. J. Brill, 1967), pp. 52-54.

<sup>26</sup>.Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>.S. P. Tregelles, The Hope of Christ's Second Coming 2nd ed. (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, Limited, 1886), p. 13.

The 144,000 are the Joshuas and Calebs of the future wilderness experience who survive to enter the Promised Land of the millennium.

Since Israel is suddenly converted as a nation after having been under God's wrath (Luke 21:23; 1 Thess. 2:16), it is necessary for God to renew the New Covenant with them (Jer. 31:31-37).

## ***E. Features of the New Covenant with Israel***

### **1. Preamble (Jer. 31:35a and c; cf. 31b)**

The Lord (of hosts) is identified as the one making the covenant in both Jeremiah 31:31 and 35. "The Lord of hosts is His name" (Jer. 31:35c).

### **2. Historical Prologue (Jer. 31:35b)**

In Jeremiah 31:35 we have the historical prologue, "Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar." It is God the creator who is making the covenant.

Jeremiah 31:32 also has the force of a historical prologue where the Lord declares that He will make a new covenant with Israel "not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My Covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them."

### **3. The Promise (Jer. 31:33c - 34)**

The promise of the New Covenant for Israel is found in Jeremiah 31:33c - 34, "I will be their God and they shall be My people. And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more." As Paul writes in Romans 11:26 "Thus all Israel will be saved."

The gift of the Holy Spirit is also a promise of the New Covenant to Israel. In Isaiah 59:21 the Lord says, "As for Me, this is My covenant with them. . . My Spirit which is upon you and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor of your offspring's offspring. . . from now and forever." According to Ezekiel 37:14 the Spirit will be an indwelling Spirit. There God says, "I will place My Spirit within you" (Ezek. 37:14). This of course will begin at the future pouring out of the Spirit at the second coming (Zech. 12:10).

### **4. Instructions for the Disposal of the Text**

The Lord indicates in Jeremiah 31:33 what He will do with the document, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it." Since from Pentecost the believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16), once again God is placing the covenant document in the temple.

### **5. The Oath**

God gives His oath in Jeremiah 31:36-37: "'If this fixed order (cf. vs. 35) departs from before Me,' declares the Lord, 'then the offspring of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever.' Thus says the Lord, 'If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off the

offspring of Israel for all that they have done' declares the Lord.'" Since it is God who "gives the sun for light by day, and the fixed order of the moon and stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar" (Jer. 31:35), the fixed order of the world will not depart.

## **6. The Solemn Ceremony**

### ***a. The Solemn Ceremony as Covenant Meal***

In Exodus 24:9-11 the Old Covenant with Israel was inaugurated at a meal where the elders of Israel went up on Mount Sinai and "ate and drank" (Ex. 24:11) with God, most likely the pre-incarnate Son of God.

In the gospels the New Covenant with the church was instituted at a meal where the disciples, the elders of the church (cf. 1 Pet. 5:1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1), ate and drank with the incarnate Son of God (Matt. 26:20-30 and parallels). It is unknown where the upper room was located but tradition says that it was on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

When we look for clues to the inauguration of the New Covenant with Israel in the book of Revelation, one of the things that we note is that three sets of seven that occupy about half the content of the book, the seven seals, seven trumpets and seven bowls, all end with the same event, "peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake" (Rev. 8:5; 11:19; 16:18). This is what happened at the making of the Old Covenant with Israel when there were "thunder and lightning flashes. . . and a very loud trumpet sound. . . and the whole mountain quaked violently" (Ex. 19:16-18). In addition, very similar things had occurred in connection with the New Covenant with the Church (Matt. 27:45, 51-54).

Very frequently in the book of Revelation John quotes from an Old Testament passage when he wants to indicate that the reader is to read the quoted Old Testament passage to learn the details of what is being portrayed in that particular passage of Revelation. (For example, Revelation 8:7 alludes to Ezekiel 38:22; Revelation 8:8 to Jeremiah 51:25, etc.) Thus in Revelation 8:5; 11:19 and 16:18 John is indicating that an event similar to Exodus 19-20 is taking place, the institution of the New Covenant with Israel.

In Revelation 14:1 John says, "I looked and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion and with Him, one hundred and forty-four thousand having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads." In other words, at the institution of the New Covenant with Israel, it is not just seventy of the elders that go up upon the mount (Ex. 24:9-11) but all of the redeemed, all 144,000.

At the Last Supper they sang a song together before they went out (Matt. 26:30). The 144,000 as new believers apparently don't know any appropriate songs because they are taught a song by the raptured church which is before the throne in heaven. John states in Revelation 14:2-3, "And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne. . . and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth" (Rev. 14:2-3).

An interesting passage to read in light of this is Hebrews 12:18-21. There in writing to Hebrew Christians, the author states referring to Israel's experience at the institution of the Old Covenant at Mount Sinai, "You have not come to a mountain that may be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and

whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which was such that those who heard begged that no further word should be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command, 'If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned.' And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, 'I am full of fear and trembling.'" On the other hand the author says to his readers in verses 22-24, "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven and to God, the judge of all. . . and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant and to the sprinkled blood" (cf. Ex. 24:8).

Jesus had said to His disciples at the institution of the New Covenant with the church, "Just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at my table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:29-30. Then as He ate the covenant renewal/Passover meal with His disciples, it was the third of the four prescribed cups of wine which was the cup of the New Covenant (Matt. 26:27-28; Mark 14:24-25; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). the third cup was drunk immediately after supper (cf. 1 Cor. 11:25) and was called "the cup of blessing" (1 Cor. 10:16), The fourth and final cup is referred to in Christ's statement, "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29). The fourth cup celebrated God's kingdom<sup>28</sup> and Jesus is thus saying that He will not drink the fourth cup until the covenant renewal meal with Israel after Israel's conversion at the second coming (Zech. 12:10; Rev. 1:7) and the subsequent full realization of God's kingdom. It is then that the Twelve will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:30b) as the 144,000 are defined (Rev. 7:4-8) and will eat and drink at Jesus' table (Luke 22:30a) at the institution of the New Covenant with Israel, just as they then were eating and drinking at His table at the institution of the New Covenant with the church. There is thus a centuries long gap in the passover/covenant meal of the New Covenant. Jesus drank the first three cups of wine at the institution of the New Covenant with the church. His drinking of the fourth cup awaits the meal instituting the New Covenant with Israel at the realization of God's kingdom (Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18). Thus the New Covenant is pictured as one (Jer. 31:31) with one covenant meal which begins with the New Covenant being instituted with the Gentile church in the upper room and ending with the renewal of the New Covenant with Israel at "His appearing and His kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:1).

In Revelation 11:19 in speaking of this time, John writes, "And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in the temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm" at the time of the institution of the New Covenant with Israel symbolizing that all of God's covenant promises to His people have now been fulfilled. It is also possible that copies of the New Covenant document will be placed in the ark as they had been at the institution of the Old Covenant (Ex. 25:16).

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<sup>28</sup> David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: University of London, Athlone Press, 1956), pp. 330-31.

## ***b. The Solemn Ceremony as the Marriage Supper of the Lamb***

In the Old Testament marriage was understood as a covenant and the concept of a marriage supper was closely linked to the covenant relationship.<sup>29</sup> In light of this it is interesting to note how Christ's coming for His bride and the marriage supper of the Lamb follow the pattern of Jewish marriage practice with the marriage supper being the covenant meal.

The Jewish bride was typically selected by the father of the bridegroom.<sup>30</sup> The first step in the marriage was the payment of the bride price by the bridegroom to the father of the bride. This effected not the marriage itself but the betrothal (cf. 2 Sam 3:14).<sup>31</sup> There is a repeated betrothal pattern in Genesis. The future bridegroom (Gen. 28:1) or his servant (Gen. 24:2) journeys to a foreign land (Gen. 24:2-10; 28:1-5; 29:1). There he meets a girl at a well (Gen. 24:11-15; 29:2-11). Then either the man (Gen. 29:10) or the woman (Gen. 24:16-27) draws water from the well after which the girl returns home to announce the glad news of the man's arrival (Gen. 24:28; 29:12). At that point the betrothal is accomplished (Gen. 24:29-60; 29:13-30), usually after the man has been invited to a meal (Gen. 24:33; 29:22).<sup>32</sup> Robert Alter summarizes the symbolism, "The hero's emergence from the immediate family circle...to discover a mate in the world outside is figured in the young man's journey to a foreign land.... The well at an oasis is obviously a symbol of fertility and, in all likelihood, also a female symbol. The drawing of water from the well is the act that emblematically establishes a bond—male-female, host-guest, benefactor-benefited— between the stranger and the girl, and its apt result is the excited running to bring the news, the gestures of hospitality, the actual betrothal."<sup>33</sup>

In preparation for marriage in Jesus' day, the bride clothes herself in wedding attire prior to the time when she was taken to her husband's home.<sup>34</sup> This was the beginning of the wedding festivities.<sup>35</sup> On the appointed day, the bridal procession set out to meet the bridegroom, the bridegroom being carried on a litter by the most important guests.<sup>36</sup> The groom accompanied by the best man, relatives and friends came out to meet the bride and to escort her to his house or his father's house (1 Mass. 9:37-39).<sup>37</sup> In the house elaborate preparations had been made.<sup>38</sup> According to Tobit 7:14 a written marriage contract was drawn up which was considered a covenant.<sup>39</sup> A marriage was held normally lasting for seven days.<sup>40</sup> On the first night of the feast, the climax of the wedding came when the bride was presented to the groom. It was the custom when a child was born to plant a tree. The tree was then used in the construction of a wedding

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<sup>29</sup> Warten H. Woudstra, "The Everlasting Covenant in Ezekiel 16:59-63," *Calvin Theological Journal* VI (April, 1971), 25. W. A. Brueggemann, "Of the Same Flesh and Bone (Gn 2, 23a)," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, XXXII (October, 1970), pp. 541-42.

<sup>30</sup> O. J. Baab, "Marriage," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* 3:283.

<sup>31</sup> Gordon P. Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: Biblical Law and Ethics as Developed from Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 246-47.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* n.p.: Basic Books, 1981, 52.

<sup>33</sup> Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 52.

<sup>34</sup> Richard A. Batey, "The Church, the Bride of Christ" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1961), p. 174-75; Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1973), p. 85.

<sup>35</sup> Batey, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176; J. S. Wright and J. A. Thompson, "Marriage," *The New Bible Dictionary*, p. 788.

<sup>38</sup> Batey, *loc. cit.*

<sup>39</sup> Wright and Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 789.

pavilion which was covered with a canopy of beautiful fabrics.<sup>41</sup> The groom stood in front of the canopy and the bride in her wedding attire was presented to him.<sup>42</sup> The bride and groom were then brought into the pavilion where they were left alone and the marriage was consummated.<sup>43</sup>

The parallelisms between the Jewish wedding and the second coming of Christ are striking. The people of God are referred to as a “bride” (Rev. 21:29; 22:17). The bride who was chosen by God the Father before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4) is “betrothed. . . to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:2) who is the bridegroom (Matt. 9:15; 25:1, 5, 10; John 3:29). In Revelation 19:7 the bride is literally referred to as the “wife” because according to Jewish law this was the appropriate designation for one betrothed.<sup>44</sup>

Jesus often performed symbolic acts, like the cursing of the fig tree. His meeting the Samaritan woman at the well is one such act. That incident includes all the of the features of the betrothals of Rebekah to Isaac in Genesis 24:1-54, of Rachel to Jacob in Genesis 28:1-29:20 and of Zipporah to Moses in Exodus 2:5-40. John had begun his gospel by noting, “He came to his own, and those who were his own did not receive Him” (John 1:10). Jesus announced, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 15:24). But in John 4 he goes to the “foreign country” of Samaria. Sychar is most likely the modern city of Askar on the shoulder of Mount Ebal across from Mount Gerazim where the Deuteronomic Covenant was ratified (Josh. 8:30-35). It is there that Jesus now goes for the symbolic betrothal to his “foreign bride,” the Gentile church (Matt. 21:43-22:10). There Jesus goes to Jacob’s well (John 4:6). The fact that it is at Jacob’s well that the symbolic betrothal takes place to a non-Jewish bride is further anticipation of the Jew’s coming rejection. In going to the well, Jesus is both the bridegroom, identified as such by John in the previous chapter (John 3:29), and the servant (John 13:12-17; Matt. 20:28).

At the well he meets the Samaritan woman who represents the “foreign” bride he will take after the Jews have rejected their Messiah (Matt. 21:39-22:10). Jesus asks the woman for a drink of water (John 4:7) presumably because the disciples, who would normally have drawn the water for him, had gone into town to buy food (John 4:8).<sup>45</sup> Since Samaritan women and their utensils were at this time no doubt considered ritually unclean, the woman replies, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?” Then John adds a parenthesis, “For Jews do not use dishes Samaritans have used.”<sup>46</sup> She did not realize that instead of being defiled by what he touched, Jesus sanctified what he touched (cf. Matt. 8:3).<sup>47</sup> Jesus then offers her living water (John 4:10-15).

It is significant that Jesus shows her her sinful condition by pointing out, “You had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband” (John 4:18) – hardly a likely representative bride for the Son of God. Yet that is the beauty of this symbolic betrothal. Though we may not have had five husbands, we in

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 175, Wright and Thompson, “Marriage,” p. 789; Roland de Vaux, Ancient Israel (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1961), p. 34; Joachim Jeremias, “*numphe, numphias*,” Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, IV:1180.

<sup>41</sup> Batey, op. cit., p. 175; Wright and Thompson, op. cit., p. 789; de Vaux, op. cit., p. 34; Jeremias, op. cit., IV:1100.

<sup>42</sup> Batey, op. cit., p. 179; Wright and Thompson, op. cit., p. 789.

<sup>43</sup> Batey, op. cit., p. 179-80; Wright and Thompson, op. cit., p. 789; de Vaux, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>44</sup> George Eldon Ladd, A Commentary on the Revelation of John (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 246-47; Isbon T. Beckwith, The Apocalypse of John (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919), p. 726; Albrecht Oepke, “*gune*” Theological Dictionary of the New Testament I:776.

<sup>45</sup> D. A. Carson, The Gospel According to John (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1991), 217.

<sup>46</sup> NIV marginal reading; Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, The New International Commentary on the New Testament ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 259.

<sup>47</sup> Carson, The Gospel According to John, 218.

our natural sinful state are no more qualified to be the bride of Christ than the woman at the well. Having heard his confession that He is the Messiah, she is in such a hurry to run back and tell others that she forgets her water pot at the well (John 4:28).

Next comes the meal. “The disciples were requesting Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat’” (John 4:31). Jesus then responds, “My food is to do the will of him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work” (John 4:34). Then, revealing his message of symbolic betrothal to the foreign bride, Jesus says, “Behold, I say to you lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white for harvest.” This is then followed by the report that “from that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him” (John 4:39) and therefore will be part of “His bride [who] has made herself ready” (Rev. 19:7).

Just as the Jewish bride prepared for her wedding by clothing herself in beautiful garments, so the saints in heaven “clothed” themselves “in fine linen, bright and clean” (Rev. 19:8). In Revelation 6:11 it is said of the departed saints, “there was given to each of them a white robe.”<sup>48</sup>

The next event is the coming of the bridegroom. In Revelation 19:11 Christ’s second coming is described in terms of Psalm 45 where the bridegroom-king who is characterized by truth (Ps. 45:4; cf. Rev. 19:11) is pictured as riding (Ps. 45:4; cf. Rev. 19:11) with his sword (Ps. 45:3; cf. Rev. 19:15), victorious over his enemies (Ps. 45:4-5; cf. Rev. 19:11, 15-21), who fall at his feet (Ps. 45:5; cf. Rev. 19:15).<sup>49</sup>

Whereas in the Jewish wedding friends and relatives bore the bride to meet the bridegroom to the accompaniment of musical instruments,<sup>50</sup> at the second coming Christ “will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other” (Matt. 24:3). So the church is “caught up. . . to meet the Lord (the bridegroom) in the air” (1 Thess. 4:17).<sup>51</sup>

In Jewish ceremonies, the bridegroom, having met his bride, brought her back either to his house or his father’s house where elaborate preparations had been made. When Christ “comes again,” He “will receive” His bride to Himself and take her to His “Father’s House” which has been “prepared” for her (John 14:2-3).<sup>52</sup>

In the Jewish wedding, arrival at the father’s house meant the beginning of the marriage supper.<sup>53</sup>

Revelation 19:7-9 states, “the marriage of the Lamb has come. . . ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’” Jesus equated the marriage supper with His kingdom. In Matthew 22:2, Jesus says, “the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.”<sup>54</sup>

The millennial kingdom will be the Messianic banquet, the marriage supper of the Lamb.<sup>55</sup> This will be the completion of the covenant renewal meal of the New Covenant where Christ drinks “of the fruit of the vine” when “the kingdom of God comes” (Luke 22:18).<sup>56</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Rusten, *op. cit.*, p. 559.

<sup>49</sup> Rusten, *op. cit.*, p. 560; cf. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms 1-50*, Vol. XVI of *The Anchor Bible*, ed. by William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freeman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1964), p. 272.

<sup>50</sup> Batey, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-76.

<sup>51</sup> Rusten, *op. cit.*, pp. 560-61.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 561.

<sup>53</sup> Batey, *op. cit.*, p. 175; Wright and Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 789; de Vaux, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>54</sup> Ladd, *op. cit.*, p. 247; Clifford Walter Edwards, “Bridegroom-Bride Imagery for Christ and the Church in the New Testament against its Biblical Background” (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1964), pp. 150-59.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Ethelbert Stauffer, “*gameo, gamos*” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, I:654.

<sup>56</sup> Rusten, *op. cit.*, p. 563.



On the first night of the Jewish wedding feast the bride was presented to her husband and the marriage consummated in a pavilion constructed from the bridegroom's tree. In Revelation 21 following the thousand year millennial kingdom, "new Jerusalem" comes "down from heaven (to the new earth) from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2). Since "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years" (2 Pet. 3:8), this may be seen as the night following the first day of the wedding feast. The fact that God's people are still referred to as the bride following the millennium (Rev. 21:2, 9) indicates that the marriage has not yet been consummated.<sup>57</sup> The creation of the new earth to which the bride is taken is the result of Christ's having "become a curse for us" on "the tree" (Gal. 3:13). The canopy over the pavilion of the new earth is the glorious new heavens. When "a loud voice from the throne" announces, "Beloved the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them" (Rev. 21:3), this is the indication of the final union of God and His people.<sup>58</sup>

Thus the symbolism of the Jewish wedding is perfectly pictured at the second coming and the marriage supper is the culmination of the covenant renewal meal of the New Covenant.

## 7. The Sign of the Covenant

It appears that in the New Covenant with Israel that circumcision is reinstated as the sign of the covenant. Ezekiel 44:9 states, "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'No foreigner uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the sons of Israel, shall enter My sanctuary.'"

It is apparent that sabbath keeping is also reinstated as part of the New Covenant. The Lord says in Isaiah 56:6, "Also the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, To minister to Him, and to love the name of the LORD, To be His servants, every one who keeps from profaning the sabbath And holds fast My covenant." This would be appropriate for the millennium is a Sabbath rest for the earth.

# II. The Covenant Age

## A. The Investiture of the King

In the light of ancient covenants of dynastic succession, one can see a clear correspondence between Revelation 5 and the investiture of a king.<sup>59</sup> Whenever there was a change of rulers in Israel, the covenant was ratified when the king was invested in his office. In the ancient Near East there was a precise procedure for the investiture of a vassal king. The same pattern is found both in Hittite treaties and in God's investiture of his vassal kings over Israel;<sup>60</sup> and Revelation 5 shows several striking similarities to this pattern.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Rusten, op. cit., pp. 564-65.

<sup>58</sup> Rusten, op. cit., p. 565.

<sup>59</sup> Daniel 7, parallel passage to Revelation 4-5, also depicts the investiture of the Son of Man as king. Cf. Edward J. Young, *Daniel's Vision of the Son of Man* (London: Tyndale Press, 1958), pp. 22 ff.

<sup>60</sup> Baltzer, *Covenant Formulary*, pp. 79-80; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, pp. 85-91.

<sup>61</sup> Stauffer, *Christ and the Caesars*, pp. 182-84 shows how Revelation 5 also reflects the imagery of the Caesars.

The setting of the investiture was the temple (cf. II Kings 11:9-13)<sup>62</sup> and Revelation 4-5 describes a heavenly temple.<sup>63</sup>

In the actual investiture, the vassal took an oath pledging his fealty to the suzerain (cf. II Kings 11:17).<sup>64</sup> The oaths of the Old Testament covenants had two major characteristics: consecration and malediction. The oath of the vassal to the great king was one of allegiance. The oaths often invoked the curses of the covenant. The oath-curses were customarily portrayed in symbolic rites, the ritual dramatizing the self-maledictory oath.<sup>65</sup> In Genesis 15:17 God took the oath of the Abrahamic Covenant by passing between the slain beasts. In so doing, God was declaring that if He failed to fulfill His covenant to Abraham the curse should fall upon Him and He should be killed like the slain beasts.<sup>66</sup>

Christ is introduced in Revelation 5 as “a Lamb standing, as if slain” (vs. 6). Thus Christ is pictured as the sacrificial Lamb who consecrated Himself to God by actually becoming a curse (Gal. 3:13) and suffering death (Heb. 2:9). His oath of consecration was not a symbolic enactment of the curse but an actual enduring of it. (Of course, His being presented as the slain Lamb also shows that the testator had died so that the testament can be opened.)<sup>67</sup>

A second feature of the investiture of a vassal king was that the suzerain invested him with dominion over the territory assigned to him. This involved two separate acts: first, the framing of the document and then the actual investiture. Three things were necessary for the document of enfeoffment: it had to be written by the great king or at his command; the great king must seal it;<sup>68</sup> and he must hand it to the vassal. In II Kings 11:12 it is said, “They . . . gave him the testimony (*‘edhuth*).<sup>69</sup> It is now believed that the translation “testimony” for *‘edhuth* has been inaccurate and that instead it corresponds to the Akkadian *ade* which means “treaty terms” or “vassal treaty stipulations.”<sup>70</sup> (In the Egyptian coronation ritual, the king was handed a casket containing the title deeds of his office.)<sup>71</sup> Thus, just as in ancient Israel the vassal king was invested with dominion over his land by being handed a sealed covenant by the suzerain, so Christ is invested as king over Israel by being handed a sealed testament by God the Father (Rev. 5:1-7).<sup>72</sup>

Another feature of investiture was that the people pledged their allegiance to the king (cf. II Kings 11:17).<sup>73</sup> When a covenant had been broken, it was necessary to renew it with penitential confession.<sup>74</sup> Similarly, the

<sup>62</sup> de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 102.

<sup>63</sup> Rusten, op. cit., p. 286.

<sup>64</sup> Baltzer in Covenant Formulary, p. 79, points out further that actually two covenants are made in II Kings 11:17. In one covenant both king and people pledge themselves to be “the Lord’s people,” in the other the people pledge their allegiance to the king.

<sup>65</sup> Kline, By Oath Consigned, pp. 39-49.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-17.

<sup>67</sup> Rusten, op. cit., p. 287.

<sup>68</sup> A document had to be sealed to be legally valid. (Baltzer, Covenant Formulary, p. 44).

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 79-80.

<sup>70</sup> Margaret Elizabeth Bellefontaine, “A Study of Ancient Israelite Laws and Their Function as Covenant Stipulations” (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1973), p. 77; cf. William Foxwell Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths (London: Athlone Press, 1968), pp. 90-92; J.A. Thompson, “Expansions of the ‘d Root,” Journal of Semitic Studies, X (1965), 222-40; A.R. Johnson, “Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship,” Myth, Ritual and Kingship: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Kingship in the Ancient Near East and in Israel, ed. by S.H. Hooke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), pp. 210-11; Wiseman, “The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon,” XX, 81.

<sup>71</sup> John Gray, I and II Kings: A Commentary (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1964), p. 519. Cf. Ironside, Revelation, pp. 89-91.

<sup>72</sup> Rusten, op. cit., p. 288.

<sup>73</sup> Baltzer, Covenant Formulary, pp. 79-80. Cf., de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 103.

<sup>74</sup> de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 97.

commitment of Israel to Christ at the second coming will be characterized by mourning (Zech. 12:10b) since they have broken the covenant by piercing their King (Zech. 12:10a; cf. John 19:14-19).<sup>75</sup>

A further feature of a coronation was anointing (I Kings 1:39; cf. II Kings 11:12). According to Justin Martyr, the Jews of his day believed that Elijah would anoint the Messiah.<sup>76</sup> It is interesting to note that Jesus' anointing with the Spirit (Acts 10:46; cf. Matt. 3:16-17; I Samuel 16:13) was through one who came "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17) and of whom it could be said, "He himself is Elijah, who was to come" (Matt. 11:14).<sup>77</sup>

As part of a coronation, there was acclamation of the new king (cf. I Kings 1:34, 39; II Kings 11:12, 14).<sup>78</sup> Thus, in Revelation 5:8-13 we find the hosts of heaven acclaiming; "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing" (Rev. 5:12).<sup>79</sup>

The final stage in the coronation was the actual enthronement (I Kings 1:46; II Kings 11:19).<sup>80</sup> This will take place "when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on his glorious throne" (Matt. 25:31); and "when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you [the twelve disciples] also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28; cf. Rev. 20:4).<sup>81</sup>

Therefore, in Revelation 5 the reader is presented with a picture of the investiture of Christ as the king who will renew the covenant with Israel and reign over them for 1000 years. Christ receives the seven-sealed testament containing the inheritance of the kingdom for himself and his fellow heirs.<sup>82</sup>

## **B. The Millennial Kingdom**

The period of the New Covenant with Israel is what we call the millennium when Satan is bound (Rev. 20:1-3) and Christ reigns with His people over the earth (Rev. 20:4-6). The millennial kingdom marks the re-establishment of God's kingdom over the earth. This is the kingdom covenanted to Christ the second Adam (Luke 22:29) for His obedience to the covenant which parallels to the covenant to which the first Adam was disobedient. The Father covenanted to the Son a kingship in Zion over the whole earth (Ps. 2:6-9). This is a royal grant to Christ, the faithful Son/Servant.

Christ, the second Adam, will fulfill the promised blessing of Genesis 1:28 when the earth will be filled with the children of God with man having subdued the earth and having dominion over the creatures. It will be the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant when Abraham and his seed inherit not just the Promised Land (Gen. 15:18-21) but the whole world (Rom. 4:13). It will be the fulfillment of the David Covenant with Christ sitting on David's throne in the culmination of God's kingdom on the earth (2 Sam. 7:12-16). It will be the full

<sup>75</sup> According to J. Wijngaards, "Death and Resurrection in Covenantal Context (Hos. VI 2)," *Vetus Testamentum*, XVII (April, 1967), 230-39, "to kill a king" was used as an expression for dethronement. Therefore actually to kill one's king was the ultimate form of breaking a covenant. Since in Christ the king himself had come as a covenant messenger, when he was killed, war was declared on the covenant breakers (Luke 20:9-16; Matt. 22:2-7; cf. Luke 21:20-24). Cf. Kline, *By Oath Consigned*, pp. 51-53.

<sup>76</sup> Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 49.1; cf. George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (2 vols.; Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1962), II, 360.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. George Widengren, "King and Covenant," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, II (January, 1957), 29-32; James D.G. Dunn, "Spirit and Kingdom," *Expository Times*, LXXXII (November, 1970), 37.

<sup>78</sup> de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 106.

<sup>79</sup> Rusten, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

<sup>80</sup> de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 106.

<sup>81</sup> Rusten, *loc. cit.*

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Rousas John Rushdoony, *Thy Kingdom Come: Studies in Daniel and Revelation* (n.p.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1971), pp. 136 ff.

realization of the New Covenant when “the house of Israel. . . shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” (Jer. 31:33-34).

The Kingdom is pictured as being inherited by Christ and all His people. Christ is both the dying David and the succeeding Solomon. Just as we make our children our heirs, not only is Christ the Son heir to the kingdom but because believers have been born again into God’s family, they are not only “children” but “heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17).

The millennial kingdom is pictured in part as a restored Eden where there is a partial rolling back of the curse where “the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the kid. . . and a little child will lead them. . . . And the nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:6-9 cf. 65:25). Sickness will be minimized (Isa. 33:24; Jer. 30:17; Ezek. 34:16). The infirm will be restored (Isa. 29:17-19; 35:3-6). “Thus says the Lord, ‘Behold I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob and have compassion on his dwelling places; and the city shall be rebuilt from its ruin, and the palace shall stand on its rightful place. And from them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of those who make merry” (Jer. 30:18-19).<sup>83</sup>

### **C. The Conversion of Gentiles During the Millennium**

During the millennium “all the peoples walk each in the name of his god” (Mic. 4:5). Then God says, “I...will send survivors from them (the Jewish believing remnant<sup>84</sup>) to the nations...and they will declare My glory among the nations” (Isa. 66:19). The result will be that “many nations will come and say, ‘Come let and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob that He may teach us about His ways and that we walk in His paths” (Mic. 4:2).

A promise of the New Covenant was, “They shall be My people” (Jer. 31:33). In Zechariah 2:10-11, sandwiched between two promises “then I will dwell in your midst” is the prophecy “And many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people,” the last clause being the promise of the New Covenant. The word “join” used in Zechariah 2:11 is also of joining a covenant. Jeremiah 50:5 states, “They will come that they may join themselves to the LORD in an everlasting covenant...” The same word is used of foreigners joining themselves “to the house of Jacob” (Isa. 14:1) and “to the LORD” (Isa. 56:3, 6). Synonymous terminology is of foreigners holding forth God’s covenant (Isa. 56:6; cf. vs. 4), keeping “from profaning the Sabbath,” the covenant sign (Isa. 56:6; cf. vss 2, 4). This is “an everlasting covenant” (Isa. 55:3) with “an everlasting sign” (Isa. 55:13).<sup>85</sup>

Another verse speaking of the conversion of the Gentiles during the millennium is Zechariah 8:23, “In those days ten men from the nations of every language will grasp the garment of a Jew saying, ‘Let us go with you, for

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<sup>83</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Findley, OH: Dunham Publishing Company, 1958), pp. 488-89.

<sup>84</sup> Geoffrey W. Grogan, “Isaiah” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 6:353.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Meredith G. Kline, *Glory in Our Midst: A Biblical Theological Reading of Zechariah’s Night Visions*, (Overland Park: Two Ages, 2001), 81-82.

we have heard that God is with you.” The Hebrew word for “garment” is *kanap* which is used in Numbers 15:38-39 and Deuteronomy 22:12 for corners of Jewish garments to which tassels were attached as a reminder of the stipulations of the covenant. Grasping the hem of a garment was a symbol of submitting to authority.<sup>86</sup> It symbolized placing oneself under authority of the LORD and taking hold of His covenant (cf. Isa. 56:4, 6). This symbolism was illustrated in the gospels where individuals touched the hem of the garment of Jesus, who was both true Jew and LORD (cf. Matt. 9:20, 21; 14:36).<sup>87</sup>

Zechariah 14:16 states, “Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went up against Jerusalem that will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.” The LORD had earlier spoken through Isaiah, “Also the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, everyone who keeps from profaning the Sabbath, and holds fast My covenant, even those I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.” The LORD God, Who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, “Yet (others) I will gather to them, to those (already) gathered” (Isa. 56:6-8). “Then they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations...to the LORD... (Isa. 66:20). God says, “I will take some of them for priests and for Levites” (Isa. 66:21).

In Isaiah 19 after God waves his hand over Egypt in judgment (Isa. 19:16-17), “in that day five cities in the land of Egypt will be speaking the language of Canaan and swearing (allegiance) to the LORD of hosts.... In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt and a pillar to the LORD near its border. And it will become a sign and a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of oppressors, and He will send to them a Savior and a Champion, and He will deliver them. Thus the LORD will make Himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day. They will even worship with sacrifice and offering.... In that day Israel will be the third (party) with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, “Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands and Israel My inheritance” (Isa. 19:18-24).<sup>88</sup>

Likewise in Zechariah 2, it is after God has judged the nations (Zech. 2:8-9), that “many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people.” Similarly in Zechariah 9 after God “will cut off the pride of the Philistines,.... They also will be a remnant for God” (Zech. 7:6-7). Likewise in Zechariah 12-14, it is after the defeat of the nations which attack Jerusalem (Zech. 12:1-9; 14:1-7) that “it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts and to celebrate the Feast of Booths” (Zech. 14:16).<sup>89</sup>

Thus after the defeat of the Antichrist and his allies at the battle of Armageddon many Gentiles will be converted and worship God (Ps. 2:8; 22:27-29; 86:9; 102:13-15; Isa. 2:2-4; 11:9-10; 25:3; 49:22-23; 52:15; 55:4-5; 60:3; 66:18-24; Jer. 3:16-17; 4:1-2; 16:19-20; Mic. 4:1-5; Zech. 8:22-23; 9:10; 14:16-19).

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. Kline, Glory in Our Midst, 82.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Kline, Glory in Our Midst, 82

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Kline, Glory in Our Midst, 83

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Kline, Glory in Our Midst, 83.

### III. The Breaking of the Covenant

At the end of the millennium Satan is released (Rev. 20:7) and once again goes out to deceive the nations to rebel against God (Rev. 20:8). John writes, “And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations. . . and they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city” (Rev. 20:7-9). God included the final rebellion in His plan to demonstrate how desperately wicked mankind is, even under the most ideal conditions.

### IV. God’s Declaration of War

The end of the world is pictured as an ordeal by fire. Peter writes, “The present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men” (2 Pet. 3:7). When Jerusalem is surrounded for a final time by its enemies, fire will come down from heaven and devour them (Rev. 20:9).

#### **A. The Final Destiny of God’s Enemies - Revelation 17:1 - 21:8**

The final destiny of God’s enemies is found in Revelation 17:1-21:8.

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|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Babylon         | Revelation 17:1-19:10 |
| 2. Antichrist      | Revelation 19:11-21   |
| 3. Gog             | Revelation 20:1-9     |
| 4. Satan           | Revelation 20:10      |
| 5. Unsaved Mankind | Revelation 20:11-15   |
| 6. Death           | Revelation 20:14      |

Jesus’ summary of His defeat of His enemies is found in Matthew 13:49, “So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth and take out (literally “sever”) the wicked from among the righteous” (Matt. 14:49).

The angels function as God’s ordeal knife by which He severs His enemies into the lake of fire (cf. Gen. 3:24).<sup>90</sup> “For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be defeated is death” (I Cor 15:25-26).

#### **B. The Final Destiny of God’s People - Revelation 21:9 - 22:5**

John writes in Revelation 21:1 “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away. . . and there is no longer any sea.” While the Bible begins with a water-covered earth (Gen. 1:2), it ends with a new earth without any sea (Rev. 21:1).

Next is pictured the final vindication of God’s people in the conflict of the ages. “And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, ‘Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb’ And he. . . showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God” (Rev. 21:9-10). This is “the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, . . . the general assembly and church. . . enrolled in heaven” (Heb. 12:22-23). The heavenly Jerusalem, the abode of God’s people, comes down from heaven to the new earth, where we will spend eternity.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Kline, Glory in Our Midst, 83.

The new earth is described as the eternal beatitude which Adam would have received if he had been obedient. The subdued earth is filled with children of God under “the eternal dominion “ (1 Tim. 6:16) of “the King eternal, . . . the only God” (1 Tim. 1:17). “The tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them. And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning or crying or pain” (Rev. 21:3-4). “And there shall no longer be any curse, and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face and His name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 22:3-5).

In addition to the vindication of God’s resurrected people, the church of all ages, the bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9), the announcing angel (Rev. 21:9) also pictures “nations” (Rev. 21:24, 26; 22:2) and “kings of the earth” (Rev. 21:24, 26) as having been also vindicated in the final fire ordeal (Rev. 15:1, 5 - 16:21 = Rev. 8:5; 2 Pet. 3:7)<sup>91</sup> and thus being present on the new earth. Just as Noah and his family were vindicated in the water ordeal of his day (cf. 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 3:6), so the believing nations and their kings will be vindicated in the final ordeal of fire (cf. 2 Pet. 3:7). The same almighty power that brought Noah safely through God’s judgment of the world by water (2 Pet. 3:6) will preserve the living believers on the earth through the fiery flood of the second judgment of the world to be the progenitors of the continued race.<sup>92</sup> Just as in the fire ordeal at the end of the present age, those vindicated included believers on earth in their physical bodies, the 144,000 (Rev. 7:1-8) and as well as those in resurrection bodies, the “multitude which no one could count” (Rev. 7:9), the raptured and resurrected church of all ages (Rev. 7:9-17), so following final fire ordeal those vindicated included both those in their physical bodies, the believing nations and their kings (Rev. 21:24-22:2) and the raptured and resurrected church of all ages, here pictured as “the bride, the wife of the Lamb” (Rev. 21:9).

It is important thus to distinguish between the citizens of the city and the nations (Rev. 21:24). The former are the risen and glorified saints who constitute the bride and who shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 22:5). The latter are men in the flesh who walk by the light of the city and bring their glory into it” (Rev. 21:26).<sup>93</sup> Since the kings of the earth and the nations “bring their glory into” the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:26) and since “only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life. . . shall ever come into it” (Rev. 21:27), it follows that those kings and the citizens of their nations are written in the book of life.<sup>94</sup> “So the nations will fear the name of the Lord and all the kings of the earth Thy glory” (Ps. 102:15).

The nations will thus be men in the flesh, freed from sin and the curse, begetting a godly seed and dwelling in blessedness under the government of the New Jerusalem. They will not be the offspring of the resurrected saints who “neither marry, nor are given in marriage” (Matt. 22:30) but those who lived in the flesh and believed during the millennium.<sup>95</sup> The unbelieving nations were found guilty in a fire ordeal when “fire came down from heaven and devoured them” when they “surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city” (Rev. 20:9).

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<sup>91</sup> Rusten, *op. cit.*, p. 537.

<sup>92</sup> E. R. Craven, “Note on the New Jerusalem” in John Peter Lange, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, trans. Phillip Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960) X:391.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958) IV:744.

<sup>95</sup> Craven, *loc. cit.*

The New Jerusalem thus is the antitype of the millennial kingdom. It is that kingdom raised to a higher plane completely freed from the curse (Rev. 22:3). The millennial kingdom is the reign of the saints over a race and earth freed from the assaults of Satan but still under the curse. The eternal state of the New Jerusalem on the new earth is a reign of God and the saints over a race and earth perfectly purified.<sup>96</sup>

In contrast to Babylon whose cup was “full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality” (Rev. 17:4), “nothing unclean and no one who practices abominations. . . will ever come into” the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:27).<sup>97</sup>

The New Jerusalem and the New Earth are thus the ultimate fulfillment of the promise of Genesis 1:28 that man would fill the earth with sons of God, subdue it and have dominion over the creatures. This is the beatitude which Adam and Eve would have received had they been obedient to God’s covenant with them. Since they were disobedient, God raised up His Son, the Second Adam, who accomplished through obedience what had been lost through the first Adam’s sin. In the garden of Eden there was a river and two trees, one the tree of life and the other, the tree of death (Gen. 2:9, 17). In the New Jerusalem there again is a river but both trees on either side of the river of life are trees of life (Rev. 22:2). In “the Paradise of God” there is unlimited access to “the tree of life” (Rev. 2:7; 22:2; cf. Gen. 3:24).

## V. The Accomplishment of God’s Purposes

Earlier we discussed that the story of the Bible is how God accomplishes His two purposes of reestablishing His kingdom over the earth and subduing His enemies. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 describes what happens when Christ has accomplished His two-fold purpose, “Then comes the end when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death (cf. Rev. 20:14). . . And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:24-28). In other words when Christ, as the Second Adam, will have reestablished God’s kingdom and subdued His enemies, He will have completed His mission of reversing the results of the sin of the First Adam.

## VI. Significance for Theology

What is significant about this study for theology is that virtually all knowledgeable scholars of every tradition (liberals, Roman Catholics, dispensationalists, Reformed, theologians, Seventh Day Adventists) acknowledge the presuppositions upon which this study has been based. What has great potential for a meeting of minds between these traditions is that all will begin thinking through the implications of their presuppositions.

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 10:391-92.

<sup>97</sup> Matthew Rist, “The Revelation of St. John the Divine,” *The Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abington Press, 1957), XII:540.