

Seminar Extra - Unit 4 (Doctrine 1) Covenants in the Bible

Divine-Human Covenant Development in the Old Testament

CREATION
Key Passages: Gen 1-2

Nature: Universal
Human Agent: Adam
Recognized R/ship: NONE
Act of faithful obedience: NONE
Foreshadowing: NONE
Cov. Formula: NONE
Ritual: NONE
Promise (Divine Obligation): NONE
Divine Command: 1:28 – 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it'; 2:15 – 'work the G of E and take care of it'; 2:16 'must not eat from the tree of...'
Human Obligation: NONE
Solemn Oath: NONE
Outlook: NONE
Sign: NONE

Conclusion: There is *no covenant* established as such in Creation.

FALL
Key Passages: Gen 3

Nature: Un-creation
Human Agent: Adam & Eve
Curse: 3:15 – 'I will put enmity between you (serpent) and the woman and between your *offspring* and hers; he will crush your head and you will strike his heel'

Comment: Covenants are established to restore creation back to the picture of Gen 1-2 through this 'offspring'.

NOAHIC
Key Passages: Gen 6-9

Nature: Universal (a re-creation)
Human Agent: Noah
Recognized R/ship: 6:8 – N found favour in eyes of Lord; 6:9 – a righteous mans blameless among the people and walked with God; 7:1
Act of faithful obedience: 6:22; 7:5 – N built the ark
Foreshadowing: Gen 6:18 'I will establish my C with you...'
Cov. Formula: NONE
Ritual: 8:20 – 'N built alter and sacrificed...'
Promise (Divine Obligation): 8:21-22 – 'Never again will I...' (c.f. 9:11, 15)
Divine Command: 9:1, 7 – 'Be fruitful and increase...' 9:4 – 'You must not eat meat that has lifeblood in it...'
Human Obligation (Cond.): NONE
Solemn Oath: 9:8-11 – 'I now establish my C with you...and with every living creature...'
Outlook: 9:16 – 'the everlasting C between God and all living creatures.'
Sign: 9:12-17 A Rainbow

Conclusion: In Noahic Yahweh establishes his *first covenant* – with his creation.

* reflective of the divine mandates of Gen 1:22, 28.

ABRAHAMIC
Key Passages: Gen 12:1-3; 15; 17; 22

Nature: Ancestral
Human Agent: Abram
Foreshadowing: Gen 12:1-3 is programmatic – vv. 1-2 Promises to A (National); v. 3 Promises to Other Nations through A. (International)

ABRAM – NATIONAL (Gen 15:1-21)

Recognized R/ship: 15:6 – 'A believed in the L and it was credited to him as righteousness.'
Act of faithful obedience: A left his country (12:4) and then offered Isaac (22:1-14)
Cov. Formula: NONE
Ritual: 15:10 – A sacrifices heifer, goat, ram, dove and pigeon.
Promise (Divine Obligation): 15:4-5 – A son (offspring) will be heir and your *offspring* will be as numerous as the stars in heaven. 15:7 – 'land to take possession of'. 15:14 – 'I will punish the nation I serves as slaves...'
Divine Command: '15:13 – 'Know for certain...'
Human Obligation (Cond.): NONE
Solemn Oath: 15:18 – 'On that day the L made a C with A...'
Outlook: Land specifically for Israel. NB. No 'everlasting' nature.
Sign: NONE

Conclusion: Gen 15 is the establishment of the first National part of the Abrahamic Covenant as foreshadowed in Gen 12:1-2.

ABRAHAM – INTERNATIONAL (Gen 17:1-27)

Recognised R/ship: 17:1 – The L appears to A (still expected to be blameless) – already established in 12:1-3.
Cov. Formula: 17:7-8 – 'I will be God for you' x2
Ritual: NONE* (unless you regard the circumcision of A household in 17:23-27 as a ritual)
Promise (Divine Obligation): 17:2 – 'I will confirm my C...and great increase your numbers'. 17:6-8 – fruitful...kings from you...everlasting C...Canaan. 17:16, 19 – a son by Sarah...kings will come from her
Divine Command: 17:5, 15 name changes; 17:9 – keep my covenant; 17:12 generation to come to be circumcised.
Human Obligation (Cond.): 17:9-10 – You must keep my covenant - circumcision
Solemn Oath: 17:4 – 'this is my covenant with you' (Father of many nations); 17:10 – This is my covenant with you (circumcision)
Outlook: 17:7-8 – 'an everlasting C with your offspring to be your God...everlasting possession of Canaan'; 17:13 'everlasting C of circumcision; 17:19 my everlasting C will be with your offspring; 22:17-blessed, numerous, land, through offspring others nations will be blessed.
Sign: 17:11 - Circumcision

Conclusion: Gen 17 is the establishment of the second International part of the Abrahamic Covenant as foreshadowed in Gen 12:3.

MOSAIC/SINAITIC
Key Pass.: Ex 6:2-8; 19:3-8; 24:3-8; 31:12-17.

Nature: National
Human Agent: Moses
Recognized R/ship: Not with Moses yet Yahweh chooses to reveal his name to Moses (3:14). There is now a longstanding re/ship with Israel – he is their Lord, 'the God of [their] fathers – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob' (2:24-25; 3:15; 6:3-4 et al.)
Act of faithful obedience: Moses led Israel out from Egypt (Ex 3-13)
Foreshadowing: 6:5 'I have remembered my covenant (to give Israel a land)'
Cov. Formula: 6:7 – 'I will take you as my people and I will be your God' (first use of complete form.)
Ritual: 24:4-8 – M. offers burnt and fellowship offerings and sacrifices bulls – central is the 'Book of the C'.
Promise (Divine Obligation): 6:6 – I will bring you out of slavery; 6:8 - I will bring you to and give you the land. 19:6 – you will be my treasured possession, K of Priests, Holy Nation.
Divine Command: 19:5 – Obey fully and keep covenant. 31:12 – Observe my Sabbaths
Human Obligation (Cond.): 19:5 – 'Obey me fully and keep my covenant then you will be...' 19:8 (c.f. 24:3,7) – the people responded 'We will do everything the L has said'
Solemn Oath: 24:8 – 'This is the blood of the C.'
Outlook: 31:16 – a lasting covenant – a sign forever.
Sign: 31:13, 17 – Sabbath*

Conclusion: In Exodus we see the establishment of the *third covenant* – the primary concern is the deepening of the r/ship between Yahweh and Israel.

* 3:12 speaks of sign to Moses that God is God – he will know that when Israel is delivered from slavery and Moses returns back to Mt Sinai

* Some see the testing of Abraham in Gen 22 as final step of forging the Abrahamic covenant – there we find a possible sacrificial ritual (using Isaac) and the angel confirms both the National and International element of the divine promises made in Gen 15 and 17 (c.f. 22:15-18)

Seminar Extra - Unit 4 (Doctrine 1) Covenants in the Bible

DAVIDIC

Key Passages: 2 Sam 7:1-29; (1Chron 17:4-15); 1 Kgs 8:1-9:9

NB: In 2 Sam 7 the specific 'berit' (covenant) word is missing – but the C. is well attested by later passages (c.f. 2 Sam 23:5; 2 Chr 7:18; Jer 33:21; Ps 89:3, 28-29, 34, 39; 132:11-12; Is 55:3.)

Nature: Royal

Human Agent: David (and his 'offspring')

Recognized R/ship: 1 Sam 13:14 – after God's own heart; 16:12 - David anointed (c.f. 2 Sam 7:8; Ps 89:20)

Cov. Formula: 7:24 – you have established Israel as your people...and you their God.

Act of faithful obedience: 7:1-3 - David expressed desire to build the temple

Ritual: 1 Kgs 8:62-66 – Solomon offers sacrifices dedicating the temple.

Promise (Divine Obligation): 7:9-16 (17:8-14) – name great...provide a place for Israel...rest from enemies...establish a house for you...raise up offspring...establish his kingdom...he will build the house...establish his throne forever...my love will never be taken from him.

Divine Command: 1 Kgs 9:4-9 – (After the temple is built) – walk before in integrity of heart and uprightness...do all I command and observe my decrees and laws.

Human Obligation (Cond.): NONE

Solemn Oath: 7:4, 11 (17:3) – the L declares; 1 Kgs 8:23 – this C of love.

Outlook: 7:12 (17:11) – offspring to succeed you; 7:16 (17:12) – your house, kingdom and throne will endure forever.

Sign: NONE (not explicitly)* – is it the ark in the temple (c.f. 1 Kgs 8:21)?

Conclusion:

The Davidic C. identifies the royal dynasty as the one from which the 'offspring' of Abraham would eventually come. The house (temple) built by the 'offspring' is crucial to the establishment of the Davidic covenant – it's construction and dedication seals the covenant leaving the temple (with the ark and the Glory of the Lord in it) as the sign.

NB: Suggested that it is an extension of Abrahamic – therefore not ritual or sign needed.

NEW COVENANT

Key Passages: Jer 31:31-34; Is 7:1-25; Eze 20:1-44; Mt 1-23; Heb 8:7-13.

Nature: Individual

Human Agent: Suffering Servant (Jesus Immanuel)

Recognized R/ship: In the immediate – Israel (already established); in future realization - Mt 3:17 – my son whom I well pleased.

Cov. Formula: Jer 31:33 – "I will be their God and they will be my people"

Act of faithful obedience: Heb 4:15 – J. was without sin.

Foreshadowing: Jer 31:31 – 'The time is coming when...'

Ritual: Sacrifice of Christ. Mt 26:28 – 'This is my blood of the covenant poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (c.f. Mk 14:24; Heb 9:20, 10:29)

Promise (Divine Obligation): Jer 31:31-33 – 'I will make a new covenant...put my law in their minds...forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more.' (c.f. Heb 9:15; 12:24)

Divine Command: NONE

Human Obligation (Cond.): Implicit and internalized in 31:33 – the law will be put in their minds and on their hearts.

Solemn Oath: NONE – Jesus came himself.

Outlook: 31:34 – forgiveness and knowledge of God – an unbreakable covenant

Sign: Is 7:14 – 'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.' (c.f. Mt 1:23; Lk 2:12)

Conclusion:

The New Covenant is established in the life sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Immanuel – he fulfills all the divine and human obligations of the previous C's (c.f. Heb 8:13), BUT – the full realization of this C. is still in the future waiting for the day Jesus returns.

* Context for the meaning of the Sabbath sign is offered in Eze 20:12, 20.

NB – the eschatological 'In that day' formula in Is 7:18, 21, 23.

RECREATION

Key Passages: Rev 21-22

Nature: Eternal

Human Agent: New Israel

Recognized R/ship: through the New Covenant

Act of faithful obedience: NONE

Foreshadowing: 21:1 – a new heavens and new earth...a holy city, the New Jerusalem.

Cov. Formula: 21:3 – 'They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.'

Ritual: NONE

Promise (Divine Obligation): 21:4 – no more death, mourning, crying or pain.

Divine Command: NONE

Human Obligation: NONE

Solemn Oath: NONE

Outlook: 21:6-8 – Those believing have eternity (names in the book of life), those unbelieving their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur (second death).

Sign: NONE

Conclusion: The ultimate eschatological reality – a new heavens and new earth where sin is no longer be a threat.

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