

THE FIVE COVENANTS OF SCRIPTURE

A Divine Biblical Covenant is a promise from God, formalised in a legal framework, solemnised by sacrifice and guaranteed by oath.

The five Covenants are stepping stones through time as God brings history to a climax in the Millennium in the restoration of all things that were lost through man's sin in Eden's garden.

(The word "unconditional" below refers to the certainty of the fulfilment of the divine promise in a covenant, but not necessarily the individual enjoyment of its blessing)

The COVENANTS	Refs	Type	Duration	Sign Symbol	Sacrifice	Timing	Beneficiary	Purpose
Noahic 2,348 BC	Genesis 6:18 8:20-22 9:8-18	Royal grant One-way Unilateral Unconditional	Everlasting	Rainbow (Gen 9:13-17)	Genesis 8:20-22	Inaugurated just after the cataclysmic worldwide destruction of the flood.	Made with Noah and his seed (with all of humanity and the animal kingdom).	To secure the earth as a STAGE for the restitution of all things (Acts 3:21) when all will be administered by Christ in Millennial Kingdom (Eph 1:10-11).
Abrahamic 1,913 BC	Genesis 12:1-3 15:13-18 17:9-11, 19 22:15-18	Royal grant One-way Unilateral Unconditional	Everlasting	Circumcision (Gen 17:11)	Genesis 15:8-21	Inaugurated just after the disaster of Nimrod's rebellion, the sin of "the sons of God" and the Tower of Babel.	Made with Abraham and His seed (Israel). Its spiritual blessings are enjoyed by believers now by faith.	To secure an innumerable SEED to enjoy the land and blessing (and the world through them). Not yet fulfilled but will come to pass in the Millennial Kingdom at Christ's second coming (Luke 1:71-75, Rom 4:13)
Mosaic - Old - Sinaitic 1,491 BC	Exodus 19:5-8 24:3-8 31:13-17	Suzerain Two-way Bilateral Conditional	Temporary (BC 1,500 to AD 32). Renewed 7x (eg. "Land Covenant" of Deut 29)	The Sabbath (Exod 31:13)	Exodus 24:4-8	Brought in just after the dramatic birth of Israel as they left Egypt. Abolished in the death of Christ (Heb 7:12-18, 8:13, 10:13)	Made with Israel. Written on stone. The Mosaic covenant has no connection with the church.	Added as a temporary supervisor to teach righteous STANDARDS and magnify sin until Christ came (Gal 3:22-26). No longer in force (2 Cor 3:9-11).
Davidic 1,042 BC	2 Samuel 7:11-16 Psalm 89:3-37	Royal grant One-way Unilateral Unconditional	Everlasting	Christ's resurrection and enthronement (Acts 2:30-33)	2 Samuel 6:17-18	Inaugurated between the past chaos of the "judges period" and the future apostasy of Israel and Judah in the post-Solomon era of a divided Kingdom of Israel.	Made with King David and his royal seed.	Secures a son of David as SOVEREIGN , to sit on a throne and reign for ever (Luke 1:32). Currently "dormant" but remains in place to be taken up when the Son of David (Christ) ascends David's throne in the Millennium.
Messianic - New - Second - Better - Everlasting 33 AD	Isa 59:20-21 Jer 31:31-34 Eze 36:24-31 37:26-38 Heb 8:8-12 10:15-18	Royal grant, One-way Unilateral Unconditional	Everlasting	Bread and cup (Matt 26:28, 1 Cor 11:25)	Hebrews 10:8-25, 29 12:24, 13:20	Announced in 606BC at the time of the Babylonian captivity. Then Inaugurated on the darkest day in human history, the day when the Lord Jesus was crucified.	Enjoyed by believers spiritually now. To be nationally enjoyed by ethnic converted Israel at Christ's return, both spiritually and physically (Jer 31:31-34, Eze 36:24-31, 37:14-28, 39:25-29) .	Replaces Old Covenant (Jer 31:31, Heb 7:18-19, 8:13). Secures SALVATION , a new heart and forgiveness for all of God's people (Heb 8:10-11). Includes a return to the land and peace for future converted Israel, ensuring they never again lose it through disobedience.

The above Covenant programme contains "Biblical covenants" only. It is not to be confused with what is popularly known as "Covenant Theology", which is a framework constructed by Reformed theologians in the 16th and 17th Centuries. "Covenant Theology" posits three "theological covenants", namely the "Covenant of Redemption" (made between the Father and the Son before creation), the "Covenant of Works" (made with Adam in the Garden of Eden) and the Covenant of Grace (promised in Gen 3:15 just after the fall), none of which are actually called 'covenants' in the Bible. Furthermore, Covenant Theology does not distinguish between Israel and the Church, nor does it see a literal 1,000 year future Kingdom on earth. For these reasons, Covenant Theology represents an inadequate framework for understanding the true Biblical "covenant programme".