

# Covenants in the Bible



There are many covenants in the Bible, some between people and some between God and people. This webpage will focus on the 6 basic covenants made by God and with His people. Covenant comes from the Latin word "*convenire*" which means to come together. A covenant is basically an agreement between people, or between God and His people, that binds one to the other. This is much different than a contract, which involves the exchange of goods or services for money. A good way to remember this distinction is to examine Holy Matrimony between a husband and a wife, and contrast that with prostitution. In the former, the two become one flesh at the marriage ceremony, with vows taken before God, each other, the priest, friends, and family, and they have sexual relations with each other that are holy and good. In the latter, money exchanges hands for sex. A covenant can be thought of as a sacred family bond, taken with an oath before a higher power, whereas a contract can be thought of as an agreement to pay someone for services rendered, which involves a promise to each other, rather than an oath. **BIG DIFFERENCE.** Covenants most often involve a ceremony with witnesses,

invoking God, and a communal meal. The covenant therefore unites flesh and blood, as well as ensuring a common family name.

So why did God decide to make covenants with mankind? Well, we are God's family, and through sin, we have separated ourselves from the eternal love of God, preferring instead the temporary pleasures of this world. Hell awaits us if we fail to unite ourselves to Him while we are still alive. To help show us the way, God our loving Father initiated 6 major covenants in the Bible to bring us back into His family.

Notice the 4 things similar in these covenants - A blessing, a condition/curse, a sign, and the resultant form of God's family.

### God's Covenants with man

**First, is God's covenant with Adam and Eve.** God created Adam and Eve to be joined together as one flesh:

Genesis 2:23-24: Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh"

Malachi 2:14: You ask, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness to the covenant between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

*The Blessing - Their descendants will fill the earth and subdue it.*

*The Condition/Curse - Do not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil/ death will result.*

*The Sign - The Sabbath - Keep it holy*

*The Family Form - Marriage*

**Second is God's covenant made with Noah and his family.** God promises to never again destroy mankind through a flood, and the rainbow is his constant reminder of that:

Genesis 9:9-17 : "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a

flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will look upon it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."

*The Blessing - God will never flood the entire earth again.*

*The Condition/Curse - Do not drink the blood of animals or shed human blood*

*The Sign - A Rainbow*

*The Family Form- Traditional Family*

### **Third is the God's Covenant made with Abram:**

Genesis 17:1-10: When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. And I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.

*Blessing- Land and many blessed descendants*

*Condition/Curse- Circumcision*

*Sign- Circumcision*

*Family Form - Tribe*

**Fourth is God's Covenant made with Moses:**

Exodus 34:10, 24: And he said, "Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been wrought in all the earth or in any nation; and all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD; for it is a terrible thing that I will do with you..... For I will cast out nations before you, and enlarge your borders; neither shall any man desire your land, when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year.

*Blessing- Becoming God's chosen people*

*Condition/Curse- They MUST keep God's law and the Commandments*

*Sign- The Passover*

*Family Form - A holy nation*

**Fifth is God's Covenant made with David:**

2 Samuel 7:9-16: Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David, `Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men; but I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

*Blessing- God becomes our Father, and we become his child*

*Condition/Curse- Chastisement with the rod of men*

*Sign- Solomon's Temple*

*Family Form - An eternal royal kingdom*

**Sixth is the Covenant promised through Jeremiah, fulfilled by Jesus:**

Jeremiah 31:31-34: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

*Blessing - God's Law will be written on our hearts. Believers become the new chosen people.*

*Condition/Curse - Belief in Jesus as the son of God, Baptism, eating His Flesh and drinking His blood at Communion, and living as Christians, not pagans.*

*Sign - The Eucharist*

*Family Form - A universal worldwide Kingdom, or His Church*

Notice how the family form progressed with each of God's six covenants - Man and wife, family, tribe, nation, kingdom, universal worldwide kingdom. What God is doing here is not only building up man's relationship to Him using signs and other humans, he is revealing more and more of Himself to us with each and every covenant, until at last He has revealed Himself fully in Jesus Christ. Sadly, man broke each covenant and had to endure the curses associated with each one. But God has been true to each one of His covenants with us, and that is really good news for us all.

So now that you know you belong to a universal (catholic) worldwide Kingdom, are you being true to your part of the last covenant, namely, living a Christian life following baptism and consuming the Eucharist? Or, are you living like a pagan? The choice is yours to make, right now. If you choose God's way, the benefits are literally out of this world. If not, you will have hell to pay....Choose Wisely!