

**LESSON 1 ON COVENANT
SUMMARY of FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS**

<p align="center">COVENANT IN SCRIPTURE Hebrew: Beriyth/ Berit Greek: Diatheke</p>	<p align="center">WHO IS INITIATOR</p>	<p align="center">WHO ARE PARTIES INVOLVED</p>	<p align="center">WHAT REASON FOR COVENANT</p>	<p align="center">IS THERE SACRIFICE</p>	<p align="center">ARE OFFSPRING AFFECTED?</p>	<p align="center">IS THERE PROMISE OR OATH?</p>	<p align="center">IS THERE A SIGN OR WITNESS?</p>	<p align="center">WHAT IS LENGTH OF COVENANT?</p>	<p align="center">IS THERE A MEAL, AN ALTAR A NAME CHANGE?</p>
<p align="center"><u>Noahic</u> GOD > MAN Ge 6:18 (1st mention of covenant) Ge 9:11 Unconditional</p>	<p align="center">God "I Myself" Ge 9:9 Unconditional covenant = declares God's purpose will be fulfilled regardless of man's response. This does not mean man makes no response but man's response doesn't leave fulfillment of covenant in doubt. Noah obeyed - he built ark in faith (Lesson - True faith obeys!) Heb 11:7-note Even an unconditional Covenant entails responsibility!</p>	<p align="center">God & Noah Noah means rest, relief, quiet Ge 5:29 "rest from our work" <i>"There it is: God obligating Himself to preserve man in the midst of judgment. Without anything on Noah's part - without any commitment, pledge, or guarantee - God obligated Himself -- Do you catch the faint but sweet scent of grace wafting in the wind?" (Arthur)</i></p>	<p align="center">Context: Divine Judgment Read Ge 6:1,2, 3, 4, 5 Wickedness of man was great warranting Ge 6:11, 12,13 --Corrupt = 3x --Filled with violence = 2x God sorry He made man... He was grieved "It broke His heart" (NLT) Preserve life Why? To fulfill His promise in Ge 3:15 to bring forth Messiah who would bruise the head of Satan (cf Ro 16:20-note)</p>	<p align="center">YES 'every clean animal...' (blood) Ge 8:20 (Costly-sacrificial)= 1/7 of his clean animals - Ge 7:2) Why? This was an act of worship & gratitude in response to God's covenant faithfulness in sparing Noah and his family.</p>	<p align="center">YES Sons...wife... son's wives Ge 6:18 descendants Ge 9:9 every living creature Ge 9:12 the earth Ge 9:13</p>	<p align="center">To keep alive Ge 6:19 This is the reason for this covenant - if all died God could not keep Ge 3:15 I will never again destroy every living thing x3 Ge 8:21,9:11, 15 Will not curse ground again Ge 8:21 Seasons, day/night shall not cease Ge 8:22 No Global Flood Ge 9:11</p>	<p align="center">RAINBOW 'My bow in the cloud' Ge 9:13 The Rainbow "is the sign of the covenant" Ge 9:12 Hebrew for "bow" also describes the weapon of war ("bow and arrow")!</p>	<p align="center">EVERLASTING "I will look upon it to remember the everlasting covenant" Ge 9:16 (cf "all successive generations" Ge 9:12) Application: God will not forget any of His covenants. When man looked at the bow he remembers the covenant - be mindful that God is also looking at the bow and as He looks He too remembers! Could that be why we see a rainbow in Rev 4:3-note?</p>	<p align="center">"Noah built an altar to Jehovah" Ge 8:20 (See Altar) (Hebrew word for altar means "place of sacrifice" -NB: Use of this word implies blood) Application: Speaks of (1) Expresses gratitude for salvation (2) Sacrificial - offered 1/7th of clean animals (cf Ge 7:2) (3) Emphasis on blood as way to approach God (cf Ge 3:21, 4:4) (4) Consecration to God (surrender) (cf NT parallel in Ro 12:1-note)</p>

<p>Abrahamic (see below for the repeating of this covenant to Isaac & Jacob) GOD > MAN Ge 15:18 Ge 17:2,4 Unconditional</p>	<p>God Ge 17:7, 15:18</p> <p>God Alone (symbolized by "a smoking oven & a flaming torch" Ge 15:17)</p> <p>passed through the pieces of flesh</p> <p>Abram was in a deep sleep (LXX = ekstasis = trance) Ge 15:12</p>	<p>God & Abraham</p>	<p>In you (Abram) all the families of the earth shall be blessed = prophecy of the Messiah</p> <p>Ge 12:1, 2, 3</p>	<p>YES</p> <p>Abram cut animals in two, each half laid opposite other (blood) Ge 15:10</p> <p>Compare Je 34:18, 19, 20</p>	<p>YES</p> <p>I will give the land to your descendants forever. Ge 13:15</p> <p>Jehovah cut covenant "to your seed I have given this land" (note past tense - God promised it - it is as good as done!) Ge 15:18</p>	<p>The Lord God's promises to Abraham: Descendant or "The Seed" (Masc. Sing. ~ Messiah) Ge 22:17, 18 (cf Ga 3:16, Ac 3:25)</p> <p>Descendants as numerous as stars Ge 15:5</p> <p>Land Ge 13:15,15:7, 18</p> <p>Be their God Ge 17:8</p>	<p>Circumcision (or see here) "And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you." Ge 17:11</p>	<p>EVERLASTING Ge 17:7,8 ----- El Shaddai promises "I will establish My covenant between Me & you & your descendants (seed) after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant." Isaac, Abraham's seed, is prophesied & granted the covenant promises. Ge 17:19, 20,21</p>	<p>NAME CHANGE 1) Abram("exalted father") to Abraham ("father of a multitude") 2) Sarai (meaning ? some say "contentious", others "princess") to Sarah ("princess") Ge 17:5,15</p>
<p>MAN > MAN Ge 21:27,32</p>	<p>Abimelech This man was a Philistine ruler over a pagan people, and yet he was the initiator of the covenant Implication? Pagans understood the solemn and binding nature of covenant</p>	<p>Abraham & Abimelech</p>	<p>FEAR</p> <p>God was with Abe Ge 21:22</p> <p>Water Rights Ge 21:25</p>	<p>Not Stated but see Ge 21:27</p> <p>"the two of them made (Karath - cut) a covenant". The fact that Abraham had given him sheep and oxen in the same verse strongly suggests they walked between the flesh of these slain animals as they "cut covenant" (blood)</p>	<p>YES</p> <p>"Swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me, or with my offspring, or with my posterity..." Ge 21:23</p>	<p>Abraham would not deal falsely with Abimelech (read Genesis 20 for why he may have prescribed this condition) but in kindness (a covenant word) Ge 21:23</p> <p>The two of them took an oath Ge 21:31,32</p>	<p>Abraham gave Abimelech seven ewe lambs Ge 21:28, 29,30</p> <p>Abraham planted a Tamarisk Ge 21:33 (See ill. in pagan culture)</p>	<p>EVERLASTING Ge 21:23</p> <p>Abraham "called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God" (El Olam)</p> <p>Everlasting is implied in Ge 21:23</p>	<p>Beersheba ("well of seven fold oath" or "well of the oath") Ge 21:31</p>

<p>MAN > MAN Ge 26:28</p>	<p>Abimelech This is probably the same one who cut covenant with Abraham (Ahuzzath & Phicol) Ge 26:26</p>	<p>Isaac & Abimelech (et. al.)</p>	<p>FEAR: Abimelech saw that the Lord was with Isaac Ge 26:28 'Do us no harm' Ge 26:29 In essence a "peace treaty"</p>	<p>The phrase "let us make (cut) a covenant" (suggests blood) Ge 26:28</p>	<p>Not Stated: Note that if this Abimelech is the same king the covenant he cut with Isaac's father Abraham should have been sufficient to ensure peace, pointing that men's covenants are not as trustworthy as God's covenants to men!</p>	<p>(Abimelech) said, "Let there now be an oath between us, even between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you, Ge 26:28 They exchanged oaths Ge 26:31 (See ill. in pagan culture)</p>	<p>--</p>	<p>--</p>	<p>Isaac 'made them a feast' Ge 26:30</p>
<p>Abrahamic GOD > ISAAC Ge 26:24,25 Unconditional</p>	<p>God Reaffirms the Abrahamic Covenant to Abraham's Seed</p>	<p>God & Isaac Ge 26:24,25</p>	<p>Preservation of the seed I am with you, I will bless you & multiply your seed Ge 26:24</p>	<p>Not clear Hebrew for Altar= "place of sacrifice" (suggests blood)</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Jehovah promises Isaac "I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham Ge 26:3</p>	<p>--</p>	<p>"multiply your descendants" in Ge 26:24 implies Everlasting</p>	<p>Isaac built an altar at Beersheba Ge 26:25</p>
<p>Abrahamic GOD > JACOB Ge 28:13-15 Unconditional</p>	<p>God Reaffirms the Abrahamic Covenant</p>	<p>God & Jacob</p>	<p>Reaffirms God's Covenant with Abraham To do what God had He had promised Ge 28:15</p>	<p>--</p>	<p>YES Ge 28:13, 14,15</p>	<p>Ge 28:15 See also Abrahamic Covenant</p>	<p>Pillar Jacob set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on its top Ge 28:18</p>	<p>Everlasting</p>	<p>Name change Luz called Bethel (House of God) Ge 28:19</p>
<p>MAN > MAN Ge 31:44-55</p>	<p>Laban "So now come let us make a covenant you & I & let it be a witness between you & me" Ge 31:44</p>	<p>Jacob & Laban</p>	<p>FEAR (distrust) I will not pass by this heap to you for harm... you will not pass by this heap & this pillar to me for harm. Ge 31:52</p>	<p>YES "Then Jacob offered a sacrifice (blood) on the mountain & called his kinsmen to the meal & they ate the meal & spent the night on the mountain" Ge 31:54</p>	<p>YES "If you mistreat my daughters or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us see God is witness between you & me." Ge 31:50</p>	<p>Not to mistreat daughters or take other wives Ge 31:50 Jacob swore by the fear (God) of his father Isaac. Ge 31:53</p>	<p>Four Witnesses! Covenant a witness Ge 31:44 God is witness Ge 31:50 Heap-witness Pillar-witness Ge 31:51, 52</p>	<p>--</p>	<p>1) Jegar-sahadutha (heap of witness) 2) Jacob called it Galed (heap of witness) 3) Mizpah = Watch tower Ge 31:47, 48,49 Meal Ge 31:54</p>

Mosaic GOD > MAN Ex 24:1-8 Ex 34:27,28 Conditional	God Ex 34:27	God, Moses & Israel Ex 34:27 Conditional = fulfillment depends on recipients obeying	--	YES 1/2 of blood on altar ; 1/2 blood in basins sprinkled on people (swore to obey) Ex 24:6, 7, 8 "the blood of the covenant"	--	Israel Made a Promise: "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." Ex 24:3,7	Twelve pillars at the foot of Mt Sinai Ex 24:4 One of the purposes of " pillars " is to help remember the covenant conditions	--	Altar at foot of Mt Sinai Ex 24:4 Meal Ex 24:11 Shared a common meal
New — Covenant GOD > MAN Mt 26:26-28 Lk 22:20 ("New covenant") Unconditional	Jesus instituted with His disciples at time of the Passover Meal the night before He was crucified (Mt 26:19-28)	God/Man Isa 42:6 Messiah = Covenant Messenger of covenant to His Temple =1st advent Mal 3:1 "refiner's fire" =2nd advent Mal 3:2	For the forgiveness of sins Mt 26:28	YES 'My body' 'My blood of the covenant ' Mt 26:28	YES	THE NEW COVENANT (prophesied - promised) Jer 31:31, 32,33, 34 THE NEW COVENANT (promise fulfilled) Lk 22:20	"This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance (memorial) of Me." Lk 22:19 Reminds us of costliness of Covenant	Eternal Covenant He 13:20-note	NEW COVENANT MEAL Mt 26:26,27,28 1Co 11:23,24, 25, 26 Shared a common meal

A Few Explanatory Notes:

1) In the ancient world covenant was the closest, holiest, most solemn and most indissoluble compact conceivable.

2) Even God's unconditional covenants with men did not absolve the human partner from some **responsibility** (Noah built an ark, Abram procured and prepared animals and birds for the covenant ritual of passing through the pieces of flesh). The only other specific Scriptural reference to individuals "passing through flesh" is found in [Jer 34:18, 19, 20](#)

3) The **motive** for God's covenant for man is His grace and love (see [word study on lovingkindness = Hebrew "hesed"](#)), whereas the primary **motive** for men's covenants in the examples above (and elsewhere in the Old Testament) is usually **fear** or **distrust** (E.g., Notice how many "**witnesses**" Laban and Jacob used to assure that neither of them broke covenant!!!)

4) Note that the covenants God made with man were ultimately made to fulfill His gracious purpose to redeem man from the **penalty, power and presence** of Sin (Not "sins" we commit but the "Power" that causes us to commit "sins" -- See **Sin** = the Sin principle or propensity inherited from Adam). In [Genesis 3:15](#) we see the prophecy of the **seed of the woman** (prophesying of the Messiah = see [Gal 3:16, Gal 4:4](#). 5) Who would bruise Satan's head (cp [Ro 16:20-note](#)). As we discussed, the "**seed of the woman**" is accepted by most conservative scholars as a prophecy of the Messiah Who would take away the sins of the world ([Jn 1:29](#)). And it follows that when God was getting ready to destroy the world in the flood, He had to preserve a godly **seed** through Noah or otherwise He would not have been able to fulfill the promise of a coming Redeemer in [Ge 3:15](#). [Genesis 3:15](#) is often referred to by theologians as the "Protoevangelium" ("the first gospel" or "first good news"). So immediately in the setting of Adam's sin, God gives a promise of redemption (**Note:** The events in Genesis 3 are referred to by some theologians as the "*Adamic Covenant*" even though the Hebrew word *covenant* is not found in the chapter). In [Ge 3:21](#) we see God "picturing" the promise of the gospel in His provision of animal skins (implication = blood spilled, also presents a "shadow" of the need for a substitute) in place of their fig leaves ([Ge 3:8](#), cp "man's works").

5) Note that the Philistine Abimelech's initiation of and desire to "cut a covenant" with [Abraham](#) and later with his son Isaac clearly shows that the basic understanding of covenant was well known in the ancient world among the pagan nations.

6) The Hebrew idiom "**cut a covenant**" although not always clearly stated in the text suggests that a bloody sacrifice was an intrinsic part of the covenant ritual. As discussed "cut a covenant" is two Hebrew words, (1) the verb **Karath** and (2) the noun **berith**. Although God initiated a covenant with Noah in [Genesis 6:18](#) ("*establish a covenant*"), the specific idiom "*to cut a covenant*" is first found in [Ge 15:18](#). Note also that most of the English Bibles translate "cut a covenant" as "**made** (make) **a covenant**" (eg, see [Ge 21:27 NASB, Ge 21:27 ESV, Ge 21:27 NKJV, Ge 21:27 YLT](#), "made a treaty" in NIV = [Ge 21:27 NIV](#))

W E Vine (author of a Hebrew/Greek lexicon) has the following note on the picture portrayed by the Hebrew idiom Karath berith...

From the arrangement of the dividing of the parts of the victims came the expression which literally denoted "to cut a covenant" (similar idioms are found in Greek and Latin). (Vine, W: Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words Vol. 1, Page 11-53. Old Tappan NJ: Revell)

7) As noted in the chart the covenant ritual as practiced in the Bible includes a variety of associations which will be discussed more fully in later lessons...

BLOOD, PROMISE, SACRIFICE, WITNESS, OATH, MEAL, SIGN