

KEY – 9, CHRIST IN THE COVENANTS, 4 pgs

While Paul was journeying around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, he visited different Jewish synagogues and reasoned with them from the Old Testament Scriptures (**Acts 17:2**). He was opening the truth about Jesus that had been closed to their understanding, explaining such things as the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead - and proclaiming that Jesus was the Christ (**v.3**). When he did this in Berea (**10-12**), the Jews gave his teachings careful consideration and many including many prominent Greek men and women, believed. Paul was teaching them to think about and view the Scriptures differently than they had been taught. The Scriptures hadn't changed, but what they saw in them did.

THE COVENANTS

A **covenant** describes a relationship in terms of obligations, consequences, and guarantees, much the same as a contract. Its provisions were divinely imposed and were therefore nonnegotiable and unchangeable. Human covenants were very common in Old Testament times and therefore were an easily understood concept through which God revealed His plans. The connection between Christ and the covenants is seen in both the OT and NT. Isaiah, speaking of the coming Messiah says in **Isa.49:8**, *I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people*. In **Malachi 3:1**, God says, *and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple [quoted in **Mt.11:10**], and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold He is coming ...* In Zechariah's prophecy concerning the Messiah (**Lk.1:72-73**), his coming is *to show the mercy promised to our fathers; and to remember his holy covenant; the oath that He swore to our father Abraham*. Christ is at the heart of all the covenants because redemption is the unifying theme.

CHRIST IN THE COVENANTS

The Covenants are progressive in what they reveal, not separate and unrelated. The truth doesn't change. The promise becomes clearer as details are added. Each covenant is a renewal and enlargement. Each covenant has a historical context.

The story of creation and the fall established the need for a Savior. **We are going to trace the revelation of that Savior through the covenants following a key word - seed**. Then from our vantage point of the NT, we will see how Christ was foreshadowed and foretold in the covenants and surrounding prophecies.

Description of the Seed: The offspring that would be the **Messiah-Savior**

The Identity of the Seed: Adam

Gen.2:16-17. The word covenant is not used, but the elements are there.

Hosea 6:7 *But like Adam [or like men], they [Ephraim and Judah] transgressed the covenant [Mosaic] ... they dealt faithlessly with me [Controversial - doesn't necessarily confirm there was a covenant with Adam or mankind. See Reformation (ESV) & NIV Study Bible notes]*

1. Who are the 2 parties? God and man

2. What are the conditions or duties? Don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

3. What is the guarantee or consequence? Eat and you die: Obedience meant life continued in the Garden, disobedience meant death and resulted in ejection from the garden

History: After the Fall, God pronounced a curse on Satan, and immediately we see the grace of God entering to defeat Satan and save men. He's going to reverse the curse.

Gen.3:15 *I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring (seed) and her offspring (seed); he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*

1. Who are the two opposing groups? Seed of the woman and the seed of Satan

2. What is the significance of the seed being of a woman? **Gal.4:4** *in the fullness of time God sent his Son, made of a woman* – human being; virgin birth

3. What is the significance of referring to her offspring as **he?** A man

4. The word bruise literally carries the idea of crushing, so who will win this battle and reverse the curse? A man, a descendant of the woman

Clue #1 - a man

History: Mankind's degeneration into sin was so great, and God so grieved, that He issued His just sentence of death on the world (**Gen 6:6**), *I will blot out man whom I've created*. It looks like Satan is winning. But God had a promise to keep: The seed of the woman was going to crush Satan. So in His grace, God singled out Noah to continue the human race.

Noah

Gen.9:8 - **With whom did God make this covenant?** Noah and his seed

Gen.9:11 - **What was the promise?** He would preserve the earth and mankind

Gen.9:26-27 - **What indicates that the prophecy of God's original intention to reverse the curse would be fulfilled through **Shem**?** Noah's blessing is put upon Shem. [ESV - not NIV] *May God enlarge Japheth, and let Him (God) dwell in the tents of Shem and let be his (God's) servant.* Fulfillment was when God dwelt in the midst of Shem's descendants in the tabernacle, and ultimately in Jesus – **Jn.1:14**, *the Word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled or tented) among us.*

Clue #2 - a Semite (descendant of Shem) God/man

History: Humanity multiplied and once again, so did its open and united rebellion against God.

Gen.11:4 says they were going to make a name for themselves by **building a city and a tower** - declaring their own power, sovereignty, and glory. Every time Satan thinks he's gotten the upper hand, God steps in. He broke up their project by confusing their language which ended up dispersing them over the earth. Immediately after the account of this scattering in **Gen.11**, we have the genealogy of Shem, showing that God has not lost track of him and his descendants - the line through whom salvation would come. So enters his offspring, **Abram**. Though mankind's defiance was great, God had vowed never again to *destroy every living creature*, **Gen.8:21-22**. So He made another new beginning by calling a man out - to live unto Him in the world. The line of disaster and of the 'curse,' from Adam, through Cain, through the Flood to Babel, begins to be reversed when God

called Abraham and said, *in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed*. The New Testament and the People of God by N.T. Wright

Abraham

Gen.12:2-3, 7; 17:4-8 - **What are the promises?**

1. land: **Dt.12:9** - *you have not yet come to the rest and to the inheritance that the LORD your God is*

giving you. Heb.3:7-4:9 - *For we who have believed enter that rest*. The land is a type of our life in Christ [see **ESV note on Gen.13:15**].

2. a seed: Seed is an ambiguous word, a collective singular noun that **can be singular or plural** in meaning. **Who are the three referents of the seed?**

a. physical seed - **Jn.8:31-33** the Jewish people

b. Ultimate Seed - **Gal.3:16**, *Now the promises were made to Abraham and his offspring [KJV - seed]. It does not say and to descendants, referring to many, but referring to one ... who is Christ.*

c. Spiritual seed - **Gal.3:29**, *If you are Christ's, then **you** are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*

3. source of universal blessing: **Gal.3:8**, *And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, In you shall all the nations be blessed.*

Clue #3 - line of Abraham

History: There is a narrowing of the promise given to Abram in **Gen.12**. As He grew older yet remained childless, Abram was perplexed as to who would be his heir. God told him it would be his own child, not his servant Eliezer (**Gen.15:2-4**). Later, as Sarai remained barren, Abram took her slave as a wife and she bore **Ishmael** (**Gen.16:1-4**). But God renewed this covenant with Abraham's son **Isaac** (**Gen.26:3-4**) later born to Sarah (**Gen.17:19; 21:1-7**) - not Ishmael, and with Isaac's son **Jacob** (**Gen.28:13-15; 35:9-12; 48:3-4**) - not **Esau** his brother. God renamed each of those in the covenant line except Isaac (who was named by God before birth) to indicate that they had become His.

Clue #4 - line of Isaac

Clue #5 - line of Jacob

History: Jacob, as he blesses his sons on his deathbed, prophesies that a Messianic kingly line would come through his son **Judah** (**Gen.49:10**; see also **Ruth 4:11-12**)

Clue #6 - tribe of Judah

History: It would be almost 1000 years before that came to pass in King David. After David's reign in was established and there was peace in the land, he told God he wanted to build a permanent house, a temple, for Him. But God turned around and made a covenant with David. At the **heart** of this covenant, He said, *Listen to what I am going to do for you - I'm going to build a house for you!*

David

2 Sam.7:12-13 - How would God build a house for David? *I will raise up your offspring after you ... and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. That house was a **dynasty** that would bring in the Ideal Messianic King.*

God would raise up a Seed and give him a kingdom.

*The parallel passage clearly refers to Christ, I will be to Him a father, and He shall be to Me a son. I will not take My steadfast love from Him ... but will confirm Him in My house and in My kingdom forever ... **1 Chron.17:13-14***

Who/what is the house that this Seed built? **Heb.3:5-6** now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later (shadow), but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are His house

1 Pt.2:5 - you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house ...

In the rest of **2 Sam.7** it is apparent that David realized this was a really big deal, he says in **v.19**, This is instruction (or revelation) for mankind! [NIV doesn't work here] It has the same elements as the Abrahamic Covenant: land, seed, and universal blessing {**Rom.15:8-12**}.

Clue #7 - family of David

Mt.1:1 begins *The book of the genealogy of Jesus, the son of David, the son of Abraham* i.e. the fulfillment of those covenant promises, by the Ultimate Seed.

The Work of the Seed

We skipped over the **Mosaic Covenant** to follow the revelation of the identity of the coming Seed. Now we look at the Covenant with Israel, which focuses on the work of the Messiah/Savior and pictures HOW he would reverse the curse.

Covenant with Israel - Describes God's faithfulness and Israel's responsibilities. It consisted of detailed written laws and is what the New Testament refers to as the Old Covenant.

What was the role of the Law?

Rom.5:20 *the law came to increase the trespass* i.e. to show man's inability to meet the standard, and therefore increase the awareness of the need for a Savior

Gal.3:24 *the law was our guardian (or tutor) until Christ came*. It pointed out sin and punished it, and also served as a protection by restraining sin - civil law brought order. See chap.4 of RPCD

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