

# Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

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# Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

## Introduction

In this study we will examine the relationship between the Covenants of God, the Blessings of God and the Laws of God. The primary emphasis shall be upon the covenants of God and the inter-relationship between God's covenants, blessings and laws. A covenant is a *pact* and unlike pacts between men which are generally *bilateral*, both parties contributing to its creation and terms, all of God's Covenants are *unilateral*, God alone establishes its terms; *Binding*, those who have duties and requirements under the terms of the covenant are *expressly* bound to adhere to 100% of the requirements, 100% of the time, including God; *Absolute*, any violation of any aspect of the covenant constitutes a breaking of the covenant in its *entirety*; and *Several*, there may be more than one covenant in effect at any given point in time. A *seal* or *sign* is often, if not always, used as a *guarantee* or *pledge* of performance by the parties to the covenant. We will find that with God, His word is often the only pledge or guarantee of performance, for there is nothing in the universe of greater value nor more sure than the very Word of God.

Covenants of God may come in various forms such as *Expressed*, God clearly states you are entering into a covenant with Him; or *Implied*, terms and conditions for performance are explicitly stated, but not specifically expressed as a covenant. Whether a command of God is part of a covenant or distinct from a covenant is moot in this one regard, obedience is always an absolute condition. When God commands, we're under obligation by love and duty to obey. Distinction between a command and a covenant does, however become important when trying to determine if a command God issued 3500 years ago was *Limited*, i.e. specific only to the person or people receiving the command, and only for a particular point and place in time. For example, when God commands Moses to go into Egypt, only Moses was expected to go into Egypt. That command of God was *limited* to Moses alone to obey. Some commands and covenants of God may be *Unlimited*, applicable to *all* His people for a given period of time. Some unlimited commands are the terms and conditions of a binding covenant that remains in full force and effect to the people of God today. It is essential for us to examine those aspects to determine our obligations under a binding covenant and to determine through Scripture whether it is limited or unlimited. This leads us into two other forms of covenants, *Conditional*, there may be duties, responsibilities and obligations required by some or all the parties prior to God's deliverance upon His promise(s); or *Unconditional*, no duties or performance is required by one or more of the parties for God to deliver upon His promises. A covenant may also be *Independent*; the covenant stands alone and is not inter-related or subject to terms and conditions of another covenant of God; or It may also be *Dependent*, specifically linked as a condition to one or more other covenants and laws of God.

If the covenant is conditional, those conditions will always be *clearly articulated* and very often *frequently repeated* to those expected to adhere, perform or carry out the will of God as articulated in the covenant. Conditional covenants may specify certain *Penalties* or *Punishments* for breaking any term or condition of the covenant. *Judgments* are often

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built into the covenant so the violating party clearly understands that the judgment rendered is because a violation has occurred and the penalty for such violation is being enforced. In addition, where judgments take place, the terms (if any) for *Restitution* in accordance to standards established within the covenant itself are specified; A covenant may be *Open*, the terms and conditions remain forever. Forever is defined as long as mortal man remains upon the earth. An Open Covenant is therefore also expressed as having an *infinite or perpetual life*, meaning the terms of the covenant remain open and binding upon God's people forever.

A covenant may also be *Closed*, meaning the covenant may have a *finite life* depending upon the fulfillment of the terms or upon a specific event that will render the covenant completed. When nothing further remains to be done by any party of the covenant, meaning all specified conditions are fulfilled as determined by God, the covenant must become *Obsolete*. An obsolete covenant is one that no longer has any obligations, no further conditions for performance or any unfulfilled promises remaining by any of the parties.

Some groups of people will argue to the contrary concerning the aforementioned characteristics of covenants, but the Scriptures themselves will bear witness to the validity and reliability of all the above as we shall soon see.

### Covenant Defined

The Hebrew term ברית *b'riyth* (ber-eeth') is the *only* word used to express the concept of a covenant of God in the Old Testament. The word appears in nearly 300 verses of Scripture and is almost always translated as covenant. (see Appendix B) B'riyth has its origin from two Hebrew words ברה *barah* (*baw-raw'*) which means to eat, consume or devour and carries the sense of a cutting through, like the word ברא *bara'* (*baw-raw'*) which means to create, to bring into existence. All covenants *must* be created and established between two or more parties. The Hebrew use of b'riyth is used to express the creation or cutting of a pact, the formation of a pledge made by the parties passing between two pieces of flesh (sacrifice). This meaning comes into sharpest focus in Genesis 15, one of God's B'riyth with Abram.

#### 01285 ברית *b'riyth* (ber-eeth')

from 01262 an unused word; in the sense of cutting [like 01254]); TWOT-282a; n f ; a **covenant**:—

**NAS**-allied (1), allies\* (1), **covenant** (275), **covenants** (1), El-berith\* (1), league (2), treaty (4).

**AV-covenant** 264, league 17, confederacy 1, confederate 1, confederate + 01167 1; 284

1) **covenant**, alliance, pledge

1a) between men

1a1) treaty, alliance, league (man to man)

1a2) constitution, ordinance (monarch to subjects)

1a3) agreement, pledge (man to man)

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- 1a4) alliance (of friendship)
- 1a5) alliance (of marriage)
- 1b) between God and man
  - 1b1) alliance (of friendship)
  - 1b2) **covenant** (divine ordinance with signs or pledges)
- 2) (phrases)
  - 2a) **covenant** making
  - 2b) **covenant** keeping
  - 2c) **covenant** violation

The definition of a covenant is that of a *binding* pact, agreement or alliance established between two or more parties. It is a *binding pledge* or *promise* between one another. A b'riyth may be created between God and man...

Genesis 9:9

"Now behold, **I Myself** do establish My **covenant** <b'riyth> with **you**, and with **your descendants after you**;

... or between man and man.

Genesis 14:13

Then a fugitive came and told Abram the Hebrew. Now he was living by the oaks of **Mamre the Amorite**, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and these were **allies** <b'riyth> with **Abram**.

The term allies above may be better rendered *covenanted with* Abram because a binding pact or alliance exists between the two men. Common usage of allies is weak in contemporary language in that it does not necessarily require that a *binding* pact exist between two parties, only general agreement that may or may not be binding. B'riyth carries the weight of a binding and formal agreement between Abram and the two brothers of the fugitive Eschol & Aner in the above verse.

## Blessing Defined

The primary term for blessing in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word בָּרַךְ *barak* (baw-rak') which literally means kneel. The sense of *barak* is when one comes to kneel before the Lord to have a promise, favor or gift *irrevocably* bestowed or conferred upon them by God. Only those chosen by God have the right, power and authority to confer such irrevocable blessings in the name of the LORD. Some patriarchs were directly blessed by God and in turn bless others with the full assuredness that the patriarchal blessing is a blessing from God Himself. The blessing may be for specific promises or for general favor by God. In all but a few limited circumstances a blessing is for good and desirable things that are pleasing to the flesh and spirit of man.

When *barak* is used to describe man blessing God, or a being of lesser stature blessing a being of greater stature, it has the sense of reverence and thankfulness of the "lesser

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kneeling before" the greater with irrevocable gratefulness to the greater being. When we read Scriptures that have man blessing God, the context demonstrate it is in thanks for God's grace and favor. Other words such as אֵשֶׁר 'eshher (eh'-sher) meaning happy or happiness; יָטֵב yatab (yaw-tab') meaning joyfully pleased; and אָשַׁר 'ashar (aw-shar') or 'asher (aw-share') have also been translated as bless. The latter is used to express the feeling or fruit of the blessing by those who have been blessed rather than the act of blessing. It describes the fruit produced in a blessed person's life rather than the blessing itself. (Appendix C [http://www.thelordschildren.org/bible\\_study/pdfs/covC.pdf](http://www.thelordschildren.org/bible_study/pdfs/covC.pdf))

Blessings stand alone as separate and distinct from covenants though they do share certain characteristics with covenants and are often rewards for keeping God's covenants and laws and also the means by which the covenant promises are transferred or passed down from one generation to another. That occasionally leads some to confuse a blessing with a covenant. We will compare and contrast blessings and covenants as we proceed through the study. Covenant promises are bestowed by lineage and passed on via Patriarchal blessings. Like many things in contemporary Christianity, certain terms are loosely applied and therefore subject to abuse in use and meaning. Such is the case with blessings.

### Law Defined

The term most generally used to describe the law of God in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word תּוֹרָה torah (to-law') Torah carries the meaning of law and instruction, a binding obligation for obedience and for giving direction on how to live.

#### **08451 תּוֹרָה towrah to-law' or תְּרָה torah to-law'**

from 03384; TWOT-910d; n f ; *direction, instruction, law*:—

**NAS**-custom (1), instruction (10), instructions (1), Law (1), law (188), laws (10), ruling (1), teaching (7), teachings (1).

**AV**-law 219; 219

1) law, direction, instruction

1a) instruction, direction (human or divine)

1a1) body of prophetic teaching

1a2) instruction in Messianic age

1a3) body of priestly direction or instruction

1a4) body of legal directives

1b) law

1b1) law of the burnt offering

1b2) of special law, codes of law

1c) custom, manner

1d) the Deuteronomic or Mosaic Law

A study of God's covenants will naturally segue into the study of God's Law. God's Torah is sometimes used to express a broad category that *includes* His statutes, precepts, commandments, ordinances, and testimonies...

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1 Kings 2:3

"Keep the charge of the LORD your God, to **walk** in His ways, to **keep** His *statutes*, His *commandments*, His *ordinances*, and His *testimonies*, according to what is written in the **Law <torah>** of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn,

In the above verse, the Law is expressed in its broadest context, similar to a covenant. In this context, the commandments, statutes, ordinances and testimonies of God are in accordance to the Torah of God. Statutes, ordinances, testimonies and commandments seem to be specific components within the Law of God.

2 Chronicles 33:8

**and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers, if** only they will *observe* to do all that I have *commanded* them *according to all* the **law <torah>**, the *statutes* and the *ordinances* given through Moses."

In the verse above we see a **covenant of God: I will not again remove Israel from the appointed land**. This covenant is a **conditional covenant** in that fulfillment of God's promise is predicated upon Israel's obedience to God's commands: **IF only they will observe to do all that I commanded them**; and **according to** all the *torah, statutes, and ordinances* given to them *through Moses*. The Law or Torah with all its statutes and ordinances is the very *condition* that must be met *before* God is under obligation to deliver upon His covenant to not *remove* Israel from the land promised to the fathers by covenant. Faith (acting upon our beliefs) is predicated upon God's faithfulness to deliver everything He says He will do via His Word, covenants and promise.

We will come to see that the **Law (Torah)** with its *ordinances, statutes and commandments* are established as **binding conditions** to one or more of the covenants of God. God has orchestrated certain scenarios, recorded in Scripture, that witness or attest to God's fidelity and reliability to deliver all He binds Himself to under covenant or blessing. **"If"** we obey His Law, He will deliver His promises. He often rewards (Blesses) obedience to the terms of His covenants *beyond* the terms of His covenant, though not under obligation to do so. The only obligation God subjects Himself to be faithful deliverance of His promises made under the terms and conditions of His covenants. When God delivers His promises upon successful completion of a covenant, God will often do this in the form of a Blessing. God's Blessing is often (but not always) how God makes good on His promises when we make good on ours. God is love, mercy compassion and everything else that is good and beyond our finite comprehension. We will see God blessing His people apart from terms of a covenant for that is within the very nature of God to do so. God's relationship with man is not *exclusively* based upon a system of covenants, works and rewards, though certainly, there is much of that present, even with His born again children living under the terms and conditions of the New Covenant.

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Our relationship with God was created to be familial (child-parent) and not industrial (master-slave or employer-employee). Our relationship with God is family driven and industrially navigated. While that may not be the best analogy, I believe it does have some merit in understanding our relationship to God. He is our Father and our LORD. We relate to Him in love and in subjection to His authority. We will *all* be judged by God, both saved and unsaved. However, the judgment of believers is not for sin but for reward. All mankind, believers and non-believers are subject to obey God, especially those who profess to love Him. **Love is the essence of our relationship with God and obedience is the expression of that love relationship.** Obedience is the fruit of love. Jesus, God in the flesh, very clearly establishes the relationship between love and obedience.

John 14:31a

so that the world may **know that I love** the Father, **I do exactly** as the Father commanded Me...

Unfortunately, not only is there is a great deal of confusion in the Judeo-Christian world concerning our relationship with God based upon love, grace and obedience but there is also great confusion concerning the covenants, blessings and laws of God as well.

This study will attempt categorize and distinguish between the covenants, blessings and laws of God and seek to determine which ones, if any, are (a) *open*, those with a perpetual life, currently binding and in full effect upon God's people; (b) *closed*, those with a finite life, but the terms for man still unfulfilled and binding; and (c) *obsolete*, closed covenants that have been fulfilled and no longer carry an obligation of performance by God or His covenant people. We will identify and examine many of the covenants, blessings and laws of God to determine their status for born again believers. Appendix A will distinguish and summarize the covenants, blessings and laws of God in Genesis and Exodus. Other Appendices will examine the remaining books of the bible and list the specific exegesis, biblical definitions of key words with a listing of the Scriptures containing these key words.

We will conclude our study by answering the question if the establishment of the New Covenant between God and Jesus on behalf of His people *automatically* renders **all prior** covenants of God as obsolete. We must allow the Scriptures to speak in order to determine why or why not a particular covenant or law is open or closed, and if closed is it obsolete or current. In other words, which, if any, of the Old Testament covenants and laws remain in full force, effect and binding concurrently with the New Covenant?

### The Theology Mess

Much of contemporary theology has greatly "muddied the waters" of biblical Judeo-Christian understanding. Jesus, God in the flesh, shows clearly what man will do over time to the covenants, laws and teachings of God. If the gap between biblical truth and Rabbinical Judaism at the time of Jesus was 10 miles wide, the gap between biblical truth and contemporary Christianity is 100 miles wide by contrast.

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It seems too many so-called theologians and shepherds are more concerned about advancing their private agendas and philosophies - often disguised as theology, and the *economic status* of their "church" which more and more resembles a bottom line "business" rather than top line service to God. If the hurdle to "unify" the various beliefs of contemporary Christianity into a united world religion is successful, I feel that will catapult "widespread apostasy" to the prophesied status of "Great Apostasy" and usher in the prophetic seals of Revelation. Much to the chagrin of a great number of apostates claiming otherwise, there is no pretribulation rapture to remove the church from that which God has prophesied is sure to happen. Heretical beliefs that are in diametric opposition to the Word of God are much more common than most professing Christians care to believe or accept. The danger with Heresy and cults is they tend not to abandon and repent from their heresies but to compromise and modify their heresies in order to gain greater acceptance into the body of truth. Man does not have the right to alter the truth of God via consensus because many of God's teachings do not have the "flesh appeal" or popularity that carnal minds demand.

Upon careful examination of Scripture, we discover God has made Himself quite clear concerning what He expects from His people and why. The problem in contemporary Christianity has more to do with man's fallen and deprived nature in accepting God's truth than it does with knowing God's truth. Many will attempt to muddy the waters of truth in order to create doubt and confusion where none should exist. Why? ... The overwhelming reason is man's refusal to willingly subject himself to the [absolute authority](#) of God and our [absolute accountability](#) to God. Economics play a vital role in this as well. Institutions have been established and these institutions will do all in their power to survive. Survival rarely has seeking God's truth at heart but rather self interest and self-preservation. By muddying the theological waters, some will claim to be "in the *expressed* will of God" without the need to "obey the expressed commands of God." After all, some may reason, "How can God hold us to a standard we don't know or understand?" Therein lays the crux for all the evils, scoffing, sects, cults, denominations, divisions, factions and whatever else you can think of. It speaks to the hardened heart of man's refusal to be in subjection to our Creator God and God's way for man. Some even go so far to claim obedience to God violates grace and therefore is contrary to God. Imagine that ... God is displeased with anyone foolish enough to listen and obey Him. What utter nonsense! It simply makes me ponder just how deep the depths of depravity go.

The good news is we can clearly know God's terms and conditions for Him to deliver upon all His promises ... the bad news is we can clearly know God's terms and conditions for Him to deliver upon all His promises. Good News to the believer is Bad News to the scoffer. The conclusion is thus, every human is individually responsible to know God's Word and is individually accountable to Him regardless of nationality, culture, education, religion or *where* a person lives or *when* a person lived. Many religions will argue this reality ad-nauseam, but the truth is all can come to know God if we desire to know God. God has provided a way for all those He calls His.

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Romans 1:20

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been **clearly seen**, being **understood** through what has been made, so that they are **without excuse**.

### Is It A Covenant?

There is generally no difficulty in determining an **Expressed Covenant** of God, for with an expressed covenant, God specifically states He is making a covenant with man. The difficulties emerge with determining the **Implied Covenants** of God. An Implied Covenant is one where God does **not specifically state** he is making a covenant, but by the very nature of the exchange, (terms and conditions for performance) makes it clear that a covenant is being established. Herein lays the myriad of problems, especially with those embracing Covenant Theology.

It seems covenant theologians have invented a term called a **Presumed Covenant**. That creates a serious problem for there is no such thing as a presumed covenant, it simply does not exist. God does not operate under such foolish concepts and neither should man. Presumed covenants simply do not exist in Scripture, or anywhere else for that matter. Presumption is indeed the mother of all foul ups. Those operating under the **presumption** of an existing covenant where no covenant exists creates an argument based upon the principle of circular reasoning. Circular reasoning is unfortunately quite common in theological circles. Two mainstream theologies, Covenantal Theology and Dispensational Theology both operate under the presumption that God exclusively operates under covenants or dispensations respectively. Both use presumption as fundamental tenets of their theologies. Whenever any theology uses **presumption** as the foundation to their **fundamental** tenets, which both dispensationalism and covenantalism do, they are doomed to be wrought with confusion, error, innuendo, false doctrine and the eventual and inevitable heresy and apostasy.

Proper understanding of Scripture is unlikely because the entirety of the theological construct is suspect at a **minimum**. Covenants, by their very nature cannot be presumed. Presumption can never "bind" two parties together. **A presumed covenant is an invention obtained via eisegesis** (putting into Scripture that which one desires to see) as opposed to an **implied covenant** which is **sound theology extracted via exegesis** (taking out of Scripture that which is there.) Implied covenants may be extracted exegetically because they are real covenants of God while presumed covenants on the other hand are imaginary inventions that cannot be extracted exegetically because they simply **do not exist**. For that reason, it is impossible to even consider the concept of presumed covenants because the two concepts of "presumed" and "covenant" are mutually exclusive concepts, one negates the other.

### A Creation Covenant?

Creation is one such presumed covenant that appears to exist in covenant theology. When one simply ponders this, even superficially, the folly of this presumption becomes

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self evident. How can a covenant exist between something or someone that does not yet exist? Can God have a covenant with man before man comes into existence? The answer is emphatically no, for it defies the very essence of covenant. A covenant is a pact between two parties, Genesis 1:1 immediately dispels the existence of any such covenant for in the beginning God alone exists...

Genesis 1:1

¶ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Was there a covenant that required God to create the material universe? Was there any covenant that required God to create life? If you believe yes, then God must have covenanted within Himself. However, Scriptures itself refutes such a notion as we shall see. The act of creation is not the fulfillment of a covenant nor is creation itself the establishment of a covenant for Creation is the Freewill act of God. (See Freewill, Sin, and Evil [http://www.thelordschildren.org/bible\\_study/pdfs/FreeWill.pdf](http://www.thelordschildren.org/bible_study/pdfs/FreeWill.pdf)). The concept of a presumed covenant that includes creation is non-biblical folly. Only God is pre-existent, not covenants. Covenants by definition must be created for them to come into existence, as the term b'riyth specifically states, to *create* or give *birth* to a pact. When then did the creation of covenants begin? Where is the first evidence of the existence of a covenant in Scripture?

To do this we'll need to exegetically distinguish what God is communicating to man through His Word. We need to ask ourselves the following series of questions to avoid faulty and misguided presumptions, especially when in Genesis.

Is this a Characteristic of God's *created* image and likeness in man? ... Or is this a Covenant or Promise of God, with terms and conditions for performance?

Is this a Blessing of God? ... Or is this a Law, Command or Ordinance of God?

### Distinguishing Between Created Nature, Covenant and Blessing

As we examine the first chapter of Genesis, we come across characteristics of God's created image and likeness of Himself in man. Creation is not a covenant so we cannot presume the existence of a covenant without specific evidence that establishes a covenant. For example, is Genesis 1:26-27 speaking to us about God's created image and likeness *in* man or is God describing an implied covenant or promise *with* man?

Genesis 1:26-27

- 26 ¶ Then God said, "**Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."
- 27 **God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.**

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**Let them rule** ... is rulership a covenant between God and man, or is it a characteristic of the image and likeness of God in man? The above Scripture appears to be saying that rulership is a created characteristic of God's Divine image and likeness in man. Corrupted man has fallen from the power and beauty of God's image and likeness, but nonetheless still bears God's image in his fallen and sinful nature as confirmed in both New and Old Testaments.

Genesis 9:6

"Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.

2 Timothy 3:2-5

2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,  
3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,  
4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,  
5 **holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power;**  
Avoid such men as these.

So the real question becomes this, "Does the conjunction "and" in Genesis 1:26 combine rulership with the image and likeness of God or does it state that *because* we bear His image, rulership is God's first implied covenant with man?"

Genesis 1:26-27

26 ¶ Then God said, "**Let Us make man in Our image**, according to **Our likeness**; **and** let them **rule over** the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."  
27 **God created man in His own image**, in the **image of God He created him**; male and female He created them.

The context of Genesis 1 strongly indicates dominionship as a characteristic of the image and likeness of God and not a covenant. Every verse in chapter one of Genesis is speaking about creation and creation is not covenantal. Verse 27 serves to *sandwich* the rulership of man in the context of creation and is therefore a characteristic of the image and likeness of God in man and not a covenant as we shall prove in the next section covering Toledahs.

## Toledahs

Let's begin this section by examining the meaning of the Hebrew word toledah. The definition below includes all occurrences of toledah in the New American Standard Bible's 1995 edition and the 1769 edition of the Authorized Version of the King James Bible.

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**08435** תולדה *towl@dah to-led-aw'* or תלדה *tol@dah to-led-aw'*

from **03205**; TWOT-867g; n f pl ; *generations*:—

**NAS**-account (1), birth (1), genealogical registration (12), genealogies (3), generations (21), order of their birth (1).

**AV**-generations 38, birth 1; 39

1) descendants, results, proceedings, generations, genealogies

1a) account of men and their descendants

1a1) genealogical list of one's descendants

1a2) one's contemporaries

1a3) course of history (of creation etc)

1b) begetting or account of heaven (metaph)

The Hebrew word *Toledah* is essentially an historical record of creation, beginnings, births and descendants. The Scriptures describe 10 Toledahs in the book of Genesis. In fact, the 10 Toledahs of creation span the entire book of Genesis. Genesis is in essence a toledah for it speaks to origins, births, beginnings, generations and descendants. The first creation Toledah establishes Genesis 1:1 through chapter 2:4 to be creation and not covenant.

Genesis 2:4

¶ This is the **account <toledah>** of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven.

The creation of the earth includes all life upon the earth. **Rulership is a characteristic of the divine image of God created in man and what man *is by creation* rather than what man *does by covenant*.** How man chooses to rule is subject to argument and debate, but whether man has the right to rule is not. Dominion is not a covenant promise per se but the evidence of the created image of God in man. We shall show that all the covenants of God come into *existence* due to sin and the fall of man. **No covenant of God existed prior to sin.** All covenants are created and therefore do not have eternal existence ... for only God is the Eternal, Self-Existent One.

The heart and soul of God's covenants with man is anchored in *restoration* and *redemption*. God was in the process of teaching and instructing man via blessings and commands on *how* the godly characteristics of His image is to be *rightly* utilized and practiced by man. Dominion appears to be an aspect of man's nature, an inherent characteristic of the image and likeness of God in man. Let's now examine all the substantial creation texts of Genesis to see if we can find the existence of a covenant prior to sin.

### Creation Toledah

My focus in reviewing the Toledahs is to determine the existence of any covenants, commands, blessings and laws. One of the first things we notice is how God creates. God brings into existence that which did not exist by *speaking* a command. God speaks and creation leaps into existence. The first command of God is recorded in Genesis 1:3

## Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

Genesis 1:3

¶ Then **God said**, "Let there be light"; **and there was** light.

**God said ... and there was.** All God did to bring something into tangible existence was to *speak* it into existence. God speaks and creation happens. This is evidence of an attribute of God we call Omnipotence. While there is so much more that can be said on this, that is better left to a different study. The power and authority of God is He speaks and existence commences. What an awesome and powerful God we serve!

This same pattern of creation continues throughout the first five days of creation, God speaks ... God said ... God called ... God made ... and that which was non-existent came into existence. Only God can create *ex nihilo*, creating something from nothing. God calls each time period of creation a day and ends each day of creation with the proclamation, "*there was evening and there was morning a \_\_\_ day.*"

God created time, space, matter, spirit and all things ... laws and powers, both seen and unseen that govern creation ... excepting God of course, for God is not subject to nor bound by that which He creates. God exists outside of creation and within all creation. We refer to this eternal presence of God as omnipresence. Time and space is subject to God and not God to it, for that which God creates is never greater than the Creator ... if only man could comprehend this fact, man would immediately be one step closer to repentance and godliness. God as Creator has free reign and sovereign control to interact with His creation, and indeed does, as the One Supreme and Sovereign Being, the Self-Existent One, the Eternal GOD.

Each day of creation is a descriptive account of *some* of the significant creative acts of God and shows an orderly, systematic and progressive approach to the creation of the universe and all things within and without that universe. However, when we come to the fifth day of creation, we see an added dimension to God's consistent pattern of creation. God now makes a significant distinction in His creation by placing a greater value and priority upon certain objects of creation. God *blesses* specific elements of His creation. All blessings of God are noteworthy for **God blesses only *specific things of distinction and purpose***. Take note *what* God blesses, *how* He blesses and *why* He blesses starting with the first recorded blessing of God in Scripture.

Genesis 1:21-22

21 God created the **great sea monsters** תַּנִּינִם tanniyn (*tan-noon'*) and **every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed** after their kind, and **every winged bird** after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

22 **God blessed them**, saying, "**Be fruitful and multiply**, and **fill the waters** in the seas, and **let birds multiply on the earth.**"

Sea monsters may or may not be a good translation of tanniyn which is also translated as dragon, (dinosaur), serpent or whale. What is important to note is God *blesses* the *living beings*. While it may rightly be argued that all of creation in some rudimentary

## Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

form is life, life *beings* - that which is in the flesh (sea-life and winged-life) warrants the first blessing of God. This blessing takes the form of an **irrevocable command** ... be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth. We see this same blessing upon all flesh-life that has being. Propagation of the species in an inherent aspect of the **created nature** in all life forms and receives special recognition from God in the form of a blessing. And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

In the sixth day of creation, God creates all the living creatures upon the land including man whom God creates in His *image* צֶלֶם *tselem* (*tseh'-lem*) and in His *likeness* דְמוּת *d'muwth* (*dem-ooth*) The **image and likeness of God** in man is not speaking to the physical appearance of man but of the **spiritual attributes** of God created in man for God does not have physicality. That being said, there certainly are aspects of man's physical appearance that do indeed imprint a finite representation of God and His image. **Man's physicality is a finite expression of some of God's infinite attributes.** Only those aspects of man's appearance that distinguish him from all other life forms created in the physical universe are representative of the image and likeness of God in man. Some of these include man's stature: stands upright and erect; the human thumb; the ability to coordinate abstract thought into physical creation and the like. However, the image and likeness of God in physical man is of minor consequence when compared to the spiritual, and non-physical abstract attributes of God in man. A few examples of this include the higher attributes and functions of emotion, family, parenting, authority, social and spiritual relationships, cognitive functioning, conscience, rationalization, reasoning, morality and many of the other godly attributes that distinguish man from all else in creation. These attributes represent the greater image and likeness of God in man than does the physical. We then see God in His sixth day of creation pronounce a blessing upon man ...

Genesis 1:28

God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be **fruitful** and **multiply**, and **fill** the earth, and **subdue** it; and **rule** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

... and a blessing upon all created life ...

Genesis 1:29-30

29 ¶ Then God said, "Behold, I have given you **every plant yielding seed** that is on the surface of all the earth, and **every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you;**

30 and to **every beast** of the earth and to **every bird** of the sky and to **every thing that moves** on the earth which has life, **I have given every green plant for food**"; and it was so.

**All life created upon the earth in days 5 and 6 were created as vegetarians.** These life forms were non-predatorial and non-flesh eating. Take note of this for it is significant when we consider the magnitude of sin and its adverse eternal and universal consequence upon all of creation.

## Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

Genesis 1:31

¶¶ God saw **all** that He had made, and behold, **it was very good**. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

God declares all His creation as very good. Not just good but very good. God is relating to and interacting with His creation via blessings and commands. There is no evidence of a covenantal relationship (redemptive, restorative) but a blessed relationship (loving and obedient) as the means of God's interaction with His creation. There are no Scriptures that can thus far be construed as covenantal in the strict meaning of *b'riyth* for man and all creation is very good and living in a right, loving and obedient relationship with God. However, God's direction to man and His commands for man are indeed covenants in the sense that God expects certain performances from man and will enact penalties for non-performance.

The next chapter, ending with verse 4 completes the first section of Genesis that God calls the first Toledah ... Creation. As mentioned earlier, a toledah is the Hebrew word to describe a historical record of birth, in this case, the birth of the universe and everything in it.

Genesis 2:4

¶¶ This is the **account <toledah>** of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven.

The first toledah of Creation has three main sections

1. Creation of the Heavens and the Earth (Gen 1:1)
2. Outline of the First Six Days of Creation (Gen 1:2 - 2:1)
3. The Seventh Day of Creation (Gen 2:2-4)

The first section of the creation toledah consists of one verse only. The remaining verses 1:2 - 2:4 are highlights of what has occurred in verse 1.

Genesis 1:1

1 ¶¶ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

**In the beginning God** ... this phrase reveals God as the Self-Existent, Eternal God (John 1:1) and identifies God as *active* Creator of the whole heavens and the whole earth. Verse 2 begins the second section of the creation toledah where we see the setting shift its focus from the broad to the narrow ... a common method in Hebrew writing that is consistent throughout Scripture.

Genesis 1:2

**The earth** was *formless* (tohu) and *void* (bohu), and *darkness* (choshek) was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

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Verse 2 records the earth as remaining in a formless (tohu), void (bohu), and darkened (choshek) state. This verse focuses upon the **pre-created earth** or more appropriately stated the raw, natural elements that will become the earth. The raw elements are not yet brought together in Form תהו tohu (*to'-hoo*) for it still remains unconnected, making it unreal, still lacking in substance; completely Void, בהו bohu (*bo'-hoo*) remaining empty or giving the appearance of laying waste; and Dark, חשך choshek (*kho-shek'*) still remaining obscured, not yet visible concerning that which it is to become. The image conjured in my mind is that of a construction site where all the materials are laid out prior to the start of construction. To a passive observer, there is not yet any clue what is going to be created apart from knowing that something is going to be created.

Many theories have been advanced concerning the creation account in the first two verses of Genesis. Some claim that the day, the Hebrew word *yom* must refer to six literal and consecutive 24 hour periods of time that comprise 144 hours of creation. Scripture in *no way* mandates that day (*yom*) be understood in this manner and in many instances *yom* is absolutely not indicative of a 24 hour period of time. In fact, Genesis 2:4 refers to the entirety of creation as occurring in one *yom*, a day.

Genesis 2:4

¶ This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the **day <yom>** that the LORD God made earth and heaven.

There is simply no biblical mandate that numbered days be viewed as *solar* days. Other views advanced are the days represent *long periods* of time; the days are *revelatory* days meaning they are days of revelation of creation and not the creation itself; the *alternate day-age* theory that states the days are 24 hour periods of time, but separated by long periods of time between the days; the *gap theory* which claims there is a great gap of time between verse 1 and 2 of Genesis into which all the geological periods fit; and the *big-bang* theory that advances the utter complexities of design and purpose as a random and natural phenomenon. Big-bang denies God as *active* Creator.

Scripture does not reveal nor even imply an absolute understanding of how long the days of creation are, or the age of the universe nor the age of the earth. Remember, there was a time when a certain denomination *mandated* that the sun was the center of our solar system and our solar system the center of the universe. To not believe that was viewed as heretical. Though that religion *claimed* to stand upon biblical authority, did they?

That same principle holds true for this discussion as well. There is no biblical authority to mandate creation as six consecutive 24 hour days. The bible is not concerned about answering the questions, "How old is the earth? ... How Old is the Universe?" There is nothing stated in Scripture to render information on the absolute age of neither the universe nor the earth. Therefore, the real conflict is not between God's revelation and science but between *religious interpretations* and *scientific theories* both of which are created and advanced by men. The man-made scientific theories have a plethora of non-verifiable, un-provable *presuppositions* in advancing their theory of an earth billions

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of years old as does the non-revelatory religious interpretations that claim a young earth about six thousand years old. In any event this short digression is appropriate in terms of Scripture context and necessary to distinguish human supposition from Divine Revelation.

### The Seventh Yom

The third and final section of the Creation Toledah is the creation of the seventh day. This seventh day stands apart from the first six days of creation in several ways.

Genesis 2:1-4

- 1 ¶ Thus the **heavens and the earth were completed**, and all their hosts.
- 2 **By the seventh day** God completed His work which He had done, and **He rested <shabath>** on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.
- 3 Then God **blessed** the seventh day and **sanctified** it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.
- 4 ¶ This is the **account <toledah>** of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven.

The Hebrew word שבת *shabath* (*shaw-bath'*) means to cease, desist, to put a definite and abrupt end to whatever activity was being done prior to the onset of shabath. It is a verb that carries the sense of an *arrest*, an active and abrupt cessation from an ongoing activity. God's deliberate and purposeful cessation has created something new and specific. This active cessation from creation established what we call the seventh yom (day) of creation.

This third sub-division stands alone as distinct and separate from the first six yoms and has some very unique aspects to it. We'll need to spend some time on this due to the significance of what is occurring here.

The seventh yom or day represents a very unique period of time in God's creation. God's *rest* is by definition the *cessation from the act of creating*. God *still remains* in that state of rest, the active cessation from creating and it is the very plan of God from creation to have man enter that rest with Him. Let's examine a highly significant aspect of each created yom (day) in Genesis. All six yoms end with the phrase, "There was evening and there was morning, a \_\_\_ day."

- Genesis 1:5 ... And there was evening and there was morning, one day.  
Genesis 1:8 ... And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.  
Genesis 1:13 ... There was evening and there was morning, a third day.  
Genesis 1:19 ... There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.  
Genesis 1:23 ... There was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.  
Genesis 1:31 ... And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

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There is no such proclamation for the seventh day. This is neither an oversight nor an insignificant point. The inspired Word of God is deliberate and purposeful in all regards. God declares His *material* creation complete *prior* to the creation of the seventh day.

Genesis 1:31 - 2:2

31 ¶ God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

1 ¶ **Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts.**

2 By the seventh day **God completed His work** which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

3 Then **God blessed the seventh day** and **sanctified it**, because **in it He rested** from all His work which God had created and made.

4 ¶ **This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven.**

The seventh yom of God is set apart and blessed by God as an *eternal* time of rest for *all* God's people. God ceased "in" His seventh yom. The seventh yom represents the time (and possibly place) where God's people will be *at one* with God ... where God "is" our God and we "are" His people.

Hebrews 4:4-7

4 For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS";

5 and again in this passage, "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER **MY REST**."

6 Therefore, since **it remains for some to enter it**, and those who formerly had good news preached to them **failed to enter because of disobedience**,

7 **He again fixes a certain day, "Today,"** saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "**TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS.**"

The Sabbath day is **Today**. **Today is the day of rest for God's born again children**. God created, sanctified and blessed this period of time at creation for this very purpose. We are currently living *during* the seventh day of creation, though not all have *entered into* that rest. Only those living in obedience to God enter His rest.

Genesis 2:3

Then God **blessed** the seventh day and **sanctified <qadash>** it, because **in it** He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

This is the first time that God has blessed anything other than life, or at least a cursory reading of the passage would make it *appear* that way and this is first instance of God *sanctifying* something. What does it mean to sanctify?

The Hebrew word for sanctification is קדש qadash (*kaw-dash'*). Its a primitive root verb which means to set apart or consecrate, and more specifically it means to **separate** to God for His holy and sacred purpose. The rest created on the seventh day is the

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*Creation Sabbath (Rest)*. God also created other Sabbaths, periods of rest, like the weekly Sabbath, Land Sabbaths, Jubilee years (Sabbaths) and all the High Holy Sabbaths all instituted under Covenants and Laws of God. The Sabbaths were created by God as a reminder to His People that eternal rest in Him and with Him is coming. This rest in creation is blessed and sanctified to God, but its *purpose* is for man. This is the rest that His people may *enter with* God as His righteous reward to those He saves. The Sabbaths שבתותן shabbathon (shab-baw-thone') are instituted as God's plan of redemption and restoration of His people from the magnitude of separation (death) due to sin. The high holy days point His people to Messiah, the Redeemer Jesus who is, and who was, and who is coming again.

Revelation 1:4

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

The *creation rest* שבת shabath (*shaw-bath'*) is different from the *weekly rest* שבת shabbath (*shab-bawth'*) and the high holy rests given to Moses as part of God's Covenant to man for Redemption and Salvation. The physical rest established by covenantal law is a *type* for the true eternal rest established by God at creation. The rest established by God at creation is the rest that awaits the people of God. As we continue through our study, we will see how Jesus *fulfilled* the *covenant promise* of rest by perfectly living in *letter and spirit* all Sabbath requirements, laws and ordinances put in place by God to *restore* His people so they could enter God's eternal rest established at creation. Let's review the major points.

1. Material creation completed in six days
2. Man created in God's image and likeness to come into relationship with God
3. Shabath (rest) means to cease and desist from creation
4. Shabath rest established at creation as the time where man will be at one with God
5. The seventh yom (day) is blessed by God
6. The seventh yom (day) is sanctified by God
7. The seventh yom (day) has no end
8. The seventh yom (day) is the completion of all creation
9. Man is currently living *during* the seventh yom (day) of creation
10. Man may enter *into* the seventh yom with God upon obedience to God

### Adamic Toledah

This second toledah is the history of man from Adam to Noah. We should notice that toledahs can and do overlap. God's inspired purpose in providing the 10 toledahs of Genesis appears to be for providing essential information God wants to impart to man. Just like the first toledah, the second has three subsections: The Creation, The Fall and Man's Genealogy.

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1. The Creation: Man, Woman and Marriage: Gen 2:5-25
2. The Fall, Sin and Curse Upon Man: Gen 3:1-24
3. The Genealogy of Man: Gen 4:1 - 5:32
  - A. Cain and Abel: Gen 4:1-24
  - B. Seth to Noah: Gen 4:25-5:32

This second toledah begins in Genesis 2:5 by returning us to the time setting just prior to the creation of man. We'll examine each Scripture in this section to determine the existence of any covenants, blessings, commands or laws.

Genesis 2: 5-6

- 5 Now **no shrub** of the field was yet in the earth, and **no plant** of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had **not sent rain upon the earth**, and there was **no man to cultivate the ground**.
- 6 But a **mist used to rise from the earth** and water the whole surface of the ground.

The earth is uncultivated and without greenery prior to the creation of man. A mist is the source of water that will be used for cultivation. In verse 7, Yahweh God describes how He made man.

Genesis 2:7

Then the **LORD God formed man of dust** from the ground, and **breathed into** his nostrils the **breath of life**; and **man became a living being**.

Man is **formed** יָצַר *yatsar* (*yaw-tsar'*) from the dust of the ground. The Hebrew word *yatsar* completely refutes all notions and attempts to integrate **evolution** (not a spelling error but my way of accurately describing the form, purpose and intent of this theory) with creation. **Man did not and does not evolve** ... he was **formed** and he **develops**. The root of the Hebrew verb has a meaning of creating through the act of "squeezing into shape" like that of a potter with clay. In fact, God directly uses the potter/clay imagery in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Romans to describe what He did in creating man and how man is to relate to His Creator.

The breathing into the nostrils of man the breath of life strongly implies God putting in man the "spirit" of man. The spirit imparts mortal life and the departure of the spirit ends mortal life. Scriptures also tell us that life is in the blood. It is the spirit of man that bears the image and likeness of God, more so than the physicality of the clay formed from the dust of the ground. These two areas are further developed in another study and will not be further developed here.

Genesis 2:8

¶ The **LORD God planted a garden** toward the east, in Eden; and **there He placed** the man whom **He had formed**.

## Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

It is God who established the garden in Eden and placed man in it. Notice that man was not created in the garden but placed there by God. God again establishes that He directly formed, squeezed together like clay, man.

Genesis 2:9

Out of the ground the **LORD God caused to grow** every tree that is **pleasing to the sight** and **good for food**; the **tree of life** also in the midst of the garden, and the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil**.

We see there are two categories of trees in the garden. The two categories are non-food producing trees and food producing trees. Scripture mentions two individual trees, the first is the tree of life and the second is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Some debate exists whether these are figurative or literal trees. The narrative given seems to suggest literal. God is teaching man and I see no reason not to believe that the consumption of food producing trees in the Garden of Eden is connected with the imparting of knowledge and how to rightly develop the characteristics of the image and likeness of God in man which is to become the very nature of all men. God planted the first trees in the garden and the trees seem to have a purpose beyond nourishment and sustenance ... the development, or creation through development what is to become man's nature.

In verses 10 through 14, God is describing the Garden itself and we see it to be a virtual irrigation paradise. Its primary river divides into four rivers, producing fertile soil, rich in precious stones and minerals.

Genesis 2:10-14

- 10 Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers.
- 11 The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.
- 12 The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there.
- 13 The name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush.
- 14 The name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

Verses 5-8 and 9-15 are revisiting the same period of time and sequence but from two different perspectives. The first focuses upon the description of the earth and the creation of man, before he was placed in the garden and the latter focuses upon the creation and description of the Garden before man was placed in it by God.

## Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

### Adamic Command or Covenant?

Genesis 2:15-17

15 Then the **LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.**

16 ¶ The **LORD God commanded the man**, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you **shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.**"

The three verses above show God indicating that it is a duty and purpose of man to work, to cultivate and to keep. Work is a characteristic of the image and likeness of God in man and is therefore a blessed condition. When we cover the consequence of sin, we'll see that toil, sorrow, sweat and pain are the penalties for sin in *how* man shall work, but work in and of itself is a godly characteristic of the image and likeness of God in man. While it may be argued that work exists in the animal kingdom, it cannot be rightly argued that the nature, means and purpose of work is the same for both man and animal.

In addition to the purpose for man to work, God issues a command to man upon his placement in the Garden of Eden. Man may eat from any tree of the garden with only one exception ... he may not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for in the day that man eats from that tree he shall surely die.

### Is Genesis 2:15-17 a covenant or command?

Let's examine these three verses in greater depth. Everything since the creation of man is leading up to this climactic event. The course of all human history and all creation for that matter, hinges upon man's obedience to one singular command of God and this one command of God is certainly not grievous or burdensome.

Genesis 2:15

Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to **cultivate <'abad> it and keep <shamar> it.**

To cultivate עבד 'abad (*aw-bad'*) and keep שומר shamar (*shaw-mar'*) is more appropriately rendered to serve and protect. That phrase should be a familiar one to most of us as a slogan for law enforcement.

The word 'abad appears in nearly 300 verses of Scripture and is translated as *serve* 80% of the time. It means to serve through work, to labor intently as in service to God. Man is created to be a priest or servant of God by *nature* and this work of service and protection is very much a characteristic of the image and likeness of God in man. Does the name Jesus ring a bell? His life was one of service as He lived to perfection the

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fullness of the human experience in His earthly existence as King, Prophet and High Priest. See New Covenant [http://www.thelordschildren.org/bible\\_study/pdfs/newcov.pdf](http://www.thelordschildren.org/bible_study/pdfs/newcov.pdf)

Shamar means to keep, guard and watch over that which has been placed under your control with a sense of foreboding, and with a heightened sense of diligence and intensity as from an impending danger or evil. When put together, we see clearly the godly nature of man in how he is to work as a servant or priest of God.

Genesis 2:16

¶ The LORD God **commanded** the man, saying, "From *any* tree of the garden you may eat freely;

It is clearly stated that this is a command of God and not a covenant of God. God is creating the nature of His likeness in man by teaching man his priestly role as servant to God. The Garden Workshop at Eden is where God is developing His like attributes (Likeness) that are destined to become the nature of man. God creates in man volition, the ability to choose as a like attribute of God's Freewill characteristic. God having the authority to issue commands, and man having the responsibility to obey and serve God appears to be both implied and understood by man. God is Sovereign Creator and therefore has the right to issue commands and the right to expect obedience. There is no evidence of a, "who do you think you are?" attitude on the part of man nor is there any evidence to imply man has a Freewill as God's will is free. So far there exists a family type relationship based upon love and obedience. God begins by telling man that any tree in the garden is open, available and accessible to him as food. The implication is that what is consumed from these trees is far more than mere fruit used for physical nourishment and sustenance. Here we see a first evidence of the volition (not free will) of man. Man has the ability to make choices within pre-determined and pre-defined limits. The bible teaches volition in man, not free will. For a more comprehensive treatment of man's relationship and purpose in Creation, please see the study on Freewill, Sin and Evil [http://www.thelordschildren.org/bible\\_study/pdfs/FreeWill.pdf](http://www.thelordschildren.org/bible_study/pdfs/FreeWill.pdf). Let's continue with the next verse.

Genesis 2:17

**but** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil **you shall not eat**, for in the day that you eat from it **you will surely die.**"

God issues His command with clarity, precision and penalty for disobedience.

The **party**: man

The **object**: the trees *God planted* in the Garden of Eden

The **terms**:

1. You may eat from any tree in the garden
2. You may not eat from one specific tree in the garden.

The **penalty** for violation: death

## Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

Here we see how the trees of Eden are literal trees but cannot be viewed as typical fruit bearing trees either. *God planted* the first trees of Eden with a specific purpose in mind, to develop the likeness of God to become the nature of man through educating and preparing man for his created role in the universe. Man bears the image of God and man is being taught by God the joys, benefits and responsibilities associated with the characteristics of godliness. The tree of life cannot be looked upon as your normal fruit producing tree nor can any tree of knowledge for that matter. The two trees mentioned are unlike any trees known to man. Though only one tree of knowledge is mentioned, that of knowing good and evil, there is strong implications that there were many other knowledge trees in the garden to impart understanding on how to rightly use the godly characteristics that are to become man's nature.

The garden was not only created for man to enjoy, serve and keep, but is also the Garden Workshop of God, man's Learning Center if you will for God to educate and develop man on his rights, privileges and responsibilities of being an image bearer of God. The remaining verses of chapter two describe these events leading up to the creation of woman and marriage. The study on Marriage as the image and likeness of God chronicle verses 18-25, so we will not review them here at this time. However, if you have not already done so, I strongly urge you to read the study on Marriage located at <http://www.thelordschildren.org/marriage.htm>

### The Fall, Sin and Judgment

So far in our study, we do not find any evidence of any *expressed covenants* between God and man in the first two chapters of Genesis. **What we do see is God creating in man his nature and purpose in creation** and the issuance of commands to obey. The commands of God is certainly evidence of an implied covenant between God and man in this respect: as man continues to develop his nature as an obedient priest, king and spokesperson (prophet) of God, the elements of what is referred to as the Adamic Covenant is beginning to come into focus.

While the creation of man's nature should not be seen as covenant per se, we do see God creating in man his nature and God's likeness in man's nature. God is creating man's nature via volitional obedience and service to God. God is developing in man the godlike nature of **king**: let them rule; **priest**: cultivate, serve ('abad) and protect and keep (shamar); **spokesman**: prophet or obedient keeper of the Words of God. Everything that is happening in Eden is to become the inherited nature of man.

Now we come to chapter three which is a continuation of the Toledah of Man (Adam) and chronicles the fall and judgment upon man. As you read through chapter three, you will see there are still **no expressed covenants** between God and man prior to the sin and fall of man. The relationship that exists between God and man is thus far centered upon God's love for man and man's volitional obedience as an act of love and service to God.

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Chapter three begins with the introduction of the serpent speaking to and enticing Ishshah (woman) to sin in verses 1-5 and the actualization of sin in verse 6 and the impact of sin in verse 7. Ishshah is the name Adam gave his wife before renaming her Eve after the sin and expulsion from the Garden.

Genesis 3:1-7

- 1 ¶ Now the **serpent** was **more crafty** than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, **has God said**, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"
- 2 The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;
- 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"
- 4 The serpent said to the woman, "**You surely will not die!**
- 5 "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
- 6 ¶ When the **woman saw** that the tree was good for food, and that it was a **delight** to the eyes, and that the tree was **desirable** to make one wise, she **took from its fruit and ate**; and she **gave also to her husband** with her, and **he ate**.
- 7 Then the **eyes of both of them were opened**, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

Sin, evil and death actualized and now, for the first time entered the world and become part of the nature of man. Man literally died in that day both spiritually and physically. We'll explain how this occurred when we cover the appropriate Scriptures. The next section, verses 8-13 God is seeking out and questioning, more like cross-examining, man.

Genesis 3:8-13

- 8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the **man and his wife hid** themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.
- 9 ¶ Then the **LORD God called** to the man, and said to him, "**Where are you?**"
- 10 He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I **was naked; so I hid** myself."
- 11 ¶ And He said, "**Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?**"
- 12 The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate."
- 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "**What is this you have done?**" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

God's questioning of Adam and Ishshah is not based upon ignorance or discovery of the facts. God's questioning is to **establish in the mind of man his own guilt and**

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**shamefulness for defiance to God and tarnishing the image of God.** Adam blames God and the woman for his sin. The woman blames the serpent and indirectly God for allowing the serpent to deceive her. God must now execute His judgment against sin. The penalty has already been established and has already occurred ... death.

Judgment takes on the form of a curse and is similar to blessings in the sense that they stand alone as separate and distinct from covenants though they do share certain characteristics with covenants. A curse is often God's penalty for transgression of His commands, covenants and laws. The Hebrew verb translated as curse is אָרַר 'arar (*aw-rar*) A curse is an execration, a vehement loathing that produces an **irrevocable edict** when commanded by God.

### Upon The Serpent

Can the curse upon the serpent be viewed as a covenant? Well, no, not in the pure sense of a covenant. However, the terms of the curse are as sure, as immutable and equally irrevocable as any closed covenant of God. Its fulfillment is *more assured* than the sun's rising and the earth's gravity. There is no possibility for error or withdrawal. Our Messiah has come and died for us (bruised heel) and rose again in majesty and power (bruised head) over the serpent.

Genesis 3:14-15

- 14 ¶ The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, **Cursed are you** more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life;
- 15 **And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."**

No cross examination by God to the serpent for he is seared in his ways as a fallen spirit and beyond redemption and salvation. God makes no attempt to arouse a sense of guilt by cross-examination as He did with man. God calls for an immediate sentence of condemnation.

In verse 15 of Genesis 3 we see the early indication of man's Messianic hope of redemption and the gospel of salvation readily coming to light. It is God who places enmity between humanity and the serpent. We also see evidence in the curse that God's plan is for redemption and the establishment of an imminent covenant is implied.

Though the covenant is not in place yet, we see the eternal plan of having covenants manifest. The mere fact that a plan of redemption has always been in place due to God's omniscience, this does not in any way negate that the covenantal relationship between God and man did not commence until after the sin and fall of man. The existence of a plan of Redemption is evidence of God's omniscience, not evidence of a covenant. To claim an eternal presence of a redemptive covenant is to claim an eternal presence of the parties to that covenant, God and man. Scripture clearly refutes such a

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notion. Both man and covenants have a specific beginning in space and time and the creation of man had to precede the creation of any covenant with man. God eternally knew that both man and covenants will exist for man's redemption. However, existence in the mind of God is not evidence of an eternal existence. Man's spirit is created to have immortal existence and God knows the names of every saved person from before the foundations of the earth.

Revelation 13:8

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, [everyone] whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

Is it then appropriate for a saved person to claim they had an *existing* relationship with God before creation? That they were in some way present *with God in the beginning*? Perish the thought!

Hebrews 13:20

Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the [great Shepherd](#) of the sheep through the [blood](#) of the [eternal covenant](#), [even] Jesus our Lord,

The omniscience of God neither mandates the *eternal pre-existence* of man nor the *eternal pre-existence* of a covenant. Man does not become pre-existent because God has foreknowledge of us and has our names written in the book of life before we came into being. To claim the covenant as *eternally existing* is a *categorical error* in exactly the same way it is to claim man as eternally existing. If that were to be so, then every human whose name is written in the book of life from the foundations of the world could claim they knew God *before* they were conceived. The bible renders no such teaching.

The eternal covenant is to be understood in the same manner as eternal life. The gift of God is eternal life to those saved through the blood of the Great Shepherd Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant. Eternal Life has a specific beginning in time and space as does the *covenant* of the Eternal God. God is Eternal, without beginning, not the covenant created in Him. The blood of Theanthropos, Jesus the God-man is the perfect representation of humanity (the second Adam) and the perfect representation of the relationship between man and God. Theanthropos is both eternal and temporal in that Jesus is both fully God (Eternal) and man (temporal) for Jesus was indeed born fully human and fully God, the Word become flesh.

Jesus is the second Adam, our life giving Spirit...

Romans 5:14

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

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Jesus replaces the old carnal nature of man created in Adam from the dust of the earth with a new spiritual nature in man born again from God above ... The New Covenant Spiritual Law written upon the hearts of man replaces the Old Covenant Mosaic Law written upon tablets of stone.

1 Corinthians 15:45

So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam [became] a life-giving spirit.

Jesus is the fullness of man's glorious relationship with God ... **LOVE and OBEDIENCE**

John 14:31a

but so that the world may **know that I love** the Father, **I do exactly** as the Father commanded Me

John 15:10

"If you **keep My commandments**, you will **abide in My love**; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

The death of written Torah breathes life into spiritual Torah.

### Upon The Woman

The next verse describes the judgment of God upon the woman.

Genesis 3:16

¶ To the woman He said, "I will **greatly multiply <rabah>** Your pain in **childbirth, <heron>** In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you."

There are two judgments upon the woman, apart from spiritual and physical death. The first is her pain will be **greatly multiplied** in conception/pregnancy and childbirth and the second **is in pain she will bring forth children**. The Hebrew word translated childbirth is **הריון** heron which means conception, pregnancy. It is presumptuous to conclude that there would be absolutely no pain associated with pregnancy if the woman had not sinned. The woman's penalty is **רבה** rabah (*raw-baw'*) which means to multiply and increase in abundance. It is reasonable to conclude from the text that whatever pain *may* have been associated with conception prior to sin would be rendered insignificant and painless by contrast.

The second part of this judgment is in pain woman will bring forth children. The implication is this exceeds the mere act of giving birth but includes also child rearing. The just recompense upon woman lies in what she perceived to be a delight to the eyes, desirable and good, is in reality not delightful, nor desirable but that which brings only pain and toil — no joy but sorrow. These two judgments upon the woman is *in addition* to the death penalty incurred for the sin of disobedience pronounced in Genesis

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2:17, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.

Many consider the latter part of Genesis 3:16, "Yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you" to be part of the judgment of God against woman. That, however, is not supported exegetically. The Hebrew participle 'el (ale) translated as **Yet** in the NASB95, and as **and** in the King James version strongly imply that *desire* shall rule over women in addition to her husband.

God ordained the husband to have dominion over his wife (and with his wife) at creation. The husband's dominion over his wife is not introduced as a form of punishment but re-affirmed along with Ishshah's punishment. A literal exegesis of the verse could read, "*And desire and your husband - they shall rule over you.*" This is further reinforced in God's judgment upon man. The penalty upon woman is just for *desire* enticed woman, so *desire* shall now rule over her. God ordained the husband at creation to have dominion over and dominion with his wife. The bible study on Marriage offers an in-depth treatment of the characteristics of the image and likeness of God in Marriage. <http://www.thelordschildren.org/marriage.htm>

### Upon The Man

Genesis 3:17

¶ Then to Adam He said, "Because you have **listened to the voice of your wife**, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; **Cursed is the ground** because of you; **In toil** you will eat of it **All the days of your life**."

**Man committed two crimes against God** that man is rightly punished for. First, he violated his God ordained role of **not maintaining dominion and leadership over his wife** and second, he **violated the direct command of God** which forbade him to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. By doing so, he loved the creation more than the Creator ... man loved Ishshah more than he loved God.

Genesis 3:18

"Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field;

**The punishment of man** is equally fitting to the crime ... **insubordination**. Just as man is insubordinate to God, that which is under the dominion of man shall be insubordinate to him, the earth itself and some may add the woman in her rebellion. The earth rebels against man by its thorns and thistles, and man overcomes it only by pain, toil and sweat in verse 19, "By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

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The subtle implication of Salvation is present in the punishment ... man shall toil in pain and sweat, but he shall eat ... man shall return to the dust of the ground in death, but he shall rise again in life. The mercy of God shines forth and the punishment is seen as corrective rather than punitive. The resurrection to life is not explicitly stated in this verse but can be clearly connected to this verse from other passages of Scripture. The reward of life is conditionally implied for both temporal and spiritual life. For those who labor there is food for temporal life and for those who obey there remains a promise of spiritual life. We also see this clearly proclaimed in the Seventh Day of Creation, the promise of an eternal rest.

### Upon Mankind

The next several verses proclaim the sentence upon mankind, both man and woman together. Man now changes the name of his wife Ishshah (woman) to חַוְּוָה Chavvah (*khav-vaw*) Eve.

Genesis 3:20

¶ Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all [the] living.

Eve means life or living. This knowledge came from sin, the eating from the tree, and from God's penalty upon woman. It is through the propagation of humanity that the hope of Salvation shall come. Through childbirth comes Salvation by Messiah Jesus.

1 Timothy 2:14-15

14 And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

15 But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

Some cults have twisted the above Scripture to mean women are saved through childbirth. The context is just as woman was preserved to bring forth Salvation through childbirth, Jesus was born of a woman, so shall she continue in faith, love, holiness and sobriety now that Salvation has come through woman's bearing of children for Salvation.

Genesis 3:21

¶ The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

Both physical and spiritual death occurred to both Man and Woman in the very day they sinned. The **physical death** for both is *literal* and *vicarious* (substitutionary). It was vicarious in the sense that physical death, the penalty for sin was the vicarious sacrifice of animals by God to provide covering. God *wrapped* man and woman in the clothes of the slain animal. This is the first indication and type for a **vicarious death** for the penalty of sin. Man must now put on and wear the slain flesh of the animal sacrifice to

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signify death just as he will in the future put on the sacrifice of our Messiah Jesus to signify life.

Romans 13:14

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to [its] lusts.

The physical death incurred was both vicarious and literal. Scriptures define all death as separation. In spiritual death, man became estranged from God, and brings upon himself the curse of literal physical death. Sin changed the nature of the relationship between God and His creation. Man went from a relationship based upon love and volitional obedience to a relationship based upon Covenants and mandatory Laws.

### Expressed Covenant of Noah

As we mentioned in the introduction, there are many covenant types. Let's begin with an examination of some of the expressed covenants of God in the book of Genesis. An expressed covenant of God is an absolute promise of God. In fact, all covenants of God are absolute, whether expressed or implied. An *Expressed Covenant* is when God *specifically states* He is establishing a covenant or will establish a covenant with a specified individual and his seed or descendants. The first expressed covenant of God recorded in Scripture is God's covenant with Noah.

### Noahic Promise

Genesis 6:18-22

- 18 "But I will establish My **covenant <b'riyth>** with you; and you shall enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you.
- 19 "And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.
- 20 "Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive.
- 21 "As for you, take for yourself some of all food which is edible, and gather it to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them."
- 22 ¶ **Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him**, so he did.

The first covenant God made with Noah was a *Conditional Covenant*. Noah is asked to perform requirements associated with this covenant promise, "**and you shall...**" before God keeps his promise to Noah, "**I will...**" This first covenant had two conditions for performance by God, (1) to see that the ark not perish in the waters He sent to blot out every living thing that He made from the face of the land, and (2) that God will establish

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His covenant with Noah. In essence, the promise to establish His covenant is in itself a covenant with Noah.

Genesis 7:1-5

- 1 ¶ Then the LORD said to Noah, "[Enter the ark](#), you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time.
- 2 "[You shall take with you](#) of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female;
- 3 also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth.
- 4 "For after seven more days, [I will send rain on the earth](#) forty days and forty nights; and [I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing](#) that I have made."
- 5 ¶ [Noah did according to all that the LORD had commanded him](#).

The first covenant is the *promise* of a covenant and conditioned upon Noah's obedience to the commands of God for his very survival. Noah's ark of the covenant is a type for salvation and a forerunner for ultimate Salvation from the True Ark of the Covenant. Genesis 6:22 and 7:5 confirm Noah fulfilled the terms or conditions of this covenant to the satisfaction of God. This covenant is a *Closed Covenant*, for the terms for completion are clearly identified. This Closed Covenant is a *Current Covenant*, one that remains active, viable and binding upon all the parties in accordance with all the terms, until such time that all terms and conditions become fulfilled. When terms and conditions of a covenant become fulfilled, the bible refers to that fulfillment as an *Obsolete Covenant*. Now the question becomes, how do we determine when a closed covenant becomes obsolete or fulfilled? God is the only one who can determine if the terms and conditions are successfully met. God determines completion ... not man.

While Noah remained in the ark the first covenant remained a *Current Covenant* for the terms were not yet satisfied ... God did *not yet* perform *His obligation* under the terms of His covenant ... that no life on the ark would perish in the waters sent to destroy the earth *and* that God will establish His covenant with Noah.

Genesis 6:22

¶ Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.

Verse 22 established that no further performance is required on the part of Noah, for God clearly states that Noah did in accordance to all the requirements set forth by God. However, this covenant shall remain a *Current Covenant* until such time that God delivers on His promises. All parties are required to fulfill all terms, conditions and promises before its status can change. God is required to fulfill His part of the covenant ... to keep life in the ark from perishing and to establish His Covenant with Noah.

Noah need *not do* anything further nor could he do anything further to satisfy the conditions of the covenant. God Himself already declared that He is satisfied with the

## Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

performance of Noah and accepts that as fulfillment of the terms. It is now up to God to maintain His *obligation* to fulfill His promise to "establish My Covenant with you."

Let's move ahead to see how the first covenant promise plays out.

Genesis 8:14-18

- 14 In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.
- 15 ¶ Then God spoke to Noah, saying,
- 16 "**Go out of the ark**, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you.
- 17 "**Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you**, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth."
- 18 **So Noah went out**, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him.
- 19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by their families from the ark.

So far so good, full compliance by both parties. God preserved all life upon the ark and commands them to come out and replenish the earth. However, there still remains a condition for God to perform; God is obligated to establish His covenant with Noah. As of this moment in Genesis, God's covenant remains Current and God is under obligation to make good on His promise to establish His covenant with Noah.

Genesis 8:20-22

- 20 ¶ Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.
- 21 The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the **LORD said to Himself**, "I will **never again curse the ground** on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will **never again destroy every living thing**, as I have done.
- 22 "While the earth remains, **Seedtime and harvest**, And **cold and heat**, And **summer and winter**, And **day and night** Shall not cease."

The terms of the covenant to be made with Noah come to light. While this is not yet the covenant *with* Noah, when the LORD speaks to Himself, it is already established as a covenant promise, but not yet with Noah. From the moment the LORD spoke these words, even to Himself, the terms of this covenant, as stated above, became fixed. There are many other terms that are part of the *blessing* God gives to Noah. A blessing is not a covenant per se but is *certainly binding* upon God to deliver. Some blessings have performance provisions upon the person blessed. To include the promises and provisions associated with God's blessing as part of a covenant should not create significant problems, for both are equally binding. However, because Scriptures distinguish between covenants and blessings, so shall I. God's blessing upon Noah covers verses 1 through 7 of Genesis 9. Let's review the blessing.

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### Noahic Blessing

Let's take note of something that is quite interesting. In verse 20 of chapter eight we see Noah sacrificing "clean" animals and birds to the Lord. When God asked Noah to bring into the ark seven males and seven females of every clean animal (Genesis 7:2-3) we find that this was for the purpose of performing "living sacrifices" unto the LORD. Prior to that, both man and beast were vegetarians, no flesh (meat) was eaten upon the earth. Our sacrifices to God is always that which is consumed for life. (This remains true for Jesus as well, for He is our spiritual food and drink.) This will become clear in verses 3 below when God says that every moving thing upon the earth that is alive is good for food *just as* God gave every green plant for food prior to the flood.

Genesis 9:1-8

- 1 ¶ And **God blessed Noah and his sons** and said to them, "Be **fruitful** and **multiply**, and **fill the earth**."
- 2 "The **fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth** and on **every bird** of the sky; with **everything that creeps** on the ground, and **all the fish** of the sea, into your hand they are given."
- 3 "**Every moving thing** that is alive **shall be food** for you; **I give all** to you, *as I gave the green plant*."
- 4 "Only **you shall not eat flesh with its life**, that is, its **blood**."
- 5 "**Surely I will require your lifeblood**; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man."
- 6 "**Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man**."
- 7 "As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it."

The blessing to man also may also be considered a curse from the perspective of the animals. **Man, for the first time becomes a predator of animals**. We can see why, in verse two, God put the fear and terror of man upon every beast of the earth ... they have now become food for man as well as a sacrificial offering to the LORD. The seven of each animal that entered the ark was for the purpose of performing sacrifices. All antediluvian life upon the earth, both man and beast, consumed only green plants for food.

The terms of this blessing upon Noah is also reminiscent of the terms of the blessing upon all life upon the earth that God made earlier with Adam. We will cover the blessing in further detail sometime in the future and it shall be become an appendix to this study. The **terms** of God's blessings are **always absolute** and **always irrevocable**. A blessing may be *limited*, for a specific individual, nation or people or *unlimited*, applicable to all or some people, all or some descendants, or for a specified period of time or for all time. God determines the terms. This Noahic blessing is *unlimited*, *unconditional*, and is *perpetually binding* to Noah, his sons and all his descendants. It is, in essence, a covenant to all mankind forever. We may look upon this blessing as Genesis II, the second beginning. Within this blessing is also a **law**, whoever sheds man's blood, by

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man his blood shall be shed. God requires the death penalty for any living thing (man or beast) that murders the image of God - man. We'll spend more time on this and other blessings as appendices to this study. For now, let's continue with the covenant God establishes with Noah beginning in the very next verse.

### Noahic Covenant

Genesis 9:8-9

8 ¶ Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying,

9 "Now behold, **I Myself do establish My covenant** with you, and with your descendants after you;

At the very moment God establishes His second covenant with Noah, God has satisfied all the conditions of His *first covenant* with Noah, thus making the *first covenant* an *Obsolete Covenant*. Remember, an obsolete covenant no longer has value for *ALL* the terms and conditions for performance have been satisfied by all the parties to the covenant. For that reason a **fulfilled covenant is obsolete**. Obsolete is the term Scriptures use to identify a fulfilled covenant (Hebrews 8:13) one that is no longer in use. No value remains with an obsolete covenant for all terms are satisfied and nothing more can be rendered.

The only reason the second covenant with Noah has rendered this first covenant obsolete is because the *terms* of the first, the making of a covenant, was the only remaining *unperformed* condition of the first. The mere existence of another covenant will *not* render a prior covenant obsolete, unless like the second covenant between God and Noah, (1) the *terms* of the first covenant *mandate* closure due to fulfillment, or (2) God specifically states the covenant is closed regardless of fulfillment of the terms or not. God is the only one who can determine if a covenant remains open or closed. The only caveat to that is God will never close a covenant where He alone has terms that He previously established He will unconditionally fulfill. God is faithful and will never lie, deceive, or navigate a loophole to release Himself from His Word. Let's continue with the terms of the Noahic Covenant.

Genesis 9:10-17

10 and with **every living creature that is with you**, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth.

11 **"I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth."**

God establishing a covenant with Noah (verse 11) renders obsolete the prior covenant for that was the only remaining unfulfilled requirement under the first. The first covenant became closed at this point.

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The **terms** of this Noahic covenant: **God will never destroy the earth and all life upon the earth with a flood.** This is a binding covenant that God must perform.

The **parties** to the new covenant are **God, humanity, earth** and **all life upon the earth.**

The **timeframe** for this covenant is **all successive generations ... forever.** Forever is defined as long as there is an earth and life of flesh dwelling upon the earth.

Genesis 9:12-17

12 ¶ God said, "This is the **sign** of the covenant which I am making **between Me and you and every living creature that is with you**, for **all successive generations**;

The **sign** of the covenant, God's guarantee of performance, is the **rainbow.**

This covenant is a **Closed Covenant** for God has revealed in another place in Scripture that there will be a *new heaven* and a *new earth* and that we will have a *new immortal body* not composed of flesh and blood. There is going to be a time where death no longer reigns. However, as long as there remains life of *flesh* upon the earth this covenant shall remain a **Current Covenant**. When the time comes that flesh and blood humans will cease to live upon this old earth, this covenant will then become obsolete. However, until that time comes, and we shall all look forward to that time, this covenant shall remain a **Current Covenant and binding upon God for as long as mortal flesh and blood humans exist upon the earth.** God must currently continue to perform His promise to not destroy the earth or all life upon the earth with a flood.

Genesis 9:13-17

13 I set My **bow** in the cloud, and it shall be for a **sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.**

14 "It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the **bow will be seen in the cloud,**

15 and I will remember My covenant, which is **between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh**; and **never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh.**

16 "When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the **everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.**"

17 And God said to Noah, "This is the **sign of the covenant** which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."

Let's now compare and contrast the terms of the two covenants between God and Noah.

## Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

### 1. Genesis 6:18 - 7:5

**Dependent** - This covenant is linked to the creation of another

**Expressed** - God specifically states this is a covenant and outlined the terms

**Limited** - The covenant is limited to only Noah and the life in the ark

**Conditional** - God established conditions that Noah had to fulfill before God would perform His promises.

**Closed** - The covenant has conditions established for fulfillment

**Obsolete** - all the conditions and promises have been fulfilled by all the parties.

### 2. Genesis 9:9-18

**Independent** - This covenant stands alone and is not linked with any other

**Expressed** - God specifically states this is a covenant and outlines its terms

**Unlimited** - The covenant carries forward to *all successive* generations of man and beast that live upon the earth forever; a perpetual covenant.

**Unconditional** - Only God has terms for performance. Man is not required to do or perform anything for God to fulfill the terms of His promise ... never to destroy all life upon the earth by flood.

**Closed** - This covenant has terms and conditions associated with fulfillment

**Current** - This covenant remains valid and enforceable for as long as there is an earth supporting lives of flesh.

When God fulfills His obligation under the terms of His first covenant with Noah, (preserving life within the ark and establishing another covenant with Noah) no further performance is possible nor can any be required by God or by Noah under the terms of the first covenant. The completion of a covenant is the fulfillment of a covenant. A *fulfilled* covenant immediately becomes *obsolete*. Obsolete means no longer in use or effect. A *fulfilled* covenant **must** become obsolete because nothing further is or can be required by either party. Promises made and promises kept result in an *Obsolete Covenant* or a *Fulfilled Covenant*. **Obsolete and fulfilled are synonymous terms that can be used interchangeably.** Covenant one above is *Obsolete*.

Immediately upon God establishing a new covenant with Noah, (only God remained under obligation for performance) God fulfilled the first covenant of Genesis 6:18-22 and rendered it obsolete. That singular act fulfills the first, and the first became fulfilled because nothing more can be done ... finis! The second covenant God established with Noah is *Current*, binding upon God and currently in full use and effect until such time that *all* its terms and requirements are fulfilled, (no longer any life of flesh upon the earth, and the creation of a new earth) will thus render this covenant obsolete.

We now begin to learn several things from God concerning the terms and conditions of His covenants. First, God always outlines **His terms** (*Unilateral*) and often repeats His terms so there is no confusion. Second, God specifies **the parties** bound to His covenant. God further identifies the **conditions for fulfillment**. God always binds Himself to fulfill His conditions of performance under the terms of the covenant and also binds the other parties to fulfill their terms as well. A covenant's **sign** is the pledge or guarantee of performance.

## Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

The above covenants and its terms and conditions dictated by God determine and regulate the performance, terms and conditions for fulfillment. Only God remains subject to the terms of the second covenant with Noah. There are *no conditions* for man in terms of performance associated with the second covenant with Noah. It remains a *Closed, Current Covenant* because *God* is *required* to *continue to perform* His covenant promise by *not* destroying all life upon the earth with a flood.

### Implied Covenant of Abram

As discussed earlier, an *Implied Covenant* is one where God does not specifically state he is making a covenant, but by the very nature of the exchange, (terms and conditions for performance) God is making it clear that a covenant is being established. The first such instance of an implied covenant is with Abram.

#### *The Four Abram Covenants*

##### **Genesis 12:1-4.**

- 1 ¶ Now the **LORD said to Abram**, "**Go forth from your country**, And from your relatives And from your father's house, **To the land which I will show you**;
- 2 **And I will make you a great nation**, And **I will bless you**, And **make your name great**; And so **you shall be a blessing**;
- 3 And **I will bless those who bless you**, And **the one who curses you I will curse**. And in you **all the families** of the earth **will be blessed**."
- 4 ¶ **So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him**; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

This is a *Conditional Covenant* God makes with Abram. The two conditions for Abram is to (1) leave his home and (2) go to the land (Canaan) that God will show him. Abraham faithfully obeys God, thus fulfilling both conditions to his part of the covenant. There is nothing else Abram need do to inherit the promises of God as stated above. God is now *bound* by the terms of His covenant to do all He said He would do. God is bound to deliver the following to Abram:

1. Make Abram a great nation
2. To bless Abram
3. Make Abram's name great
4. Abram will be a blessing
5. God will bless those who bless Abram
6. Curse those who curse Abram
7. In Abram all families of the earth will be blessed

The terms of performance are now with God alone. Because the first six promises are to Abram and Abram alone, one might come to conclude this is a limited covenant but it is not. The seventh promise, "all families of the earth shall be blessed" make this an

## Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

**Unlimited Covenant** and a **Closed Covenant** in that the conditions for fulfillment are clearly articulated.

So what is the status of this covenant today, in 2006?

This covenant is fulfilled and is therefore an **Obsolete Covenant**, by biblical standards. Abram became a great people (nation) as did also Israel become a great nation. Abram's name, later changed to Abraham, did indeed become great, was indeed blessed by God and did indeed become a blessing. Those who cursed Abram did themselves become cursed and the first advent of Jesus Christ completed the 7<sup>th</sup> and final obligation of God, "all the families of the earth will be blessed in Abram" for Jesus the Messiah is the seed of Abraham (Abram).

The substance of God's first covenant with Abraham is found in Genesis 17:7

Genesis 17:7

¶ "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.**

"To be God to you and your descendants after you" is the summary and substance of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants. The New Covenant establish this seed to be none other than the Messiah Jesus.

Galatians 3:16

Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as [referring] to many, but [rather] to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.

According to the terms of this covenant, the **Covenant is Completed, Obsolete**. God makes three additional covenants with Abram before He changed his name to Abraham. The second covenant is located in Genesis 12:7

**Genesis 12:7**

The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "**To your descendants I will give this land.**" So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

Abram had just passed through the land of Shechem to the Terebinth or Oak of Moreh in the land of Canaan when the LORD made this covenant with Abram. It is important to note that this land is specifically given to the *descendants* of Abram and not to Abram himself. This covenant of God is an **Implied, Independent, Unconditional** and **Limited** covenant being made to Abram. There is no performance required on the part of Abram associated with the giving of this land to his descendants. This is an absolute and unconditional promise of God. I believe this covenant **may** be an Obsolete Covenant.

## Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

The debate continues to rage in theological circles whether this is an obsolete or current covenant. The questions raised is, is this land bound to **all** the descendants of Abraham **forever**? Does this mean if some descendants have possession of the land but other descendants do not that God has defaulted upon His covenant promise? I think not for God's faithfulness renders that an impossible scenario. Yet, there remain those who choose to interpret Scripture in such a manner as to render God unfaithful. (So what else is new?) Let ALL the theologians all be liars and God be true. Some will claim that every generation *must* have possession of this land for God's promise to be fulfilled. Is God's covenant fulfilled by *giving* the land or is it fulfilled by *keeping* uninterrupted possession of the land? We'll see that God's Word satisfies a correct understanding of this in other Scriptures, but nonetheless, that does not seem to deter the detractors. The minions of Satan who disguise themselves as bible believing lovers of God are liars, deceivers, mockers, and people with one overall purpose in life ... to place as many stumbling blocks before the people God is calling to shipwreck as many as will sink. Debates are better left until all the facts are in. Let them be what they will be. From the text itself it appears that God is bound to give the land for possession to more than one of the descendantss of Abram for this covenant to be fulfilled. Let's continue.

The third covenant God makes with Abram is recorded in Genesis 13:14-18

### Genesis 13:14-18

- 14 ¶ **The LORD said to Abram**, after Lot had separated from him, "**Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward;**
- 15 **for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.**
- 16 "**I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth**, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered.
- 17 "**Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you.**"
- 18 Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

Now the journeys of Abraham are quite remarkable for he traversed significant parcels of land. Between the last covenant and this, Abram had traveled down to Egypt and back up to Negev (Southwest of Canaan) and returned to the place of the altar between Bethel and Ai. He then returned to the land of Canaan after he separated from his brother Lot. The location of this covenant land appears to be further south from the second covenant with God, though still in the land of Canaan. Let's examine the terms of this *Implied Covenant* with God.

1. All the land as far as the eye can see in all direction is given to Abram, and his **descendants <olam>** translated as forever and as a long duration of time.
2. Abram's seed is as the dust of the earth, innumerable
3. Abram is to examine and walk about the length and breadth of the land

## Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

This covenant is *Independent*, *Unlimited* and *Unconditional*. This covenant neither depends upon nor rests upon any other, is not limited to Abram only but also to his seed ... *for a long period of time*. There are **no** conditions associated with God delivering upon His absolute promises. This covenant is a *Closed Covenant*, and God is bound to deliver upon His promise. Much debate has raged over the phrase עַד עוֹלָם (ad 'owlam) as to whether this should be properly translated "for a long time" or forever. The translation forever appears to be appropriate in both context and use. However, this does create some difficulties. If God disinherits the land for a time from some of the descendants of Abram, does this negate the reliability and faithfulness of God in keeping His promises? One needs look no further than some Scriptures that invoke the intent of God with His promises.

2 Chronicles 33:8

**and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers, if only they will observe to do all that I have commanded them according to all the law, the statutes and the ordinances given through Moses."**

The context demonstrates the purpose and intent of God in how we should understand the term owlam, in Genesis 13:15. It was never God's intent to absolutely give this land to every one of Abram's descendants *unconditionally forever*. Absolute, unconditional promises were made to Abraham and the fathers (descendants) forever.

This is yet another example of theologians *reading into* (eisegesis) the Scriptures things that are not there. They tend to do this not so much to *extract* truth but more to infuse their theology or rather confusion into God's Holy Word. Another instance of eisegesis is the presupposition that faith is a *covenant condition* for God to deliver upon all His covenant promises. This undermines the faithfulness and integrity of God. God made His covenants with Abraham because of the faith of Abraham. The covenant God makes with Abraham is a *reward* of faith, the blessings rendered to Abraham for his faithfulness. Once God *establishes* His covenant, nothing more can or should be added nor anything taken away ... it is set.

Where no conditions are established to the promises, no conditions can later be added ... why? ... Because God Is Faithful! We can completely and totally take Him at His Word, without reservation, without doubt, without wavering. The continuing faith of Abraham is the reason God continues to make a series of covenants with Abraham, but once a covenant is made and the conditions (or lack of) are established by God, nothing more can be added to nor taken from an established covenant. Nothing beyond that which is stated need be done for God to deliver His covenant promise. This is an extremely critical concept to understand and etch into our psyche because it speaks to the very nature and essence of whom and what God is and why we can absolutely put our complete and total trust in Him. The essence of our relationship with God is that of having faith in a faithful God. No small issue by any measurable standard.

## Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

### Genesis 15: The 4<sup>th</sup> Covenant

This too is the essence of the fourth and final covenant God makes with Abram, This is perhaps the most significant covenant of God in this sense, it brings to light that **Salvation in both Old and New Covenants is exactly the same ... By Grace ... Through Faith.**

This covenant with Abram take place 24 years after God's first covenant with him and is the last covenant prior to God changing Abram's name to Abraham. We read about this covenant in Genesis chapter 15. I've separated this covenant into four distinct parts. Part 1: the Vision Covenant; Part 2: the Sacrificial Sign of the Covenant; Part 3: the Terror of Great Darkness; And Part 4: the expressed covenant with Abram. It is in Part 2 of this covenant, the sacrificial sign of the B'riyth, the Hebrew word for covenant, where the sharpest meaning and intent of B'riyth becomes manifest. As discussed earlier, B'riyth is a solemn and binding covenant or agreement made by passing through and between two pieces of flesh.

The LORD appears to Abram in a vision and theophany (appearances of God in the likeness of a man) that begins at evening, and culminates the following night.

#### Part 1: The Vision Covenant

1. Do not fear
2. El Shaddai is Abram's shield
3. Abram's reward shall be very great - El Shaddai Himself
4. Ishmael shall not be heir, but one born of your inward parts
5. Your descendants shall be as numerous as the stars of heaven
6. Abram believed and the LORD accounted it to him as righteousness
7. Yahweh gives this land to Abram to ירש (yarash) seize, possess, inherit

#### Part 2: The Sacrificial Sign of the B'riyth (Covenant)

1. A three year old: heifer, female goat ram cut in two down the middle laying opposite each other
2. A turtledove and young pigeon: uncut
3. Abram drives away the birds of prey seeking to devour the b'riyth
4. After sunset when it became very dark, a smoking oven and flaming torch passed between the carcasses

#### Part 3: The Terror of Great Darkness

1. Your seed will be strangers in a land not theirs
2. They will be enslaved and oppressed 400 years
3. They will emerge with great possessions
4. God will judge the oppressors
5. Abram will die in peace at a very ripe old age
6. The fourth generation will return to the land of Canaan
7. The iniquity of the Amorite (Egyptians) is not yet complete

## Covenants, Law and Blessing: Genesis

### Part 4: The Expressed Covenant of The LORD

1. To Abram's seed God has given this land
2. From the Nile to the Euphrates
3. The people of the land are to be disinherited

The terms of this covenant is Independent, Implied, Limited, Conditional, Closed, and Obsolete. All the promises of God in this four part covenant, the fourth covenant of God with Abram have been delivered and fulfilled by God thus making this an [Obsolete Covenant](#).

I will work as diligently as I can to list and discuss each and every covenant of God as appendices to this study. A study on the covenants of God is a comprehensive work and one that will be ongoing for many, many years to come. My purpose here is to give a foundational study on the nature and purpose of covenants. Covenants are essential elements to God's plan of redemption of His people.

Peace and Blessings in the name of Jesus.