

Session 1

Covenant & Kingdom

1- What is Covenant Theology?

"The idea of covenant is fundamental to the Bible's story. At its most basic, covenant presents God's desire to enter into relationship with men and women created in his image. This is reflected in the repeated covenant refrain, 'I will be your God and you will be my people.' Covenant is all about relationship between the Creator and his creations."

- Alistair Wilson and Jamie Grant, God of the Covenant

Definition: A covenant is a legal and relational agreement, initiated by God to establish and secure the conditions and expectations for a binding relationship with his people. God sets the terms of the covenant relationship including conditions and obligations, promises and blessings, penalties and curses.

"The Bible is not a random collection of laws, moral principles, and stories. It is a story that goes somewhere; it is the story of redemption, the story of God's kingdom. And the story unfolds and advances through the covenants God made with his people."

- Thomas Schreiner, Understand the Covenants to Understand the Bible

"Covenant theology seeks to understand and explain the united purpose of God in all history, past, present, and future." - Samuel Renihan, The Mystery of Christ

LHC Expanded Doctrinal Statement

- EDS #5: God the Son, Jesus Christ, came to earth to fulfill the covenant with Israel by establishing a new covenant in his blood and thereby reconciling one unified people to God. This Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, was both fully God and fully man and lived a life without sin as humanity's second representative to accomplish God's eternal purpose for redemption.
- EDS #6: "God the Son, Jesus Christ, will come again to the earth in bodily form, at an unknown time, bringing to completion God's plan of redemption secured at his first coming."

2- What are the main covenants of the Bible and how do they fit together?

"Covenant Theology understands the whole of history after man's fall into sin as unifying under the provisions of the covenant of redemption (or more traditionally, the covenant of grace). Beginning with the first promise to Adam-in-sin and continuing throughout history to the consummation of the ages, God orders all things in view of his singular purpose of redeeming a people to himself."

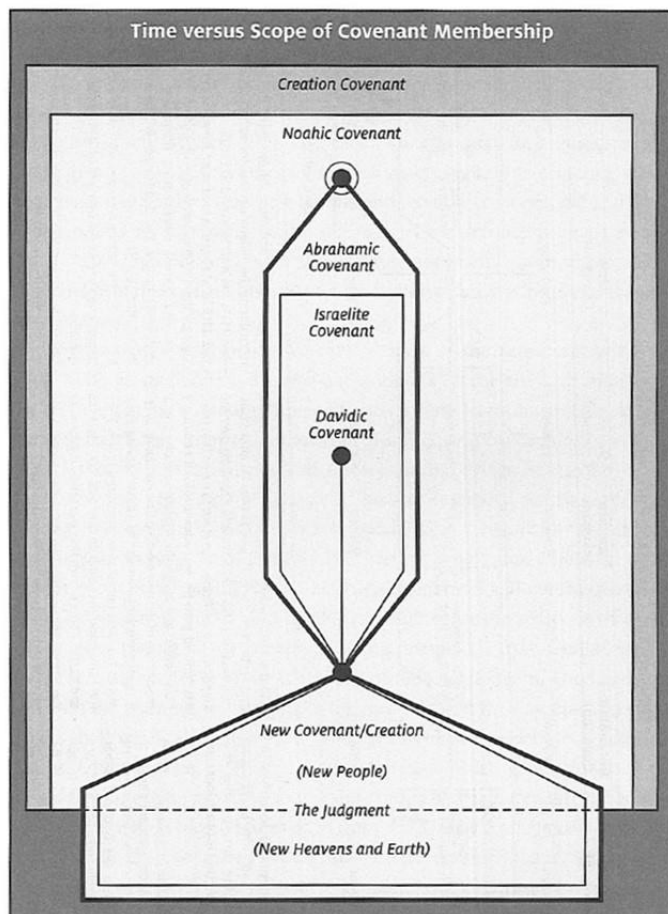
– Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*

1. Covenant with Adam:
2. Covenant with Noah:
3. Covenant with Abraham:
4. Covenant with Israel through Moses:
5. Covenant with David:
6. New Covenant in Christ:

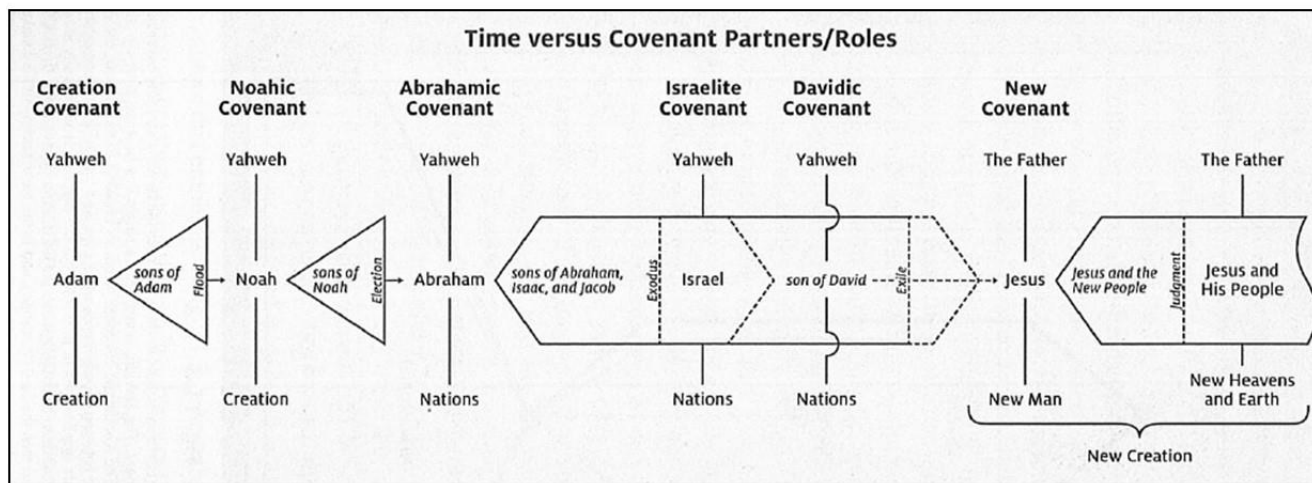
Hebrews 8:6-13 – *"But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. ⁷ For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. ⁸ For he finds fault with them when he says: 'Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ⁹ not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. ¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹¹ And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. ¹² For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." ¹³ In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away."*

God's Kingdom through God's Covenants

by Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum



"As one biblical covenant leads to the next, all of them find their *telos* (terminus) and fulfillment in Christ, the mediator of the new covenant...when the new covenant arrives, we have the ultimate fulfillment of all of God's promises, the reversal of the effects of sin and death brought about by Adam, and the establishment of the new creation... Ultimately, all prophetic hope is tied to the dawning of the new covenant age...In the new covenant, *all* of God's promises are fulfilled...In the NT, it is clear that the new covenant texts are applied to Christ and the church, which includes with it both Jews and Gentiles...Individually, and corporately, Christians are God's new covenant people, and it is in Messiah Jesus - the last Adam, true Israel, and David's greater Son - that all of God's promises are fulfilled. In Christ, Jew and Gentile are now the one new man, the church. Together and equally, we inherit *all* of God's promises in Christ Jesus our Lord...God has not replaced Israel by the church; instead, he has brought Israel's role to its fulfillment in Christ and to Christ's people...There are no outstanding promises for national Israel which are not first fulfilled in Messiah Jesus and then given to Christ's people, the church, comprised of believing Jews and Gentiles."



3- What principles help us interpret the Bible from a covenantal perspective?

1- Progressive Revelation:

2- Inauguration & Consumption:

3- Christocentric & Christotelic:

- The OT is Christian Scriptures, written to lead us to salvation in Christ (Rom 15:4; 1Co 10:11; 2Ti 3:14-17; 1Pe 1:10-12; 1Co 15:3-4).
- The fulfillment of Israel's prophetic hope anticipated in the OT is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ (Act 10:42-43; 13:29-34; 26:6-7, 22-23).

Luke 24:44-47 – *“Then he said to them, ‘These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶ and said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead...’”* (see also Luke 24:25-27)

2 Corinthians 1:20 – *“For all the promises of God find their ‘Yes’ in him.”*

4- Typology:

Examples of typology in the NT:

- Son Out of Egypt – Mat 2:14-15
- Lord Over His Enemies – Mat 22:41-45; Mar 12:36; Luk 20:43; Act 2:35; 1Co 15:25; Heb 1:13, 10:13
- Serpent Lifted Up – Joh 3:14-15
- New Temple – Joh 2:20-21
- New Adam – Rom 5:12-21
- Passover Lamb – 1 Cor 5:7
- High Priest & Sacrifice – Heb 9:11-12

4- What is Dispensational Theology?

- A system of organizing and interpreting the Bible. In this view God's relationship to people groups is organized into distinct and successive time periods, called dispensations.
- 4 points to summarize:
 1. Division of Scripture into time periods called *dispensations*.
 2. Focus on Literal interpretation of prophecy (literal whenever possible).
 3. An ongoing distinction between Israel & the Church.
 4. A unique version of Premillennial Eschatology (Pre Tribulation Rapture).
- Dispensationalism's origin and growth:
- What we respect about Dispensationalists:
- Concerns and Critiques of Dispensationalism:
 - Overly Literal Hermeneutic:
 - Two Plans/Two people of God:
 - View of Second Coming and End Times Events:

5- How is the Old Covenant fulfilled in Christ and the Church?

- **Blessing:** How does God's blessing to Abraham extend to all the nations?
- **People:** Who are the people of God?

Romans 2:28-29 – *"For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God."* (see also Rom 4:11-12)

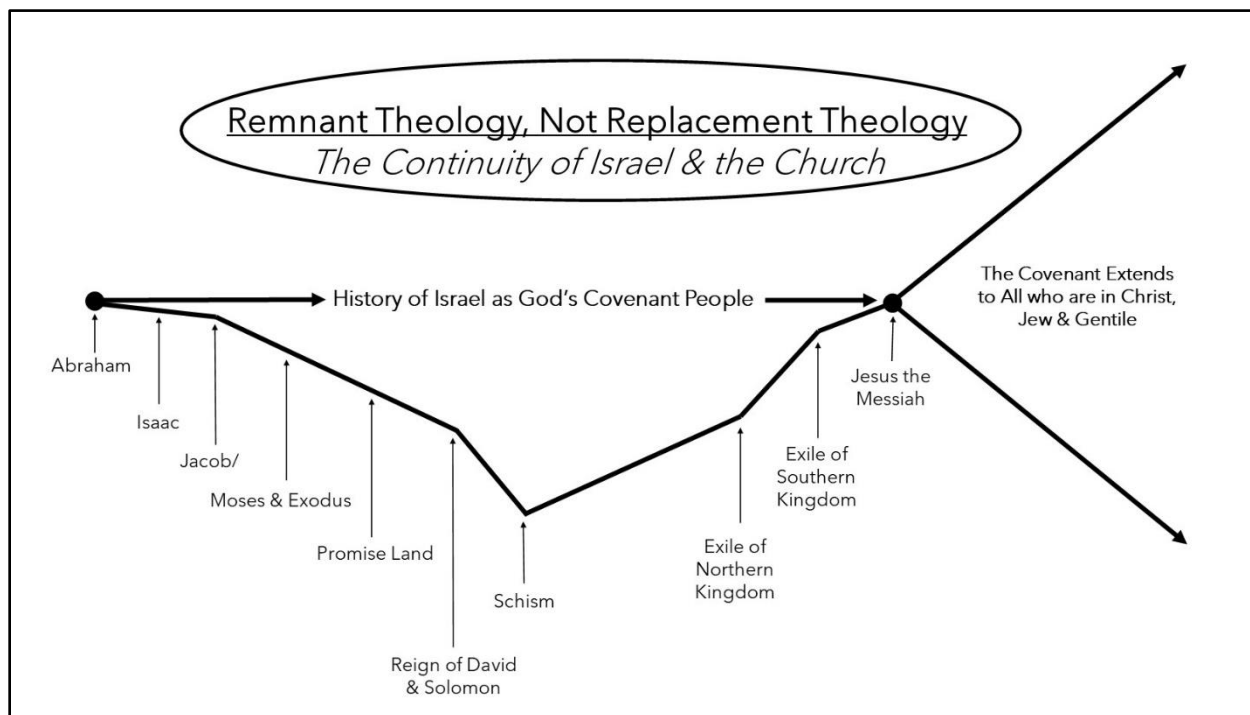
Romans 3:28-30 – *"For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. ²⁹ Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰ since God is one-- who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith."* (see also Rom 3:21-27)

Hebrews 11:39-40 – *"And all these [OT saints], though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect."*

Ephesians 2:11-16 – *"Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands – ¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility."* (see also Joh 8:56; Act 3:25-26; Eph 3:6; Rom 11:11-24)

"...the church includes both Old Testament believers and new Testament believers in one church or one body of Christ...Many NT verses, particularly in Hebrews, James, and 1 Peter, understand the church as the 'new Israel' or new 'people of God'...The new covenant that God predicted through Jeremiah [as interpreted in Hebrews 8] is the covenant of which believers in the church are now members...The church is the continuation of [God's] plan expressed through-out the OT to call a people to himself..."

– Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology



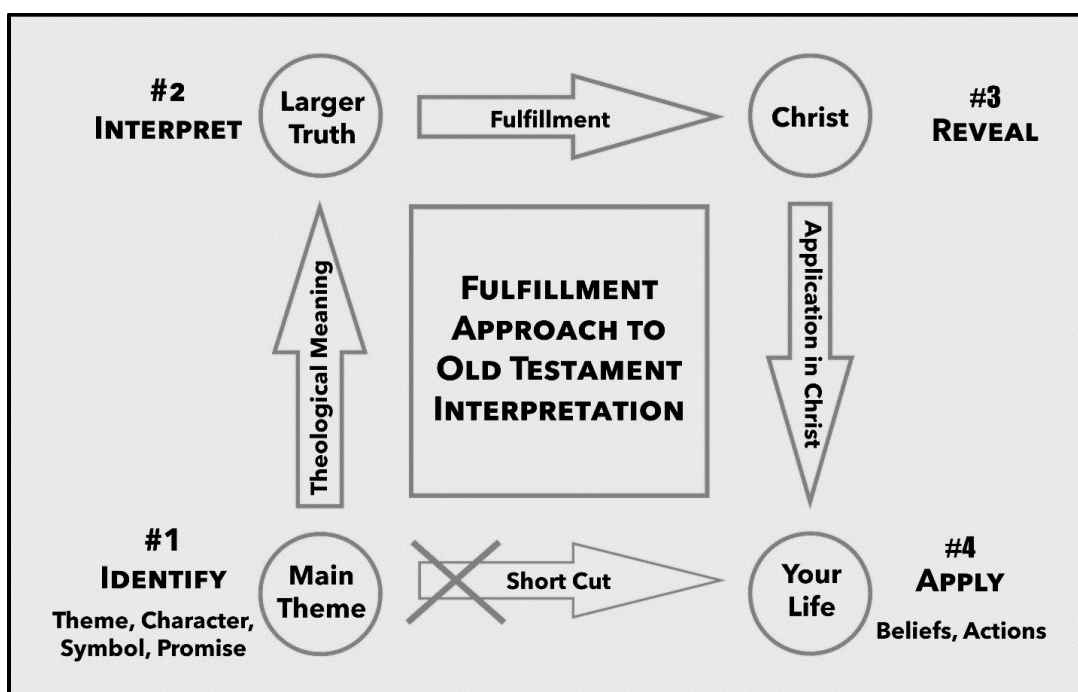
Galatians 3:16, 27-29 - "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ... ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."

- **Land:** What is the fulfillment of the Promise Land?

Hebrews 11:12-16 - "Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore." These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city."

6- How do we read and interpret the OT in practice?

- **Exemplary Approach:** How should we follow/not follow the examples of the characters in the story?
- **Redemptive-Historical Approach:** How did God guide the events of history toward the redemption of mankind?
- **Systematic-Theological Approach:** What does the passage show us about who God is and how He works?
- **Fulfillment Approach:** How do the themes, character, symbols, and promises foreshadow and find fulfillment in the work of Christ?



1- Identify

2- Interpret

3- Reveal:

4- Apply:

Romans 15:4 – “For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”