

A The Eternal Covenant.

- ❖ God invites everyone to have a relationship with Him as a covenant. God has adapted this covenant to the epoch, place, and people involved.
- ❖ “Covenant”—*berith* in Hebrew, *διαθήκη* in Greek— may be also translated as “testament” or “last will.” It lays the foundation of a relationship or an agreement between two people.
- ❖ The eternal covenant contains three basic elements:
 - God affirmed the covenant promises with an oath (Hebrews 6:17)
 - The individual commits to obey God (Deuteronomy 4:13)
 - The means by which the covenant is fulfilled: Salvation through Jesus (Isaiah 42:6)

B Covenant with Noah.

- ❖ Genesis 6:18 is a bilateral covenant:
 - God promised to save Noah and his family (and actually anyone who would have wanted to enter the ark with them).
 - Noah had to build an ark and enter it. If Noah had not fulfilled his part of the covenant, God could not have fulfilled His.
- ❖ God is always true to His word. He can only be prevented from fulfilling His promises if we stubbornly reject His help.

C Covenant with Abram.

- ❖ Before His formal covenant with Abraham, God promised to bless him and to bless all the nations of the Earth through him (Genesis 12:1-3). That is, He promised him that the Savior of the world would be one of his descendants (Galatians 3:16).
- ❖ Once the relationship between them was established, God formalized His covenant with him (Genesis 15). Abram believed in God’s promises and was justified (v. 6), and therefore prepared to obey and fulfill the terms of the covenant (Genesis 18:19).
- ❖ Our obedience to God is a response of faith to everything He has already done for us (1 John 4:19).

D Covenant with Moses.

- ❖ The covenant of God with Israel through Moses is the continuation of the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 6:4-5).
 - A special relationship with God is established (Genesis 17:7-8; Exodus 19:5)
 - They are promised that they would become a great nation (Genesis 12:2; Exodus 19:6)
 - Obedience is required (Genesis 17:9-10; Exodus 19:7-8)
- ❖ It was a covenant of grace. God took the first step by saving Israel. Then, He gave them the Law so they would keep it as a natural response to the covenant.
- ❖ The Gospel is the same. First, Christ saves us from sin. Then, He helps us to obey Him (1 Peter 2:24).

E The New Covenant.

- ❖ Why was a new covenant necessary? How is it different from the old one?
- ❖ God had taken care of Israel as if He was their husband, but they had been unfaithful and had disobeyed Him. They had invalidated the first covenant (Jeremiah 31:32).
- ❖ However, the new covenant is still a continuation of the old one. The only difference is that God promised a closer relationship between humans and Himself (v. 33).
- ❖ Again (v. 34), God took the first step and saved us. Our natural response should be to obey the Law He’s placed in our hearts (v. 33).