

An Arc of the Covenants: Tracing How the Bible's Storyline Climaxes in Christ

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INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

Covenants as Scripture's Backbone

Covenant (Hebrew *bērit*; Greek *diathēkē*) is the Bible's term for "a chosen [as opposed to natural] relationship in which two parties make binding promises to each other," often with God as the witness.¹ That is, a covenant's core is a non-biological, oath-bound relationship like those in clan alliances (Gen 14:13), personal agreements (Gen 31:44), international treaties (Josh 9:6; 1 Kgs 15:19), national agreements (Jer 34:8–10), and loyalty agreements (1 Sam 20:14–17), including marriage (Mal 2:14).² Some scholars assert that "covenant" or "the covenantal kingdom" is

the controlling center of the Christian canon.³ Others more modestly argue that the covenants' progression "forms the backbone of Scripture's metanarrative."⁴ Through covenants God relates to others, reverses sin's ruinous effects, and introduces his saving reign into the world.

The concept of covenant correlates closely with that of canon, for the latter is by nature the authoritative written word of a covenant lord.⁵ The Bible grew up in the context of covenant and is, therefore, canonical revelation.⁶ This fact led the early church fathers to designate the Bible's two parts as *Testaments* (i.e., "covenants"), with the Mosaic (old) covenant and the new covenant respectively dominating the first and second.

A development of the covenants guides the biblical storyline. Each historical covenant includes both common grace and saving grace elements that Jesus's person and work culminate or realize. This study overviews the nature and interrelationship of the five main historical covenants between God and his creatures, which I refer to as the Adamic-Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and new.⁷ The specific covenant head or mediator determines the names of the first four, and the title *new* covenant derives from its contrast with and superseding of the old Mosaic administration.

Tracing the Covenantal Argument Through an Arc

"Arcing" is a type of argument diagramming that allows interpreters to quickly trace an author's thought flow through visual representation.⁸ Arcing is a tool for analyzing discourse at any level. It usually serves to trace the logical relationships of propositions and paragraphs within Bible passages, but I use it here to help visualize the progress and inter-relationship of the biblical covenants. Thought units relate in either a coordinate or subordinate way. Coordinate relationships include series, progression, or alternative. Subordinate relationships have a main or primary structure and then another that restates it, stands distinct from it, or stands contrary to it. The question, then, is: How do the Bible's five main covenants progress, integrate, and climax in Christ, and how may one visualize such interrelationships through arcing? Table 1 synthesizes the various semantic relationships that are possible between two linguistic entities.

Table 1. Definitions for Propositional Relationships	
Coordinate	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Series (S): Each proposition makes its own independent contribution to a whole (English signal: "and, moreover, likewise, neither, nor"). • Progression (P): Like series, but each proposition is a further step toward a climax (English signal: "then, and, moreover, furthermore"). • Alternate (A): Each proposition expresses a different possibility arising from a situation (English signal: "or, but, while, on the other hand"). • Both-And (B&): Two propositions that are surprisingly both true or both false (English signal: "both ... and, neither ... nor"). 	
Subordinate	
Restatement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action-Manner (Ac/Mn): An action and a more precise statement indicating the way or manner in which the action is carried out (also call Way-End) (English signal: "in that, by" + participles). • Comparison (Cf): An action and a statement that clarifies that action by showing what it is like (English signal: "even as, as ... so, like, just as"). • Negative-Positive (-/+): Two statements, one of which is denied so that the other is enforced. This is also the relationship implicit in contrasting statements (English signal: "not ... but"). • Question-Answer (Q/A): The statement of a question and the answer to that question (English signal: "?"). • Idea-Explanation (Id/Exp): The relationship between a statement and another clarifying its meaning by expounding on a single word or the entire idea (English signal: "that is, in other words"). • General-Specific (Gn/Sp): A proposition stating a whole and a second stating one or more parts of that whole (English signal: "such as, for example"). • Fact-Interpretation (Ft/In): A statement and its interpretation (English signal: "that is, which is, meaning"). 	
Distinct Statement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground (G): A statement and the argument or reason for that statement (supporting proposition follows) (English signal: "for, because, since"). • Inference (-): A statement and the argument or reason for that statement (supporting proposition precedes) (English signal: "therefore, accordingly, so"). • Bilateral (BL): A proposition that supports two other propositions, one preceding and one following (English signal: "for, because, therefore, so"). • Action-Result (Ac/Res): An action and a consequence or result which accompanies that action (also called Cause-Effect) (English signal: "so that, that, with the result that"). • Action-Purpose (Ac/Pur): An action and its intended result (also called End-Means) (English signal: "in order that, so that, that, lest"). • Conditional (If/Th): Like action-result except that the existence of the action is only potential and the result is contingent upon that action (English signal: "if ... then, provided that, except, unless"). • Temporal (T): A statement and the occasion when it is true or can occur (English signal: "when, whenever, after, before"). • Locative (L): A statement and the place where it is true or can occur (English signal: "where, wherever"). • Anticipation-Fulfillment (Ant/F): A promise with its accompanying fulfillment (English signal: "and so"). 	
Contrary Statement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concessive (Cov): A main clause that stands despite a contrary statement (also called Adversative) (English signal: "although, though, yet, nevertheless, but, however"). • Situation-Response (Sit/R): A situation and a surprising or counter-intuitive response (English signal: "and"). 	
<small>These definitions are all from https://BibleArc.com.</small>	

1. ADAMIC-NOAHIC COVENANT

Adam's Headship in the Covenant with Creation

Because the word "covenant" (*bērît*) first appears in Genesis 6:18 in relation to Noah, some question if God formally makes a covenant with creation through Adam.⁹ However, Yahweh's interactions with David in 2 Samuel 7

indicate that the substance of a "covenant" can exist without the term (cf. 2 Sam 23:5; Ps 89:3; 132:11–12). Furthermore, the Bible's earliest chapters depict the results of God's choosing to initiate a kinship-type bond with creation through Adam's representative headship (see Gen 1:1; 5:1–3; Jer 33:20, 25), and this is a covenant's essence.¹⁰ Finally, Adam's royal-priestly duties (Gen 1:28; 2:15; cf. Exod 19:6) and his conditional enjoyment of the garden sanctuary and consequences for disobedience (Gen 2:17; cf. Deut 28) foreshadow Israel's life under the Sinai/Horeb covenant and suggest that Moses viewed what God was doing with Adam as a prototype for the Sinai covenant.¹¹

While creation was "very good" (1:30), it was incomplete. Thus, this elected covenantal relationship includes both God's pledge to providentially sustain terrestrial life (1:29–30) and humanity's conditional responsibility to fulfill the Lord's charge to serve as his image-bearing priest-kings who expand a God-dependent community and the garden sanctuary to the ends of the earth (1:26–28; 2:15–18).¹² From the start, God's covenant with creation through Adam stresses the themes of progeny, property, and power (rule) (1:28), all of which resurface in Scripture's covenantal progression culminating in Christ.¹³ That is, God's blessing was linked to his kingdom, as humans would represent his reign on the earth (1:28). By dependently obeying, Adam and his offspring would have gained both wisdom and eternal life (3:22, 24), but they gained knowledge and death through their disobedience (2:17; 3:1–6, 22).¹⁴ Functioning as covenant head/representative, Adam transgressed the covenant (Isa 43:27; Hos 6:7) when he submitted to the serpent's rule rather than God's (Gen 4:7; cf. Rom 6:12). He failed to spread God's blessing (Gen 1:28) and sinned by disobeying God's word and not protecting his wife and the land from the serpent (2:15, 17; 3:6). As a result, God cursed the earth and condemned humanity to spiritual and physical death (2:17; 3:17–19; cf. Isa 24:4–6; Jer 25:30–38). Thus, "one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people," and "through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners" (Rom 5:18–19).

Whereas the first Adam sinned, failing his probationary test for securing life, his antitype—the last Adam Jesus Christ—would succeed, securing "justification and life for all people" (5:18).¹⁵ Hence, the Lord "subjected [the creation] to frustration ... in hope" (8:20) and renewed his covenant

with creation even through the curse.¹⁶ Before punishing Adam and the world (Gen 3:17–19), God cursed the serpent and promised that the woman's male offspring would eventually destroy the evil one (3:14–19), thus reinstating God's kingdom blessing.¹⁷ By naming his wife "Eve" (*ḥawâ*), which resembles the Hebrew term for "life" (*ḥay*), Adam professes his faith in the promise that the coming Savior would overcome the curse of death. God then clothed his royal priests with animal skin garments likely because a substitutionary sacrifice was necessary to reestablish his relationship and partnership with them (3:20–21).¹⁸

Covenant Affirmation through Noah

Rebellious humanity expands, and Yahweh preserves a remnant of those calling on his name.¹⁹ Yet, because of mankind's wickedness (Gen 6:5, 13), God sent a great flood that resulted in the death of "everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life" (7:22). He saved only eight people, the head of whom was Noah, who "found favor [i.e., grace] in the eyes of the LORD" (6:8) and who in turn "walked faithfully with God" and "was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time" (6:9).

After the flood, Yahweh fulfilled his promise (6:18) to "establish ... the everlasting covenant" between himself and all living creatures on the earth, including Noah and his descendants (9:16). This singular covenant included God's promise to never again destroy all life with a flood (9:9–11; cf. 8:22).²⁰ Recalling his earlier command to the first couple (1:27–28), God charges Noah and his offspring to fill the earth with his image (9:1, 7). The sign of the covenant was his rainbow in the clouds, which symbolically portrays that Yahweh's war-bow was raised and that a season of common grace was now blowing over the world (9:12–17).

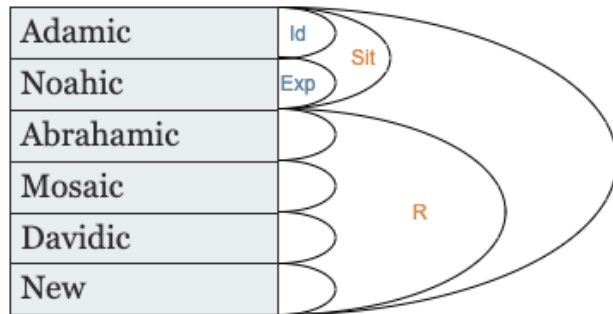
A substitutionary blood-sacrifice was necessary for Yahweh to declare, "Never again will I curse the ground because of humans. ... And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done" (8:21). The burnt offering of clean animals was a "pleasing aroma" to Yahweh (8:20), and it moved him to proclaim the covenant promises. Because even among the survivors of the flood "the inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood" (8:21; cf. 6:5), Yahweh's blood-bought grace alone could justly allow him to make "his sun to rise on the evil and the good" and

to send "rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matt 5:45). That is, the symbolic and predictive nature of the substitutionary sacrifice of clean animals after the flood anticipated Jesus's atoning work. This fact indicates that what God would ultimately accomplish through Christ purchased the very context of common grace that allows for saving grace to become operative.

At least two features show that God affirms with Noah his pre-existing relationship with creation under Adam's headship (thus, the Adamic-Noahic *covenant* [singular]), though with some developments. First, parallels suggest that Yahweh recreates the world with Noah as covenant head in ways that intentionally recall God's earlier work with Adam: (1) (re-)creation begins in watery chaos (Gen 1:2 // 7:17–24); (2) the Spirit/wind moves (1:2 // 8:1); (3) God's image bearers are creation's stewards (1:26–27 // 7:1–3; 9:2, 6); (4) animals are "according to their kind" (1:21–22, 24, 28 // 7:2–3, 13–14); (5) God blesses/commands humans to be fruitful (1:28 // 9:1, 7), (6) designates food (1:29–30; 2:16 // 9:3–4), and (7) restricts food (2:17 // 9:4); (8) both families include father, mother, and three sons (4:1–2, 25 // 6:10; 7:13). Second, God's "establishing" (Hiphil *qûm*) rather than "cutting/making" (*krt*) the Noahic covenant (*ḥēqîm bērit*; 6:18; 9:9, 11, 17) points to God's *affirming* or *sustaining* his earlier covenant with creation rather than his *initiating* (e.g., Gen 15:8; Exod 24:8; Deut 5:2–3; 28:69[29:1]) or *renewing* an old one either after it has been broken (e.g., Exod 34:10; Deut 29:1[28:69]) or with a new party (e.g., Josh 24:25; 2 Chr 34:31).²¹ Scripture applies "affirmation" language with the Noahic (Gen 6:18; 9:9, 11, 17), patriarchal (Gen 17:7, 9, 21; Exod 6:4; Lev 26:9; Deut 8:18), Mosaic (Lev 26:9), and new (Ezek 16:60, 62) covenants.

Additionally, God's affirmation with Noah develops the divine-creation relationship. Fear and defense of human life now occur within humanity's dominion (Gen 9:2, 6). God sanctions animal life as food (9:3; cf. 1:29), and he also guarantees the new context's perpetuity for redemption by specific promises and the covenant sign of the rainbow (9:12–17).²²

Tracing the Plotline's Argument: Adamic-Noahic Covenant



Because Yahweh's purposes and commitments to and through Noah affirm those with Adam, the Bible portrays these two figures as successive heads of one Adamic-Noahic covenant with creation. What God does with Noah restates his earlier work with Adam by sustaining and expounding upon what he already started, and this points to a relationship of *Idea-Explanation* (Id/Exp). Furthermore, humanity's sin and the resulting curse in the garden and at the flood are matched by God committing to maintain a context of common grace from which he will fulfill his earlier promise to save through the first woman's male offspring. The Adamic-Noahic covenant, therefore, provides a *Situation*, and the rest of the redemptive story provides the divine *Response* (= Sit/R).

2. ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

After the flood and Shem, Ham, and Japheth's families multiplied and rebelled against God by exalting themselves, Yahweh confused their languages and dispersed some seventy nations across the globe (Gen 11:8-9; cf. ch. 10). From one of them, he then distinguished Abram and his offspring through whom he purposed to reverse the global curse and reconcile the world to himself.²³

God Fulfills the Covenant in Two Stages

Yahweh commissioned Abram to "go" to the land of Canaan and there "be a blessing" (12:1-3), the latter of which implies spreading God's kingdom

rule through the world (1:28). These two coordinated commands (12:1b, 2d) are each followed by one or more conditional promises (12:2abc, 3ab), and the second command-promise unit includes the ultimate promissory result: global blessing (12:3c).²⁴

Table 2. Genesis 12:1-3, DeRouchie's translation

	And Yahweh said to Abram,	1
Stage 1: Realized in the Mosaic Covenant	"Go from your land and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you,	b
	so that I may make you into a great nation,	2
	and may bless you, and may make your name great.	b c
Stage 2: Realized in the New Covenant	<u>Then be a blessing,</u>	d
	so that I may bless those who bless you,	3
	but him who dishonors you I will curse, with the result that in you all the families of the ground may be blessed."	b c

At least three features are important from this command-promise structure. First, the two command-promise units indicate how God would reverse the punishments of property and progeny from Gen 3:14-19.²⁵ He would do so as the patriarch or his representative would "go" to the land and there "be a blessing."

Second, the command-promise units foresee two major stages in salvation history.²⁶ Stage 1 relates to Abraham fathering one nation with a kingdom centered in Canaan, which Yahweh fulfills through the Mosaic covenant after Egypt afflicted Israel four hundred years (Gen 15:13, 18; 17:8; cf. Exod 2:24; 6:4-5, 8; 33:1; Deut 1:8; 9:5).²⁷ God gave Israel Canaan for the twelve tribes during the days of Joshua (Josh 11:23; 21:43-45; cf. Gen 17:8), but it is not until kings David and Solomon reigned that Israel's realm stretched from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates River (2 Sam 7:1; 8:1-14; 10:19 1 Kgs 4:20-21; 8:65; cf. Gen 15:18).²⁸ Stage 2 occurs when God's representative "blesses" the "clans/families" Yahweh dispersed (Gen 12:2d-3; cf. 10:32), thus reversing the universal curse. God would commission Israel the nation to extend the blessing of

Yahweh's rule to the nations (Exod 19:5–6; Deut 4:5–8). Yet, like Adam, they would fail (Hos 6:7), and a royal representative would be needed to fulfill the commission.

Paul recognized how in Christ the church is the beneficiary of these blessings: “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed’” (Gal 3:8). Thus, Abraham's ultimate offspring, Christ (Gal 3:16), fulfills stage 2 of the Abrahamic covenant by triumphing over God's enemies (Col 2:15) and blessing the world (Acts 3:26; Gal 3:14, 29). This he accomplishes through his perfect life of obedience culminating in his death and resurrection (Rom 5:18–19; Phil 2:8; 1 Pet 2:22), by which he created the new covenant community (Luke 1:54–55, 72–73).

Third, the patriarch initially obeyed (= fruit) only because he first believed (= root).²⁹ Thus, the author of Hebrews declares, “*By faith Abraham obeyed* when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance” (Heb 11:8; cf. Gen 12:1–4). The promises must have been desirable, and the promise-maker must have been believable to move a former moon-worshiper to leave family and the familiar to go with his barren wife to a far-off land (Josh 24:2–3). As Stephen testifies, “The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham” (Acts 6:2).

Significantly, while Abraham's faith is apparent already in Genesis 12, the narrator reserves the vocabulary of faith for Genesis 15, specifically where the hope of the coming offspring is at the fore: “And [Abraham] believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness” (Gen 15:6). Abraham's justifying faith was trusting God to do in, through, and for him what he could not do on his own, specifically in relation to bringing the promised offspring-Deliverer, in whom the world's hopes rested.³⁰ Throughout the Pentateuch, “righteousness” language refers to doing righteous acts, yet the declaration of Genesis 15:6 focuses on the patriarch's inability and not his ability. Hence, God imputes to Abraham by faith something that was by nature not his own—righteousness. As Brian Vickers notes,

Because Abraham believes the promise for an heir, God counts Abraham as holding the same status or position as that of a person who has done everything right

according to God's standards.... The status or description typically reserved for actions is here counted to Abraham on the basis of faith. Abraham's faith is counted to him as something that it inherently is not, righteousness.... What might usually be declared over a person who did what is right in God's sight is declared upon Abraham through faith.³¹

Within the biblical framework, Abraham's justification by faith directly contrasts with the idea that he was justified by works (Rom 4:1–5), and his later willingness to offer Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen 22:1–19) simply “fulfills” his earlier belief, such that his “faith was completed by his works” (Jas 2:21–23). That the Genesis narrative places Abraham's faith directly in the promised offspring highlights how he already recognized that a person and not a people would be the ultimate instrument of restoring God's kingdom blessing to the world.

Genesis 17 contrasts Abraham's fatherhood of a single covenant nation in Canaan (17:7–8) with his becoming “a father of many nations” (17:4–6; cf. 35:11), which fulfills the promise in 12:3 and 15:5 (cf. Rom 4:16–17). Fulfilling the promise of a singular “offspring” in Gen 3:15, Yahweh would raise up the patriarch's biological “offspring” and multiply him like the stars (Gen 15:3–5; cf. 22:17). He will be named through Isaac (21:12; cf. 17:19, 21), conquer his enemies' gate, and stand as the agent of blessing for all nations (22:17–18).³² Although God refers to both the limited “Canaan” and the larger suzerain state with the singular “land” (15:18; 17:8), this singular offspring from Gen 22:17–18 would inherit plural “lands” (26:3–4). By this means God would overcome the world's curse, and Abraham would inherit “the world” (Rom 4:13; cf. Ps 2:8; Dan 2:35; Matt 5:5; Eph 6:3).³³ Quoting the land promise in Genesis 26:3 with an allusion to 22:18 (cf. 13:15; 17:8; 24:7), Paul identifies Christ as the “offspring/seed” that blesses the world (Gal 3:16; cf. 3:8, 14), and those belonging to him become “Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (3:29).³⁴

The Fulfillment of God's Promise is both Conditional and Certain

The Abrahamic covenant testifies to the conditional nature *and* certain fulfillment of its promises. Conditionally, the patriarch must “go” to the land and there “be a blessing” to overcome curse and bless the world (Gen

12:1–3). For Yahweh to confirm the covenant, the patriarch must “walk before” God and “be blameless” (17:1–2).³⁵ The covenant sign of circumcision reminded recipients of this priestly commission (cf. Exod 19:5–6), portrayed the curse of excision for violators, and distinguished Abraham’s offspring from all other ancient peoples.³⁶ Alternatively, Yahweh stresses certain fulfillment through his self-imprecatory oath-sign and promise (Gen 15:17–21; cf. 1 Sam 11:7; Jer 34:18)³⁷ and by swearing upon himself, following Abraham’s faith-filled obedience wherein he nearly sacrificed Isaac (22:16–18; cf. 26:3–5).

Hence, Yahweh vows to fulfill both covenant stages ([1] great nation; [2] blessed world), but he would do so only in response to his covenant “son’s” obedience (cf. Rom 5:18–19; 8:4; Phil 2:8).³⁸ Using the infinitive absolute + *yiqtol* construction in Gen 18:18 followed by the conditional reason plus purposes statements in 18:19 highlights the certainty yet contingent nature of God’s promise: “Abraham *will surely become* [*hāyô yihyê*] a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. *For* [*kî*] I have chosen him, *so that* [*l’ma’an*] he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, *so that* [*l’ma’an*] the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”³⁹ Abraham’s covenant mediating, faith-generated obedience does secure initial fulfillment (Gen 22:18; 26:5), but his own faith rested in the promised obedience of the singular, male “offspring,” who would become numerous like the stars (Gen 15:5–6; 22:17ab), expand the kingdom turf from land to lands (22:17c; 26:3–4), and be the agent through whom the nations regard themselves blessed (22:18; 26:4).⁴⁰

The Abrahamic covenant parallels ancient royal grants, which obligated every generation to loyalty but promised irrevocable or perpetual promises ensuring the pledged land or kingship remained in the family, even if disloyal individuals forfeited their participation in the covenant blessings. This stands in contrast to suzerain-vassal treaties, which a suzerain could terminate when a vassal rebelled. The following excerpt supplies an example of a grant of royal succession and land that Hattusili III of Hatti bestowed on Ulmi-Teshshup of Tarhuntassa: “If any son or grandson of yours commits an offense, then the King of Hatti shall question him. ... If he is deserving of death, he shall perish, but his household and land shall not

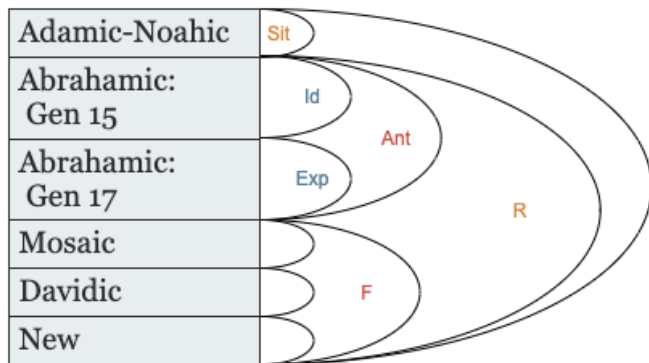
be taken from him and given to the progeny of another.”⁴¹ Whereas both grants and suzerain-vassal treaties were conditional for every generation, grants alone ensured that the property or dynasty would remain in the family. The Mosaic covenant is like the suzerain-vassal treaties in the way Israel’s rebellion resulted in the covenant’s termination. In contrast, the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants express the conditional yet perpetual qualities found in ancient grants.⁴²

Paul likely emphasizes this distinction when he draws attention to the Abrahamic covenant’s promissory quality in contrast to the Mosaic law-administration: “The law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise” (Gal 3:17–18; cf. Rom 4:13–14). Furthermore, Christ’s perfect obedience to both the Adamic-Noahic covenant with creation (Rom 5:18–19; 2 Cor 5:21) and the Mosaic covenant with Israel (2 Cor 3:9; Gal 3:10–13; Col 2:13–15) merits all kingdom blessings for those in him, and his once-for-all sacrifice and eternal life and reign secure these blessings eternally (Rom 5:9; 6:22–23; 1 Thess 1:10).

The Single Abrahamic Covenant

Paul Williamson argues that Yahweh builds off his commission in Genesis 12:1–3 by initiating two distinct covenants with Abraham; (1) Genesis 15’s temporary, national, and unilateral covenant, and (2) Genesis 17’s eternal, international, and bilateral covenant.⁴³ However, both chapters include national (Gen 15:18; 17:7–8) and international (15:5; 17:4–6) elements, later Scripture always speaks of a single “covenant” with the patriarchs (e.g., Exod 2:24; 2 Kgs 13:23; Neh 9:7–8; Ps 105:9; Acts 3:25), and the switch from God’s “cutting” a covenant (*krt*, Gen 15:18) to “affirming” a covenant (Hiphil *qûm*, 17:7, 19, 21) strongly suggest a single covenant administration that develops over two redemptive-historical phases.⁴⁴ We will see that the Mosaic and new covenants fulfill different aspects of the single Abrahamic covenant.

Tracing the Plotline's Argument: Abrahamic Covenant



In response to the five occurrences of “curse” as noun (*’ārūr*) or verb (Qal or Piel *’r*) in Genesis 1–11 (Gen 3:14, 17; 4:11; 5:29; 9:25), Gen 12:1–3’s five uses of “blessing/ble^s” (*berākā*/Piel or Niphal *brk*) signal a major shift in salvation history from the problem to the solution (= *Situation-Response*). Paralleling the structure of the Adamic-Noahic covenant, God develops the Abrahamic covenant in two phases by first cutting the covenant (15:18) and then committing to affirm it (17:7; cf. 22:16–18). The reinstatement and expansion point to a relationship of *Idea-Explanation* (Id/Exp). Furthermore, the command-promise structure in Gen 12:1–3 along with the rest of the patriarchal narrative anticipate two stages of fulfillment, the first associated with Abraham serving as a father of one nation centered in the land of Canaan (17:7–8; cf. 13:15–16; 15:18) and the second linked to the rise of the coming royal Deliverer in the line of Judah when Abraham will serve as the father of many nations in many lands (17:4–6; 22:17–18; 26:3–4; 49:8–10). God’s promises stand at the fore in the Abrahamic covenant, and this *Anticipation* prepares us for the *Fulfillment* (Ant/F) later in the plotline.

3. MOSAIC COVENANT

The Mosaic Covenant Fulfills Stage 1 of the Abrahamic Covenant

After Yahweh brought Israel through the exodus to Mount Sinai, he charged them to respond to his salvation by heeding his voice, keeping his “covenant,” and being his treasured possession amid the world so that they might ultimately serve him as “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exod 19:5–6;

cf. Deut 10:12–13).⁴⁵ God called Israel to love him with all their hearts (Deut 6:4–5) and to love their neighbor as themselves (Lev 19:18). By treasuring God through surrendered lives and by valuing his image in others they would mediate and display his worth and beauty to their neighbors through their loyalty to Yahweh (cf. Deut 4:5–8). This could happen only by Yahweh’s presence igniting holiness (Exod 33:16; cf. Lev 9:23–10:3; 20:8; 21:8; 22:32).

The national “covenant” of Sinai (Exod 19:5) realized stage 1 fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant (2:24; 6:4)—Israel would become a single nation in the land (Gen 12:1–2; 17:7).⁴⁶ This link between Sinai and Abraham is apparent in at least three ways: (1) After the golden calf rebellion Moses pleads for the people’s pardon by urging him to remember his covenant promises to the patriarchs (Exod 32:13; Deut 9:27), and this resulted in Yahweh restoring the covenant (Exod 34:1–2, 27–28). (2) Moses’s covenant renewal sermons at Moab in Deuteronomy frequently clarify that in giving Israel the land God was directly fulfilling his pledge to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Deut 1:8; 6:10; 9:5; 29:13; 30:20; cf. 29:1[28:69]).⁴⁷ (3) The Abrahamic covenant sign of circumcision (Gen 17:10–11) continues into the Mosaic covenant as a mark of God’s covenant people (Exod 12:43–49; Lev 12:3).

After synthesizing (Exod 20:1–17) and detailing (20:22–23:19) the covenant obligations, Yahweh formalized his relationship with Israel (24:1–11). Leviticus and the scroll of the law (ESV = “Book of the Law”) in Deuteronomy then develop the covenant through their holiness instructions and sanctions, and Deuteronomy’s law scroll supplies a formal covenant renewal after the exodus generation’s rebellion in the wilderness (cf. Deut 29:20; 30:10; 31:26). The way Deuteronomy organizes the embedded law scroll resembles second millennium BC suzerain-vassal treaty patterns,⁴⁸ and this link aligns with the way Scripture describes this covenant’s contingent and temporary nature. The Mosaic covenant guided the evaluation of Israel’s history, determined the indictments, instructions, warnings and hopes of the prophets, and supplied the framework for the wisdom of the sages. It governed God’s people’s existence until the coming of Christ (see Josh 1:7–8; Mal 4:4[3:22]; Luke 16:16). Now, however, the new covenant has superseded this old administration. As Paul states, “Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified

by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith" (Gal 3:23–26; cf. Heb 8:6–13).⁴⁹

The Mosaic covenant's sign was the Sabbath (Exod 31:13–17). Yahweh instituted it to supply rest (Deut 5:14) and to develop holiness by testing obedience and nurturing trust (Exod 16:4–5, 23–26). Through the Sabbath Yahweh proved himself to be Israel's Provider.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the weekly and yearly Sabbath cycles reminded Israel that through them and their Messiah Yahweh would reestablish right order in his world (cf. Matt 11:27–12:8; Heb 4:9–10) and would restore the sovereign peace he enjoyed with his creation in the beginning (Gen 2:1–3; cf. Ps 132:7–8, 13–14). Israel's Sabbath, therefore, represented a future reality to which both Israel and the world were to hope—a hope now realized in Jesus.⁵¹

The Mosaic Covenant Brings Death

Had Israel "kept" the Mosaic covenant (Exod 19:5), their obedience would have brought blessing both temporal (Lev 26:3–10; cf. Deut 28:1–14) and spiritual (26:10–11; cf. 2 Cor 6:16), and they would have served as a royal priesthood, magnifying and mediating Yahweh's presence and to the world (Exod 19:6; cf. Deut 4:5–8) and igniting the universal blessing linked to stage 2 of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:2–3; cf. Deut 4:5–8; 26:18–19; 28:10; 32:43 LXX; 33:19).⁵² However, by connecting the means of this blessing to the promised royal Deliverer (Gen 3:15; 22:17–18; 26:3–4; 49:8–10), Genesis already anticipated the nation itself would fail and that faith in the coming offspring was the people's only hope (Gen 15:6).

The Mosaic covenant shows similarities to both second millennium BC law codes and suzerain-vassal treaties, but its conditionality and revocability most approximate the latter.⁵³ Yahweh's gift of righteousness, blessing, and lasting life depended upon Israel perfectly obeying *all* God's commands (Lev 18:5; Deut 4:1; 6:25; 8:1; 28:1–2). Thus, in this "old" covenant, righteousness was the *goal* and not the *ground* (Deut 6:25; cf. 16:20). Where unforgiven disobedience prevailed, curse and death reigned (27:26; 28:15).⁵⁴

While a remnant of true believers existed in Israel (e.g., Moses, Rahab, Ruth, Hannah, David, Isaiah, etc.; cf. Rom 11:7), the majority needed heart surgery (Deut 10:16) since at the core they were unrighteous (9:6) and spiritually disabled (29:4[3]). As Moses characterized them, they were stubborn,

unbelieving, and rebellious (9:6–7, 23–24; 10:16; 31:27).⁵⁵ Their spiritual want should have moved them to recognize their deep neediness and that their only hope was for God to reconcile them by grace through faith in his provision of a substitutionary sacrifice, which would atone for them if they realized their guilt and confessed their sins (e.g., Lev 5:5–6; Num 5:6–7). If they were to enjoy any blessing, it would be solely because of God's grace and not because they earned it. It would be because they would enjoy a right standing only attainable by faith (Rom 9:30–32; cf. Gen 15:6) and because Yahweh's past pardoning of them would produce for them power to obey and purchase promises that would motivate loyalty (Deut 30:6, 8).

Nevertheless, Moses saw that Israel's stubbornness would lead them to rebel even more in the land and then experience God's just exilic wrath (4:25–28; 31:16–17, 27). The lengthy covenant curse lists (Lev 26:14–39; Deut 28:15–68; much longer than the blessing, Lev 26:3–13; Deut 28:1–14) forecasted what was to come, and Israel's history unfolded just as Moses predicted (e.g., 2 Kgs 17:13–18; Dan 9:11–14).

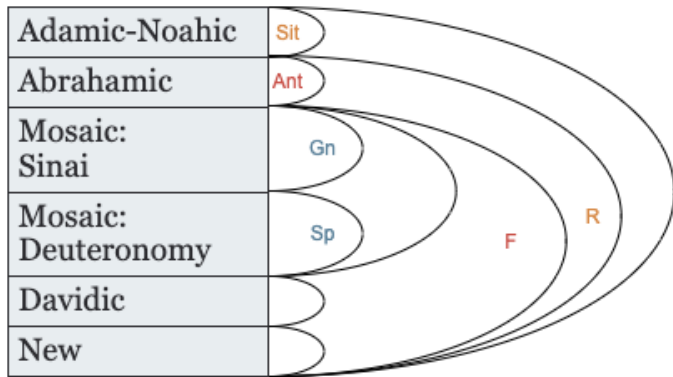
Because the Mosaic covenant era included a sustained hardness that resulted in the people's destruction (Rom 11:7–8; 2 Cor 3:14), Paul rightly noted that "the law is not of faith" (Gal 3:12).⁵⁶ The Mosaic covenant bore a "ministry of death" and "condemnation" (2 Cor 3:7, 9) and demonstrated Israel and the world's need for the promised Deliverer (Rom 3:19–22; 5:20), whose new covenant mediation and rule would result in a "ministry of righteousness" (2 Cor 3:9).⁵⁷

The Mosaic Covenant Anticipates the New Covenant

Moses himself recognized that the covenant he mediated would bring Israel's death (Deut 4:25–28; 31:16–17, 27) and also that after exile Yahweh would remember his covenant promises to the patriarchs (Lev 26:42) and the exodus generation (26:45), restore his people, transform the remnant's hearts, curse their enemies, and secure their life (Deut 4:30–31; 30:1–14; cf. Hab 2:4).⁵⁸ Yahweh's promised Savior would lead a new exodus, bring kingdom blessing, and establish global dominion (Num 24:5–9, 17–19). Other nations would gather to and rejoice in Yahweh (Deut 32:43; 33:19; cf. Isa 60:15; Rom 15:10), and this would ignite jealousy to draw Israelites back to God (Deut 32:21; cf. Rom 10:19). In this age, the remnant would heed Moses's commandments (Deut 30:8; cf. Matt 5:19) because a prophet

like Moses would supersede Moses's role (cf. 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 9:15; 12:24), perform signs and wonders (Deut 34:10–12; cf. John 20:30–31), clarify the divine word (Deut 18:15, 18; cf. Matt 5:17–18; 17:5), and ensure its internalization within God's people (30:8–14; cf. Isa 59:21; Matt 28:20; Rom 10:6–8).⁵⁹

Tracing the Plotline's Argument: Mosaic Covenant



The Mosaic covenant fulfills stage 1 of the Abrahamic covenant promises since under the Mosaic administration Israel becomes a nation centered in Canaan with a calling to serve as royal priests amid the world. The covenant Yahweh cut with Israel at Sinai/Horeb, he renewed in Deuteronomy with a new generation after the exodus generation's wilderness disobedience. Yahweh's covenant affirmations with Noah and Abraham are different than his covenant renewals at Sinai after the golden calf revolt (Exod 34) and in Deuteronomy after further wilderness rebellions.⁶⁰ By affirming a covenant, God graciously upholds his previous commitment, whereas by renewing a covenant he mercifully re-cuts or re-institutes what the vassal broke. Whereas I represented covenant affirmation with the relationship *Idea-Explanation* (Id/Exp), I portray covenant renewal with *General-Specific* (Gn/Sp). Thus, in Deuteronomy God instates the new wilderness generation and its offspring as his covenant people, assumes the lasting validity of the previous covenant materials, and develops the implications of the covenant relationship for the whole community dwelling in the promised land. Had Israel "kept" the covenant, they would have served

Yahweh and his world as royal priests (Exod 19:5–6; cf. Deut 4:5–8), thus igniting stage 2 of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:2–3). Instead, the law revealed and increased sin (Rom 3:20; 5:20; 7:7–9; cf. Gal 3:19) and brought wrath (Rom 4:15) and death (7:10; 2 Cor 3:7, 9). Israel's only hope would be in God's new work through the promised offspring.

4. DAVIDIC COVENANT

During the Mosaic covenant era after Israel settled the promised land, Yahweh advanced his promise of a coming royal Savior by pledging to David an eternal kingdom (2 Sam 7:8–16; 1 Chr 17:7–14). While the narrative accounts do not call the event a "covenant," other Scriptures do (2 Sam 23:5; Pss 89:3, 28, 34, 39[4, 29, 35, 40]; 132:12).

The Nature of the Davidic Covenant

Scripture progressively reveals Yahweh's commitment to raise up a royal-priestly offspring to deliver the world. He would overcome the curse with blessing, expand God's kingdom, and come from the first woman (Gen 3:15) and from the lines of Shem (9:26–27), Abraham (17:6, 16; 22:17–18), Isaac (17:19; 21:12; cf. 26:3–4), Jacob (35:11; Num 24:17–19), and Judah (Gen 49:8–10). He would lead a new exodus, overcome enemies, and bestow blessings (Num 24:7–9). His reign would curb the self-rule of God's people (Judg 21:25), be the means by which Yahweh would judge the ends of the earth (1 Sam 2:10), and fulfill the hope for a faithful king-priest around whom Yahweh would build a sure house (2:35; cf. Ps 110:4; Zech 6:12–13).⁶¹ The Davidic covenant now reveals that God's kingdom blessing would rest on his house and that the coming royal Son of God in his line would reign eternally (2 Sam 7:16, 29).⁶²

While describing his prior (7:8–9) and subsequent (7:9–11a; cf. Ps 89:21–23, 27[22–24, 28]) accomplishments for David, Yahweh echoes the Abrahamic covenant. Yahweh then vowed that after David's death he would build David a "house/dynasty" (2 Sam 7:11b–16). David's biological descendant ("offspring") would build a "house" for God's name, enjoy a lasting kingdom, and be Yahweh's royal son (7:12–15). David's house, kingdom, and throne would remain steadfast and established forever (7:16). In response, David recognized that such promises bore hope and guidance

for the world (7:19).⁶³ Thus, David's final words before death unpack his confident longing for this Deliverer to work justice, overcome the curse, and establish a new creation (23:3-7).⁶⁴

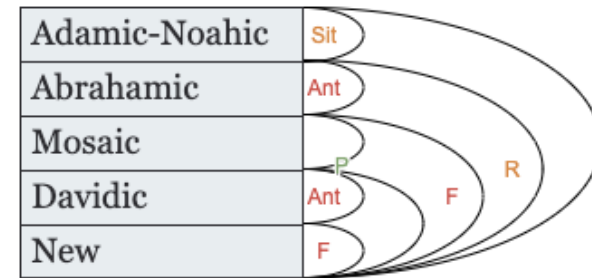
Because of the royal son's potential for sin (7:14) and because Solomon was convinced that his temple fulfilled God's promise that David's son would build Yahweh's "house" (1 Kgs 8:18-20), Solomon initially and typologically fulfilled God's promise of a royal son. Nevertheless, as with royal grants, Yahweh promised that the royal son's throne would last forever (2 Sam 7:13, 16) but also stressed how fulfillment was conditioned on the king's lasting loyalty (1 Kgs 2:4; 8:25; 9:4-5; Ps 132:12). Hence, only a monarch with perfect obedience and an eternal reign would fulfill God's Davidic promises--facts manifest only through Christ Jesus in the new covenant (Isa 9:6-7[5-6]; 11:4-5; 50:5-9; 55:3; Luke 1:32-33; Acts 2:29-36).⁶⁵

Other Scriptural Reflections on the Davidic Covenant

The writing prophets identified the promised Savior of the Pentateuch and Former Prophets with David's seed and noted that through him God would work a new exodus and new creation and reconcile many from Israel and other nations to himself (Isa 9:7; 11:1-12:6; Jer 23:5-8; 30:9; Ezek 37:24; Hos 3:5; Amos 9:11-15; Zech 12:10; 13:1; cf. Acts 15:16-18). The royal psalms also anticipate this Davidide, who would be Yahweh's "begotten son" (Pss 2:7; 89:27[28]; cf. Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5), receive Yahweh's everlasting blessing (Pss 21:6[7]; 45:2[3]; cf. 72:17), fulfill the Davidic covenant promises (89:28-37[29-38]; 132:11-12, 17-18), and inherit both the nations (2:8-9; cf. Rev 5:9-10; 12:5; 19:15) and Melchizedekian priesthood (Ps 110:1-4; cf. Heb 5:6; 7:17, 21).⁶⁶

Peter identifies Jesus as the descendant whom God promised to sit on David's throne (Acts 2:30-31). The author of Hebrews views Jesus as fulfilling the promise, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son" (Heb 1:5). And the rest of the NT stresses that Jesus's already and not yet end-time reign realizes all Davidic kingdom hopes (Matt 1:1; Luke 1:68-75; Rom 1:1-4; Rev 22:16).

Tracing the Plotline's Argument: Davidic Covenant



The Abrahamic covenant anticipated a two-stage fulfilment, the second of which would include a single, male Deliverer from the line of Judah whose reign would extend Yahweh's influence to the earth's ends (Gen 17:4-6; 22:17-18; 26:3-4; 49:8-10). The shift from Abraham's fatherhood of one nation in the Mosaic era to many nations in a future era would mark a true *Progression* (P) in Scripture's plotline that cannot be reversed. The Davidic covenant narrows the promise from Judah to the Davidic line and signals this *Progression*. While Yahweh made the promises to David during the Mosaic administration, the covenant *Anticipates* an ultimate *Fulfillment* after this era in stage 2 of the Abrahamic covenant (Ant/F).

5. NEW COVENANT

The new covenant in Christ between God and his church realizes the hopes of Scripture's previous divine-human covenants. The new covenant solves the global problem of sin and death that the Adamic-Noahic covenant creates. It also accomplishes the universal blessings promised to the patriarchs, overcomes the Mosaic administration's condemnation, realizes the old covenant's restoration blessings, and embodies the Davidic kingdom hopes. Yahweh's elect seers, sages, sovereigns, and song writers foresaw from a distance the glories that you and I now enjoy in Jesus (Matt 13:17; Luke 10:24; John 8:56; Heb 11:13; cf. 1 Pet 1:10-20).

The Old Testament Terminology Associated with the New Covenant

Among the various labels the OT uses for the end-times relationship between Yahweh and those reconciled in Christ are "covenant" (Jer 31:33; Ezek 16:62;

Dan 9:27; Hos 2:18; Zech 9:11; Mal 3:1), “new covenant” (Jer 31:31), “everlasting covenant” (Isa 55:3; Jer 32:40; 50:5; Ezek 16:60; 37:26), and “covenant of peace” (Isa 54:10; Ezek 34:25; 37:26). Yahweh also calls the messianic servant himself a “covenant” (Isa 42:6; 49:8; 59:21; cf. 55:3; Dan 9:27).⁶⁷ The relationship is commonly associated with other features like:

- New exodus (Isa 11:10–12, 15–16; Jer 16:14–15; 23:7–8; Hos 11:10–11; Zech 10:8–12; cf. Mark 1:1–3; Luke 9:30–31; 2 Cor 6:17–18);
- New “David” (Isa 9:7; 16:5; 22:22; 55:3; Jer 23:5–6; 30:9; 33:15; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25; Hos 3:5; Amos 9:11; Zech 12:10; 13:1; cf. Luke 1:32–33, 68–69; Acts 2:30–35; Rev 5:5; 22:16);
- Restoring past fortunes (Zeph 3:20; *to a remnant of Israel/Judah*: Jer 29:14; 30:3, 18; 31:23; 32:44; 33:7, 11, 26; Ezek 39:25; Hos 6:11; Joel 3:1; Amos 9:14; Zeph 2:7; *to a remnant of other nations*: Jer 48:47; 49:6, 39; Ezek 16:53; 29:14; cf. Deut 30:3);
- New “heart” (Jer 24:7; 32:39; Ezek 11:19; 36:26; cf. Deut 30:6; Rom 2:29);
- The outpouring of God’s Spirit (*on the messianic Servant*: Isa 11:2; 42:1; 59:21; 61:1; cf. Matt 12:18–20; Luke 4:18–19; *on the people*: Isa 32:15; 44:3; 59:21; Ezek 36:27; 37:14, 27; Joel 2:28–29; Zech 12:10; cf. Acts 2:16–18; Rom 2:29; Gal 3:14);
- A new “Jerusalem” (Isa 2:2–4; 4:2–6; 11:6–9; 65:18, 25; Jer 3:16–17; cf. Gal 4:25–26; Heb 12:22) that appears coterminous with a new creation (Isa 43:19; 48:6; 65:17; 66:22; Hos 2:18[20]; Amos 9:13–15; cf. Rev 21:1–2).

From one perspective, in the new covenant Yahweh *affirms* the original patriarchal covenant promises (*hēqīm bēřīt*; Ezek 16:60, 62 with Lev 26:42).⁶⁸ But Scripture also treats the covenant Christ mediates as *new and freshly initiated* (*kārat bēřīt*) when contrasted with the temporary Mosaic covenant (Jer 31:31; 32:40; Ezek 34:25; 37:26).⁶⁹ Only in Jer 31:31 does the OT use the adjective “new” to describe the end-times relationship between God and humanity that Jesus inaugurates through his life, death, and resurrection (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; Heb 9:15). This covenant’s newness brings “righteousness,” against the old Mosaic covenant that brought “death” and “condemnation” (Jer 31:32; 2 Cor 3:6–7, 9, 14). In relation to the outworking of the Abrahamic covenant promises, the author of Hebrews notes that the Mosaic administration

was the “first covenant” and the “new covenant” the “second” and that because of Christ the new covenant supersedes the old, which is now “becoming obsolete and growing old” and will soon “vanish away” (Heb 8:6–8, 13; cf. Gal 3:23–25).⁷⁰

The Old Testament depiction of the New Covenant community

The prophets at times portray the new covenant in national terms (Jer 31:36; Mic 4:7; Ezek 37:22), specifically when describing the Messiah’s kingdom people (cf. 1 Pet 2:9).⁷¹ This community, however, includes a remnant from Israel/Judah (Isa 10:20–22; 11:11, 16; Mic 2:12; 7:18; Zeph 2:7, 9; Zech 8:11–12) and—fulfilling the Abrahamic promises (Gen 12:3; 22:18; cf. Isa 54:1–3; Jer 4:1–2; Acts 3:25–26; Gal 3:8, 14)—other nations (Amos 9:12; cf. Isa 2:2–4; 49:6; Jer 3:17–18; Zech 8:22–23).⁷² God adopts both groups into his single family (Isa 19:24–25; Jer 12:16; Zech 2:11; cf. Gal 4:4–5; Eph 1:5) by their faith in the righteous Servant-person’s substitutionary sacrifice and victorious resurrection (Isa 53:10–11; Zech 12:10; 13:1). Together they serve Yahweh their God and the Davidic king (Jer 30:9; Hos 3:5) and enjoy new birth certificates associated with the new Jerusalem (Ps 87; cf. Ezek 16:61).⁷³ Thus, God counts as Abraham’s multi-ethnic offspring the single “Israel of God” (Gal 3:29; 6:16; Eph 2:13–22; cf. Rom 2:28–29; Phil 5:3) whom Yahweh’s Servant-person “Israel” justifies (Isa 45:25; 49:3, 6; 53:10–11; 54:2–3; 59:21).⁷⁴ These peoples are Christ’s church and God’s new “holy nation” (1 Pet 2:9; cf. Rev 5:10) connected with the heavenly “Jerusalem” (Gal 4:25–26; Heb 12:22; cf. Phil 3:20). The church does not replace Israel. Instead, its members are part of the true Israel (cf. Rom 2:28–29; Gal 3:29; 6:16; Phil 3:3) by means of their faith in Christ, who is the true “Israel” (Isa 49:3) and who saves a remnant offspring of ethnic Israelites and some from other nations (49:6; cf. 53:10–11; 54:1–3).

From the prophets’ perspective, whereas sin once characterized the hearts of foreigners (Jer 3:17) and most Israelites/Judeans alike (4:4; 9:26; 17:1), every member of the new covenant will gain new, united, law-filled hearts (3:17; 31:33; 32:39; cf. Ezek 11:19–20; 36:26–27).

Yahweh will restore his relationship with them (Jer 24:7; 31:33; 32:38; Ezek 11:20; 37:23, 27; Zech 8:8), and from the least to the greatest, all will know, fear, and obey God because every covenant member will experience blood-bought forgiveness (Isa 43:25; 44:22; 54:13; Jer 31:33–34; 32:39–40; Ezek 36:25–26, 33; cf. Matt 26:28; John 6:45; Heb 10:26; 1 John 2:20–21). God will count the many as righteous, all on account of the righteous Servant-person's perfect obedience culminating in his substitutionary sacrifice and victorious resurrection (Isa 53:10–11; 55:3; Zech 12:10; 13:1; cf. Isa 45:25; 50:7–9; Rom 5:19).⁷⁵

The New Testament sets forth how the New Covenant is Realized

Jesus's ministry inaugurates the new covenant and God's end-times reign that the OT anticipates (Matt 26:28–29; cf. Mark 14:24–25; Luke 22:20). Christ is Abraham's singular, male "offspring" (Gal 3:16). Through him believers from every nation become God's children and inherit every kingdom promise (3:8, 14, 28–29; cf. Acts 3:13–14; 1 Cor 2:20).⁷⁶

Many faithful evangelicals, especially in paedo-Baptist circles, claim that Christ has only partially inaugurated the new covenant, thus allowing both regenerate and non-regenerate covenant membership.⁷⁷ The use of perfect verbs in Hebrews, however, indicates that Christ has already fully initiated the new covenant, though God has not brought it to completion—fully now, finally later.⁷⁸ "Christ *has obtained* [*tetychen*] a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it *is enacted* [*nenomothetēai*] on better promises" (Heb 8:6). Indeed, "By calling this covenant 'new,' [God] *has made* the first one *obsolete* [*pepalaiōken*]; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear" (8:13 NIV; cf. John 1:16–17; 2 Cor 3:9–10). If the new covenant is fully inaugurated, then all, and not just some, of its members are already experiencing the internal transformation that God promised (Jer 31:31–34; Heb 8:8–12). Furthermore, we know that "by a single offering [Christ] *has perfected* [*teteliōken*] for all time those who are being sanctified" (10:14)—that is, those who are part of the new covenant, in whose hearts Yahweh has already put his law and whose sins he remembers "no more" (10:16–17; cf. Jer 31:33–34). Such teaching reaffirms that only

those who "*have come* [*gegonamen*] to share in Christ," the new covenant priestly mediator, "hold our original confidence firm to the end" (Heb 3:14), for sustained sinning results in punishment (10:26–27). One does not over-realize the new covenant by stressing that membership into it comes only by faith in Christ's covenant mediating, priestly-sacrifice.⁷⁹

Within the Abrahamic covenant, physical circumcision depicted an excising curse, marked one out for God's service, and typologically foreshadowed a heart circumcision that would bring about the required devotion.⁸⁰ Until Christ's coming, for most Israelites the sign announced only their coming punishment rather than actual loyalty. However, in his death, Jesus underwent the excising curse to which the physical circumcision pointed (Col 2:11; cf. 1:22; John 3:14–15; 1 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13)⁸¹ and secured the new covenant's sign of promised heart circumcision for those believing in him, thus characterizing God's new people as true "Jews" (Rom 2:28–29; Gal 6:15; Phil 5:3; cf. Rev 2:9).⁸² Baptizing believers in the Triune God's name externally testifies to this inward reality (Matt 28:19; cf. John 3:23; Acts 8:36–39) and signifies membership in Christ's church as his new people (Mark 1:4–5; Rom 2:28–29; 4:16; Gal 3:7). Rather than replacing circumcision in the flesh, water baptism symbolizes primarily the believer's union with Christ in his death and resurrection (Rom 6:3–4; Col 2:11–12) and secondarily the believer's cleansing from sin (Heb 10:22; 1 Pet 3:21). Because heart circumcision as the antitype is now realized among all new covenant members, physical circumcision as a type is no longer necessary (1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:6; cf. 3:28–29).

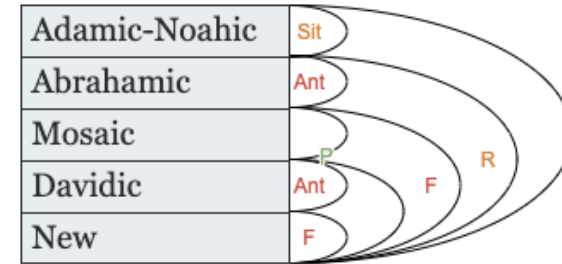
Along with the one-time rite of water baptism, gathered members of Christ's church regularly partake of the Lord's supper (1 Cor 11:17–20, 22) to remember Christ (11:25) and receive spiritual nourishment (10:16–17; cf. John 6:53–57, 63). We eat bread signifying his body given for his people, and we drink the Lord's cup signifying the new covenant in his blood (1 Cor 11:23–26; cf. Luke 22:20).

The contrast of the old and new covenants parallel a number of other NT end-times old and new contrasts like old wine in old wineskins vs. new wine in fresh wineskins (Matt 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37–38), old man

vs. new man (Rom 6:6; Eph 4:22–24; Col 3:9–10), oldness of the letter vs. newness of the Spirit (Rom 7:6; cf. 2:29; 2 Cor 3:6), old leaven vs. new leaven (1 Cor 5:7–8), and old creation vs. new creation (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15). Furthermore, Paul highlights a series of theological contrasts that often parallel the old and new covenant distinction: law vs. faith (Rom 3:20, 28; 4:13–14; 9:30–10:8; Gal 2:16–21; 3:1–14; Phil 3:9), first Adam vs. last Adam (Rom 5:14, 18–19; 1 Cor 15:22, 45), sin vs. righteousness (Rom 5:21; 6:20; 8:10), flesh vs. Spirit (Rom 8:4–13; Gal 3:3; 4:29; 5:16–25; 6:8), letter vs. Spirit (Rom 2:29; 7:6; 2 Cor 3:3, 6), and slavery vs. freedom (Gal 4:21–5:1). These all highlight two different ages and place Jesus's person and work as the decisive turning point in salvation history.⁸³ In Christ, God fulfills what he promised, and Christ realizes what the OT anticipates.

Jesus is a better covenant mediator than Moses (Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24; cf. Deut 18:15–19) because he offers a superior sacrifice (Heb 9:6–10:18) that brings better results, better provision, and better promises. Whereas the first Adam failed to secure lasting life, Christ as the last Adam succeeds, winning justification unto life for all who believe (Rom 5:18–19; cf. 1 Cor 15:45). Through his perfect covenant keeping unto death (Rom 5:19; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 2:8), he triumphs over all powers of darkness (Col 2:15), satisfies God's wrath against his elect (Rom 5:9; 8:1; Gal 3:13; Col 3:14; Heb 9:26), and secures for them every eternal blessing and consummate inheritance (Matt 5:3, 10; 28:18–20; Gal 3:14, 29; Eph 1:3, 14; 1 Pet 1:3–5), including eternal redemption, forgiveness, adoption, sonship, peace with God, righteousness, sanctification, and glorification (Rom 5:1; 8:4, 30; Eph 1:3–14; Heb 9:12; 10:10, 14). "Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" (Heb 9:28). In that day, the victorious King will punish his enemies, consummate his new creation, and bless all his redeemed with the right to eat from the tree of life in God's paradise and to reign with him forevermore (2 Thess 1:9–10; Rev 5:10; 21:1–22:5, 14)), thus fulfilling humanity's original mandate (Gen 1:28).

Tracing the Plotline's Argument: New Covenant



Christ came declaring, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Indeed, Christ fulfills all that that the OT anticipated both directly and indirectly (Matt 5:17), but that fulfillment comes in various ways, depending on the covenant. For example,

- In fulfillment of the *Adamic/Noahic covenant*, Jesus is the Son of Man, last Adam, and image of God (Mark 10:45; 14:62; Rom 5:14, 18–19; 1 Cor 15:45; 2 Cor 4:4).
- In fulfillment of the *Abrahamic covenant*, Jesus is the offspring of Abraham and agent of universal blessing (Gen 22:17b–18; Acts 3:25–26; Gal 3:16).
- In fulfillment of the *Mosaic (old) covenant*, Jesus represents Israel and stands as God's Son, Yahweh's servant, the embodiment of wisdom, the one who fulfilled the law's demands, and the substance of all covenant shadows (Exod 4:22–23; Isa 49:3, 5–6; Matt 3:17; 11:2, 19; 12:42; 13:54; John 2:19–21; Acts 3:25–26; Rom 5:19; Col 2:17; Heb 9:9–12; 10:1).
- In fulfillment of the *Davidic covenant*, Jesus is the King of the Jews, the Son of David, and the builder of the true temple (Matt 2:1; 16:18; 21:9; Luke 1:32–33; Eph 2:19–21).
- In fulfillment of the *new covenant* promises, Jesus is the prophet like Moses who was to come, the only true mediator between God and man, and the one who grants new hearts and the indwelling Spirit (Deut 18:15, 18; Luke 7:16; 22:20; Acts 3:22–26; 7:37; Rom 2:29; 2 Cor 3:3; 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6; 9:15; 10:16; 12:24).

The tragic *Situation* of sin and curse that the Adamic-Noahic covenant introduced finds its divine saving *Response* ultimately in Jesus's life, death, and resurrection. What Yahweh resolved to accomplish in the Abrahamic

covenant, he fulfilled in two stages climaxing in Christ (Ant/F). The OT is dominated by the first stage, realized in the Mosaic old covenant, whose ministry was one of death and destruction (2 Cor 3:7, 9). Yet God had a purpose in delaying the resolution to the world's problem: "What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?" (Rom 9:22–24). The OT's story of deep darkness through rebellion and punishment supplies a backdrop for Christ's light to shine all the brighter.

Christ's coming initiates the second stage of Abrahamic covenant fulfillment (P) and the culmination of all salvation history (Sit/R). In direct realization of the Davidic covenant promises, which themselves built on God's promises to Abraham, the angel Gabriel foretold of Jesus, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:32–33). Indeed, the one who would be born in David's city was the "Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (2:10–11). What the Davidic covenant anticipated, Jesus fulfills (Ant/F), and he does so in a way that overcomes the problems set forth in both the Adamic-Noahic covenant (Sit/R) and the Mosaic covenant (P).

As for the Mosaic covenant, "Before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian" (Gal 3:23–25). Why? "When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (4:4–5).

As for the Adamic-Noahic covenant, "As one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous" (Rom 5:18–19).

In Christ Jesus, the use of law for righteousness finds its end (Rom 10:4), every promise gains its Yes (2 Cor 1:20), and every OT shadow finds its substance (Col 2:16–17). All the OT's laws, history, prophecy, and wisdom

point to Jesus, and through him God fulfills all the OT anticipates (Matt 5:17–18; Mark 1:15; Acts 3:18; 1 Cor 1:23–24).

SUMMARY

The Bible's storyline progresses through the historical covenants between God and his people. Jesus fulfills each covenant in different ways. The Adamic-Noahic covenant with creation establishes the crisis and context of global curse and common grace out of which the other covenants clarify God's solution and saving grace. The Abrahamic covenant forecasts the hope of Christ and new creation through its conditional yet certain kingdom promises of land(s), seed, blessing, and divine presence. The remaining covenants clarify how God fulfilled these promises in two progressive stages. In the Mosaic covenant (stage 1) Abraham's offspring as a single nation experience blessing and curse, which results in their exile from the promised land. The Davidic covenant recalls the promises of a royal Deliverer and declares the specific line through whom he will rise. Then the new covenant (stage 2) realizes these hopes in an already-but-not yet way through the person and perfect obedience of Christ Jesus, whose kingdom work overcomes the curse with universal blessing, makes Abraham the father of many nations to the ends of the earth, and reconciles all things to God through the new creation.⁸⁴

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¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Covenant and God's Purpose for the World*, Short Studies in Biblical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 13; cf. Gordon P. Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: Biblical Law and Ethics as Developed from Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 11; Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 164–66. Block defines Scripture's view of covenant relationship as "two parties reciprocally committed to each other, determined to live in the interest of the other party." Daniel I. Block, *Covenant: The Framework of God's Grand Plan of Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), 153.

² Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 162–63.

- ³ Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. J. A. Baker, vols. 1–2 of OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961, 1967); Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006).
- ⁴ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 31; cf. Scott J. Hafemann, “The Covenant Relationship,” in *Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity*, ed. Scott J. Hafemann and Paul R. House (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 23; Daniel I. Block, “Covenant: A Whole Bible Perspective,” in *The Triumph of Grace: Literary and Theological Studies in Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic Themes* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017), 62.
- ⁵ Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1989), 21–44.
- ⁶ Many studies since the 1950s establish how the biblical covenants are closely aligned with second millennium BC treaty patterns. See, especially, George E. Mendenhall, “Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition,” *BA* 17.3 (1954): 50–76; George E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: The Presbyterian Board of Colportage of Western Pennsylvania, 1955); Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy: Studies and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 13–44; J. A. Thompson, “The Significance of the Ancient Near Eastern Treaty Pattern,” *TynBul* 13 (1963): 1–6; J. A. Thompson, *The Ancient Near Eastern Treaties and the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale, 1964); Delbert R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969); Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament*, 2nd ed., *Analecta Biblica* 21 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981); Kenneth A. Kitchen, “The Fall and Rise of Covenant, Law and Treaty,” *TynBul* 40 (1989): 118–35; K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 283–307; K. A. Kitchen and Paul J. N. Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant in the Ancient Near East*, Part 1–3 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012). In contrast, Julius Wellhausen argued the concept of covenant grew up very late, and a number of scholars continue to build on his conclusions. See Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel with a Reprint of the Article Israel from the “Encyclopaedia Britannica,”* trans. J. Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies (Edinburgh: Black, 1885); cf. Lothar Perlit, *Bundestheologie Im Alten Testament*, WMANT 36 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969); John Van Seters, “Confessional Reformulation in the Exilic Period,” *VT* 22 (1972): 448–59; Ernest W. Nicholson, *God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988); cf. Richard J. Bauckham and Gary N. Knoppers, eds., *Covenant in the Persian Period: From Genesis to Chronicles* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015). For two helpful synopses of the scholarly dialogue, see George E. Mendenhall, “The Suzerainty Treaty Structure: Thirty Years Later,” in *Religion and Law: Biblical-Judaic and Islamic Perspectives*, ed. Edwin B. Firmage, Bernard G. Weiss, and John W. Welch (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 85–100; Scott Hahn, “Covenant in the Old and New Testaments: Some Current Research (1994–2004),” *CurBR* 3 (2005): 263–92.
- ⁷ For a helpful comparison of the constituent parts of the various covenants, see Roger T. Beckwith, “The Unity and Diversity of God’s Covenants,” *TynBul* 38 (1987): 103–107. Walton unhelpfully speaks of a single covenant in Scripture made up of “constituent phases of development,” yet Paul notes that to the Israelites belongs “the covenants” (plural, Rom 9:4; Eph 2:12). John H. Walton, *Covenant* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 441; cf. 44–45, 49, 60, 106–107, 148–49. In contrast, Hafemann speaks of “one covenant people, in two epochs, with one kind of covenant relationship that spans the individual covenants of redemptive history.... There are various covenants, but one covenant relationship based on one covenant structure.” Hafemann, “The Covenant Relationship,” 30, 30 n.32. This portrayal is also too limited based on the biblical data, for the Adamic-Noahic covenant is made with all creation, whereas the Abrahamic, Mosaic, David, and new covenants have a narrower scope, based on election.
- ⁸ For an overview of the arcing method with definitions, examples, and a host of training videos, go to <https://BibleArc.com>; see also Jason S. DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017), 237–68. This approach to analyzing discourse and tracing arguments is highly indebted to the teaching and unpublished hermeneutics notes of Daniel P. Fuller (1925–), professor emeritus of hermeneutics at Fuller Theological Seminary. While several Old and New Testament scholars have proposed similar categories, I use Fuller’s categories and approach because of their simplicity and clarity. Robert Longacre, the father of OT discourse analysis, attributes his earliest motivation into the field to Fuller’s 1959 hermeneutics notes. Robert E. Longacre, *Joseph—A Story of Divine Providence: A Text Theoretical and Textlinguistic Analysis of Genesis 37 and 39–48*, 2nd ed. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 60. Similarly, both John Piper and Tom Schreiner in New Testament studies point to Fuller as their guide. John Piper, *Biblical Exegesis: Discovering the Meaning of Scriptural Texts* (Minneapolis: Desiring God, 1999), 11, <http://www.desiringgod.org/media/pdf/booklets/BTBX.pdf>; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 98 n.2.
- ⁹ E.g., Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God’s Unfolding Plan*, NSBT 23 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 52–58, 69–76; Douglas W. Kennard, *Biblical Covenantalism*, Vol 1 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 1:2–6; Block, “Covenant,” 63–64; Block, *Covenant*, 15, 45–47, 53; cf. Beckwith, “The Unity and Diversity of God’s Covenants,” 100–101; Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 128–30. Block affirms that the creation account includes “elements that would later be picked up and built into covenantal arrangements,” but he concludes that, “since the narratives do not use covenantal language before [Gen] 6:18, we should ... certainly not impose a covenant on Gen 1–2.” Later, however, he does assert that in Eden “God, his creatures including humans, and the environment lived in perfect covenantal harmony.” Block, “Covenant,” 64, 75, italics added.
- ¹⁰ Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *Biblical Theology: Volume 1: The Common Grace Covenants* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2014), 46–50; Richard P. Belcher Jr., “The Covenant of Works in the Old Testament,” in *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Guy Prentiss Waters, J. Nicholas Reid, and John R. Muether (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), 64–66; cf. O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1980), 17–25, 67–87.
- ¹¹ So Seth D. Postell, *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1–3 as the Introduction to the Torah and Tanakh* (Cambridge: Clarke, 2012), 114–19.
- ¹² G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 81–122.
- ¹³ See Paul Kywook Kim, “From Biblical Coherence to Systematic Theology: A Critical Reinterpretation of Covenant Theology” (South African Theological Seminary, ThD diss., 2020), especially the overview on 13–15.
- ¹⁴ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 103–107. The text suggests that God’s prohibition in Gen 2:17 (don’t eat of the tree of knowledge, lest you die!) was a probationary test, obedience to which would have opened the door to lasting life. Such is further suggested by God later withholding the tree of life from humans (3:24) until the perfect offspring-Deliverer would secure the blessing of re-entry and into the paradise of God for those he has forgiven (Rev 2:7; 22:14).
- ¹⁵ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 670–77; cf. Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 54–57; Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *Biblical Theology: Volume 2: The Special Grace Covenants—Old Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2017), 13–17; Guy Prentiss Waters, “The Covenant of Works in the New Testament,” in *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Guy Prentiss Waters, J. Nicholas Reid, and John R. Muether (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), 79–97. On the probationary test, see the previous footnote.
- ¹⁶ The formal language of covenant renewal is not used (i.e., *kārat bērit*), but the reality is apparent for God cursed in hope by foreshadowing a Deliverer who would subdue and have dominion where Adam failed, thus overcoming the global curse with blessing. God’s response after the first couple’s covenant rebellion is like what he does in both Exodus 34 (after the golden calf rebellion) and Deuteronomy (after the wilderness rebellion). That we should not view a new covenant, but a renewed covenant is evident from the fact that Christ is born under the same creation covenant as Adam yet obeys where he failed, thus meriting life for the many in him (Rom 5:18–19; cf. Gen 22:18). For more on covenant renewal, see Niehaus, *Biblical Theology: Volume 1*, 212 n.27.
- ¹⁷ For this messianic reading of Gen 3:15, see C. John Collins, “A Syntactical Note (Genesis 3:15): Is the Woman’s Seed Singular or Plural?,” *TynBul* 48.1 (1997): 139–48; T. Desmond Alexander, “Further Observations on the Term ‘Seed’ in Genesis,” *TynBul* 48.2 (1997): 363–67; James M. Hamilton Jr., “The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15,” *SBJT* 10.2 (2006): 30–55; Kevin Chen, *The Messianic Vision of the Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 35–66; Jonathan M. Cheek, “Genesis 3:15 as the Root of a Biblical Theology of the Church and the World: The Commencement, Continuation, and Culmination of the Enmity between the Seeds” (Bob Jones University, PhD diss., 2019); Jonathan Cheek, “Recent Developments in the Interpretation of the Seed of the Woman in Genesis 3:15,” *JETS* 64.2 (2021): 215–36.
- ¹⁸ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 145–53; William N. Wilder, “Illumination and Investiture: The Royal Significance of the Tree of Wisdom in Genesis 3,” *WTJ* 68 (2006): 51–69.
- ¹⁹ Jason S. DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission, the Promised Offspring, and the Toledot Structure of Genesis,” *JETS* 56.2 (2013): 219–47.
- ²⁰ Against Kline and Van Pelt, both of whom see two covenants with Noah. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 230–34;

- Miles V. Van Pelt, "The Noachic Covenant of the Covenant of Grace," in *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Guy Prentiss Waters, J. Nicholas Reid, and John R. Muether (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), 111–32. In a rare step of convoluted exegesis, Block distinguishes an administrative "Adamic covenant" in Gen 9:9 (with Noah as a second Adam) and a missional "cosmic covenant" in 9:10–17, but the passages are part of the same unit detailing a single relationship between God and his creation that God himself tags "my covenant," with Noah as the covenant head. Block, *Covenant*, 37–40, 61–65.
- ²¹ Niehaus, *Biblical Theology: Volume 1*, 192, 198–99; Niehaus, *Biblical Theology: Volume 2*, 139–74; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 187–95; cf. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 232; William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: An Old Testament Covenant Theology*, 2nd ed. (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2013), 15–23; against Paul R. Williamson, *Abraham, Israel, and the Nations: The Patriarchal Promise and Its Covenantal Development in Genesis*, JSOTSup 315 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 195–203; John Day, "Why Does God 'Establish' Rather Than 'Cut' Covenants in the Priestly Source," in *Covenant as Context: Essays in Honour of E. W. Nicholson*, ed. A. D. H. Mayes and Robert B. Salter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 91–109; Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 70–75; Block, *Covenant*, 46.
- ²² Cf. Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 109–25. Hafemann calls God's relationships with Adam and Noah two "covenants of creation" and says, "These two covenant with humanity ensure God's providential provisions necessary for history itself, in order that God may also establish a redemptive covenant relationship with his chosen people." Hafemann, "The Covenant Relationship," 29. Renihan, too, distinguishes separate Adamic and Noachic covenants, asserting, "If Adam's covenant was a covenant of works for eternal life, then a covenant of providently sustained government [with Noah] is a somewhat different creature." Samuel Renihan, "Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants—A Review Article," *Journal of the Institute of Reformed Baptist Studies* (2014): 172. In contrast, Christ's perfect obedience overcomes Adam's disobedience (Rom 5:18–19) precisely because he perfectly obeys the obligations of the Adamic-Noachic covenant (and the Mosaic covenant) where Adam (and the Israelite nation) failed. This proposal aligns more closely with the biblical data than the theological construct of a covenant of works vs. a covenant of grace.
- ²³ DeRouchie, "The Blessing Commission," 235.
- ²⁴ On this structure, cf. Gen 17:1–2. See also Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 78–79; Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 73–76; DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament*, 209–11, 247–50; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 266–70; Block, *Covenant*, 77.
- ²⁵ James M. Hamilton Jr., "The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham," *TynBul* 58.2 (2007): 253–73.
- ²⁶ DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament*, 209–11; cf. Thomas Edward McComiskey, *Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1985), 172–74, 195–210; Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 332–40; Block, "Covenant," 65–66. In Block's larger work, he unhelpfully speaks of the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and new covenants as a single "covenant" worked out in four stages (Abraham in Gen 15, 17; Israel at Sinai in Exod 19–Lev 27; Deuteronomy as covenant renewal; new covenant in Jer 31–33; Ezek 34, 36–37). Block, *Covenant*, 68. The proposal is unhelpful for it fails to use the Bible's own language of "covenants" (plural, e.g., Rom 9:4) and to appreciate that, whereas Deuteronomy renews what God did at Sinai, the new covenant contrasts with it and supplants it.
- ²⁷ Cf. Gentry and Wellum, who note that God gave the Mosaic covenant "to administer the fulfillment of the divine promises to Abraham and to the nation as a whole, and through them to the entire world." Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 342; cf. 362.
- ²⁸ Compton sees the Abrahamic covenant giving rise to the Davidic and new covenants but fails to indicate how it also gives rise to the Mosaic. R. Bruce Compton, "Dispensationalism, the Church, and the New Covenant," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 8 (2003): 12 n.29.
- ²⁹ Hafemann dangerously conflates faith and obedience, the root and fruit, when he writes, "Within the covenant, this response of faith and hope in God and his promises is defined in terms of obedience.... Love is the direct expression of trusting in God's provision and hoping in his promises.... This obedience ... is not something added to faith; it is the organic expression of faith itself. In other words, the commands of God simply make clear what trusting God looks like in concrete circumstances. Hafemann, "The Covenant Relationship," 36, 37, 39.
- ³⁰ See Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "Is It the Case That Christ Is the Same Object of Faith in the Old Testament? (Genesis 15:1–6)," *JETS* 55 (2012): 291–98.
- ³¹ Brian Vickers, *Justification by Grace through Faith: Finding Freedom from Legalism, Lawlessness, Pride, and Despair*, Explorations in Biblical Theology (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 58, 60–61. For more on this reading of Gen 15:5–6, see Jason S. DeRouchie, "Lifting the Veil: Reading and Preaching Jesus' Bible through Christ and for Christ," *SBJT* 22.3 (2018): 167–77.
- ³² For my messianic reading of Gen 22:1–19, see Jason S. DeRouchie, "The Redemptive-Historical Christocentric Approach," in *Five Views of Christ in the Old Testament*, ed. Andrew M. King and Brian J. Tabb (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022), 191–99; cf. Alexander, "Further Observations on the Term 'Seed' in Genesis," 363–67; Andrew E. Steinmann, "Jesus and Possessing the Enemies' Gate (Genesis 22:17–18; 24:60)," *BSac* 174.693 (2017): 13–21.
- ³³ Block rightly distinguishes between Israel's limited tribal "land" of Canaan (Gen 17:8) and the broader vassal state "land" (15:18) that reached from Egypt's border to the Euphrates, but he confuses matters when he attributes the larger turf to "Israel's wider mission to the world." Block, *Covenant*, 91. Both Gen 15:18 and 17:8 speak of Israel's "land" (singular) that they enjoyed in the OT age; it is texts like Gen 22:17 and 26:3–4 that address "lands" (plural) and relate to Israel's broader mission attached the coming Deliverer's rule (e.g., 22:18; 49:8–10) and Abraham's fatherhood of many nations (17:4–6).
- ³⁴ C. John Collins, "Galatians 3:16: What Kind of Exegete Was Paul?," *TynBul* 54.1 (2003): 75–86; Jason S. DeRouchie and Jason C. Meyer, "Christ or Family as the 'Seed' of Promise? An Evaluation of N. T. Wright on Galatians 3:16," *SBJT* 14.3 (2010): 36–48; Jason S. DeRouchie, "Counting Stars with Abraham and the Prophets: New Covenant Ecclesiology in OT Perspective," *JETS* 58.3 (2015): 478–85.
- ³⁵ Block suggests that walking "with God" (e.g., Gen 5:22, 24) relates to devotion and fellowship whereas walking "before God" (17:2) points to an official appointment as a commissioned agent of the divine court. Block, *Covenant*, 94.
- ³⁶ Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968); Jason S. DeRouchie, "Circumcision in the Hebrew Bible and Targums: Theology, Rhetoric, and the Handling of Metaphor," *BBR* 14 (2004): 182–89; John D. Meade, "The Meaning of Circumcision in Israel: A Proposal for a Transfer of Rite from Egypt to Israel," *SBJT* 20.1 (2016): 35–54.
- ³⁷ Kline, *By Oath Consigned*, 16–17, 41–42; Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 7–15, 128–46; Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant*, 168–215; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 286–94; Block, *Covenant*, 90.
- ³⁸ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 775–82; cf. Niehaus, *Biblical Theology: Volume 2*, 123–29.
- ³⁹ Cf. Blaising and Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 132–34.
- ⁴⁰ I read the Hithpael of *brk* in Gen 22:18 and 26:4 as an estimative-declarative reflexive. See Chee-Chiew Lee, "נִרְמָס in Genesis 35:11 and the Abrahamic Promise of Blessings for the Nations," *JETS* 52.3 (2009): 472. Scripture uses the Hithpael form only where the singular offspring-Deliverer is explicitly in view, and the reflexive identifies how his coming marks the ability to specifically regard oneself as blessed in him (Gen 22:18; 26:4). In contrast, the passive Niphal of *brk* always occurs where the text identifies a patriarch and, at times, his plural offspring-nation as the agents of God's blessing (and the ones from whom the messianic Deliverer would rise: 12:3; 18:18; 28:14). Cf. Michael B. Shepherd, *The Text in the Middle*, StBibLit 162 (New York: Lang, 2014), 22.
- ⁴¹ Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, ed. Harry A. Hoffner Jr., 2nd ed., WAW 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 109 (No. 18B, §1 [obv. 7'–14']); cf. Moshe Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East," *JAOS* 90 (1970): 189–90; Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 74–91; Gary N. Knoppers, "Ancient Near Eastern Royal Grants and the Davidic Covenant: A Parallel?," *JAOS* 116 (1996): 683–92.
- ⁴² Scholars commonly link the Abrahamic, Davidic, and new covenants with royal grants and call them unconditional-unilateral relationships, whereas they tie the Mosaic covenant with suzerain-vassal treaties and call it a conditional-bilateral relationship. While the promises a superior gave in a grant were unconditionally secure for a family's posterity and thus perpetual, any given generation could forfeit their own enjoyment of those blessings through disloyalty. The language of *unconditional-unilateral* is, therefore, misleading. See, e.g., Blaising and Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 128–211; Michael Horton, *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 23–110; Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 17–43; Eugene H. Merrill, "The Covenant with Abraham: The Keystone of Biblical Architecture," *Journal of Dispensational Theology* 12.36 (2008): 5–17. While Gentry and Wellum are correct that all the biblical "covenants consist of unconditional (unilateral) and conditional (bilateral) elements blended together," the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants still bear a perpetually binding quality not found in the Mosaic covenant, and this quality aligns them with ancient royal grants. See Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 662–66; cf. 68–69, 451, 455. Earlier I noted that the Adamic-Noachic covenant is prototypical of the Mosaic covenant and thus anticipates what would become suzerain-vassal

- treaties. Nevertheless, it also includes perpetual promises that resemble grants.
- ⁴³ Williamson, *Abraham, Israel, and the Nations*, 212–14; Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, 89–91.
- ⁴⁴ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 312–18; cf. Niehaus, *Biblical Theology: Volume 2*, 103–38, 139–74. Block affirms that we have a single covenant in two phases (Gen 15, 17) and compares it to the way Moses would later use sacrificial animal blood to sprinkle first the altar (representing Yahweh and a self-imprecatory oath ritual) and then the people (Exod 24:7; cf. 19:8; 24:3). Block, *Covenant*, 104; cf. 161.
- ⁴⁵ For the start of the apodosis at Exod 19:6, see Jason S. DeRouchie, “Understanding and Applying Exodus 19:4–6: A Case Study in Exegesis and Theology,” *JBTS* 6.1 (2021): 92–96; cf. DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament*, 226–29.
- ⁴⁶ John A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19.6*, JSOTSup 395 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 49; Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 113–14; Block, “Covenant,” 69–73; Block, *Covenant*, 149.
- ⁴⁷ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 416–40.
- ⁴⁸ Kitchen, “The Fall and Rise of Covenant, Law and Treaty”; Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 283–89; Kitchen and Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant in the Ancient Near East, Part 1–3*; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 397–402.
- ⁴⁹ See also 1 Cor 9:20–21; 2 Cor 3:4–16.
- ⁵⁰ As Hafemann notes, “The Sabbath is God’s declaration of the sufficiency of his provisions and of his ongoing commitment to meet the needs of his people (Exod. 31:16). Keeping the Sabbath is therefore a symbolic, public demonstration of one’s dependence on God to lead, guide and provide for his people.” Hafemann, “The Covenant Relationship,” 48.
- ⁵¹ DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament*, 449–53. Cf. Thomas R. Schreiner, “Good-Bye and Hello: The Sabbath Command for New Covenant Believers,” in *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies*, ed. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016), 159–88; Beau M. Landers, “Christ Will Give You Rest: A Biblical Theology of the Sabbath” (Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, PhD diss., 2022).
- ⁵² Gordon is not nuanced enough when he treats the Sinai covenant as sub-eschatological and relating only to temporal life in Canaan. T. David Gordon, *Promise, Law, Faith: Covenant-Historical Reasoning in Galatians* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2019), 152. Not only does obedience anticipate an escalated encounter with God’s presence (Lev 26:11–12; cf. Ezek 37:26–28; 2 Cor 6:16), but the temporal blessing of life linked to obedience (e.g., Lev 18:5; Deut 28:1–14; 30:15–20) typologically foreshadowed eternal life and its benefits (Deut 30:6; 32:39; cf. Rom 7:10).
- ⁵³ Kitchen, “The Fall and Rise of Covenant, Law and Treaty,” 118–35; Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 283–89; cf. Kitchen and Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant in the Ancient Near East, Part 1–3*. Block incorrectly asserts that “all the biblical covenants are “eternal and irrevocable.” Block, *Covenant*, 181; cf. 2. In contrast, (1) Isaiah and Jeremiah speak of God covenantally divorcing Israel and Judah (Isa 50:1; Jer 3:8); (2) Jeremiah portrays the new covenant as replacing the old Mosaic covenant that Israel “broke” (31:31–34); (3) the Jerusalem council affirmed that the Mosaic law-covenant was something that no Israelite had been able to bear (Acts 15:10) and that Gentile believers should not be troubled with the Mosaic law (15:19); (4) Paul stressed that “the end of the law was Christ for righteousness” (Rom 10:4), that he was not under the law of Moses but under the law of Christ (1 Cor 9:20–21), and that the church was no longer under the Mosaic law as a guardian (Gal 3:24–25); (5) and the author of Hebrews characterizes the new covenant as “better” than the old (Heb 8:6) and the old covenant as “obsolete and growing old” and “ready to vanish away” (8:13). Moses speaks of Sabbath keeping as “a covenant forever” (Exod 31:16; Lev 24:8), but he never applies eternity language to the Mosaic covenant itself. Contra Block, *Covenant*, 164–65, 276.
- ⁵⁴ For a development of this thesis, see Jason S. DeRouchie, “From Condemnation to Righteousness: A Christian Reading of Deuteronomy,” *SB/T* 18.3 (2014): 87–118; Jason S. DeRouchie, “The Use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12: A Redemptive-Historical Reassessment,” *Them* 45.2 (2020): 240–59. In Deuteronomy, Moses prefers the term “Horeb” over “Sinai” likely to stress how the covenant associated with that place had become like a “wasteland” or “ruin” for the people, due to their covenant rebellion (= Hebrew, *horbā*). Cf. Block, *Covenant*, 236–37.
- ⁵⁵ Compton helpfully notes that Yahweh regenerated people during the old covenant but that “this was not something the old covenant itself provided.” Compton, “Dispensationalism, the Church, and the New Covenant,” 13.
- ⁵⁶ DeRouchie, “The Use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12,” 240–59.
- ⁵⁷ DeRouchie, “From Condemnation to Righteousness,” 87–118.
- ⁵⁸ Kenneth J. Turner, *The Death of Deaths in the Death of Israel: Deuteronomy’s Theology of Exile* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011); Kenneth J. Turner, “Deuteronomy’s Theology of Exile,” in *For Our Good Always: Studies on the Message and Influence of Deuteronomy in Honor of Daniel I. Block*, ed. Jason S. DeRouchie, Jason Gile, and Kenneth J. Turner (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 189–220.
- ⁵⁹ On the eschatological reading of Deut 30:11–14, see Steven R. Coxhead, “Deuteronomy 30:11–14 as a Prophecy of the New Covenant in Christ,” *WTJ* 68 (2006): 305–20; Colin James Smothers, “In Your Mouth and in Your Heart: A Study of Deuteronomy 30:12–14 in Paul’s Letter to the Romans in Canonical Context” (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, PhD diss., 2018).
- ⁶⁰ On the distinction between covenant recommitment and covenant renewal, see Niehaus, *Biblical Theology: Volume 1*, 212 n.27.
- ⁶¹ On the promise of a king-priest in 1 Sam 2:10, 35, see Nicholas Ray Majors, “The King-Priest in 1–2 Samuel: A Messianic Motif” (Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, PhD diss., 2022), forthcoming.
- ⁶² For David as a type of this coming royal figure, see Jason S. DeRouchie, “The Heart of YHWH and His Chosen One in 1 Samuel 13:14,” *BBR* 24 (2014): 467–89; Brian A. Verrett, *The Serpent in Samuel: A Messianic Motif* (Eugene, OR: Resource, 2020); Majors, “The King-Priest in Samuel.”
- ⁶³ Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “The Blessing of David: The Charter for Humanity,” in *The Law and The Prophets: Old Testament Studies Prepared in Honor of Oswald Thompson Allis*, ed. John H. Skilton (Nutley, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1974), 298–318; Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 230; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 456–59.
- ⁶⁴ Verrett helpfully develops these topics in Verrett, *Serpent in Samuel*, 143–77.
- ⁶⁵ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 459–80.
- ⁶⁶ J. Alec Motyer, *Look to the Rock: An Old Testament Background to Our Understanding of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 23–38; J. Alec Motyer, “Messiah,” *NBD* 755–56; DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament*, 64–65.
- ⁶⁷ Compton helpfully notes that for Christ to stand as the people’s “covenant” means “to be appointed to provide for or to mediate a covenant for the people.” Compton, “Dispensationalism, the Church, and the New Covenant,” 18.
- ⁶⁸ For three alternative approaches to Ezek 16:59–63, see Niehaus, *Biblical Theology: Volume 2*, 165–69; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 585–88; Block, *Covenant*, 287–89.
- ⁶⁹ Hafemann asserts that the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants “together make up the ‘old covenant’” Hafemann, “The Covenant Relationship,” 29; cf. Block, *Covenant*, 484–85. However, Yahweh specifically states that the covenant his people broke and with which the new covenant contrasts is the one he cut with Israel and Judah’s fathers “on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt” (Jer 31:32). Hence, the “old covenant” is the Sinai/Horeb covenant and its renewal in Deuteronomy, which together govern stage 1 of the Abrahamic covenant and supply the means for bringing about stage 2.
- ⁷⁰ Block minimizes the contrast between the old and new covenants by asserting that Paul’s negative language regarding the law (*nomos*) relates to Jewish oral tradition and not to the Mosaic law-covenant itself. Block, *Covenant*, 483–515, esp. 489, 493, 496, 498. However, the frequency with which Block alters the meaning of *nomos* even within single paragraphs and without clear textual signals betrays that he is subjectively forcing Paul to conform to his own paradigm rather than letting Paul speak for himself. Similarly, Block claims that Paul’s view that the old covenant bore a ministry of death (2 Cor 3:9) did not derive out of the OT but must correlate with perspectives that rose in intertestamental Judaism (ibid., 520). However, this fails to appreciate that Moses himself affirmed both Israel’s stubbornness and spiritual disability (Deut 9:6–7; 10:16; 29:4[3]) and that the old covenant would result in the nation’s death (Deut 4:25–28; 31:16–18, 27–29). Finally, when Block says that only the ceremonial shadows associated with the OT sanctuary are rendered “obsolete and irrelevant in the new order” (Heb 8:13; ibid., 528), he fails to recognize the immediate context where the author cites Jer 31:31–34 to contrast the new covenant with the entire Sinai administration and not just the duties of the tabernacle/temple (Heb 8:8–12). For a more contextual wrestling with the Mosaic law and its relationship to the new covenant, see Douglas J. Moo, “The Law of Christ as the Fulfillment of the Law of Moses: A Modified Lutheran View,” in *Five Views on Law and Gospel*, ed. Wayne G. Strickland, Counterpoints (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 319–76 (also 83–90, 165–73, 218–25, 309–15); Jason C. Meyer, *The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology*, NAC Studies in Bible and Theology 7 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009).
- ⁷¹ See also Jer 33:6–16; Ezek 36:24–38.

- ⁷² This is a point Compton misses when he asserts that God accomplished the new covenant for national Israel and *not* the church. Compton, "Dispensationalism, the Church, and the New Covenant," 34; cf. 46–47. Block, too, fails to recognize the broader context when he claims that the nations are participants only in God's judgment and not in his salvation. Block, *Covenant*, 281. When Yahweh speaks of cutting a new covenant with "the house of Israel" in Jer 31:31–34, he has already made clear that this "Israel" will have a remnant from foreign, once-enemy nations built into it (12:16; cf. 3:17–18; 30:8–9).
- ⁷³ DeRouchie, "Counting Stars with Abraham and the Prophets," 445–85.
- ⁷⁴ Cf. Isa 50:12–16; Hos 14:4–8; Zech 13:7–10. See also G. K. Beale, "Peace and Mercy upon the Israel of God: The Old Testament Background of Gal. 6,16b," *Bib* 80 (1999): 204–23.
- ⁷⁵ The ESV reads an objective genitive construct in Isa 55:3: "And I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love *for David*." With this reading, the "steadfast, sure love" relates to "the promises God gave to David in the Davidic covenant." Compton, "Dispensationalism, the Church, and the New Covenant," 19. However, Gentry has convincingly argued that the genitive construct is subjective: "And I will make with you an everlasting covenant, the faithful loyalties *performed by David*" (Isa 55:3). Here the construction refers to the perfect, covenant-creating obedience of the new David, Christ. Peter J. Gentry, "Rethinking the 'Sure Mercies of David' in Isaiah 55:3," *WTJ* 69 (2007): 279–304; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 464–79.
- ⁷⁶ Collins, "Galatians 3:16," 75–86; DeRouchie and Meyer, "Christ or Family as the 'Seed' of Promise?," 36–48; Kevin P. Conway, *The Promises of God: The Background of Paul's Exclusive Use of "Evangelia" for the Divine Pledge* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014); DeRouchie, "Counting Stars with Abraham and the Prophets," 445–85; Jason S. DeRouchie, "Is Every Promise 'Yes'? Old Testament Promises and the Christian," *Them* 42 (2017): 16–45.
- ⁷⁷ Richard L. Pratt, "Infant Baptism in the New Covenant," in *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism*, ed. Gregg Strawbridge (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003), 172; Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 269–72; Michael G. McKelvey, "The New Covenant as Promised in the Major Prophets," in *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Guy Prentiss Waters, J. Nicholas Reid, and John R. Muether (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), 196–98; Scott R. Swain, "New Covenant Theologies," in *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Guy Prentiss Waters, J. Nicholas Reid, and John R. Muether (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), 566–69.
- ⁷⁸ So, too, Compton, "Dispensationalism, the Church, and the New Covenant," 33.
- ⁷⁹ Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 670–83; Stephen J. Wellum, "The New Covenant Work of Christ: Priesthood, Atonement, and Intercession," in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Biblical, Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*, ed. David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 517–40; cf. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 799–824.
- ⁸⁰ Kline, *By Oath Consigned*; DeRouchie, "Circumcision in the Hebrew Bible and Targums," 182–89; Meade, "The Meaning of Circumcision in Israel," 35–54; John D. Meade, "Circumcision of Flesh to Circumcision of Heart: The Typology of the Sign of the Abrahamic Covenant," in *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies*, ed. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016), 127–58.
- ⁸¹ Kline, *By Oath Consigned*.
- ⁸² Meade, "Circumcision of Flesh to Circumcision of Heart," 127–58; cf. Stephen J. Wellum, "Baptism and the Relationship between the Covenants," in *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright, *NAC Studies in Bible and Theology* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2007), 97–161.
- ⁸³ N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); Meyer, *End of the Law*; cf. DeRouchie, "The Use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12," 240–59.
- ⁸⁴ For a fair overview of the way the various theological systems understand how the historical covenants progress, integrate, and climax in Christ, see Benjamin L. Merkle, *Discontinuity to Continuity: A Survey of Dispensational and Covenantal Theologies* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020); cf. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 31–158; Jason S. DeRouchie, Oren R. Martin, and Andrew David Naselli, *40 Questions about Biblical Theology*, 40 Questions (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020), 101–97; Brent E. Parker and Richard J. Lucas, eds., *Covenantal and Dispensational Theologies: Four Views on the Continuity of Scripture*, Spectrum Multiview Books (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2022). For progressive dispensationalism, see Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, eds., *Dispensationalism, Israel and the*

Church: The Search for Definition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992); Blaising and Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*; Robert Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993). For progressive covenantalism, see Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker, eds., *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016); Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*. For covenant theology, see Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*; Horton, *God of Promise*; Guy Prentiss Waters, J. Nicholas Reid, and John R. Muether, eds., *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020).