

Covenant Characteristics Explaining and Defending the New Covenant

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Our topic for the weekend is the new covenant. However for those of us who have been Adventists it is important for us to understand the Old Covenant as well. Most of us did not realize that we were trying to live in two incompatible covenants and that was the reason we could never have real assurance of salvation. We had to ignore many passages of Scripture and dismiss much of what Paul had to say in order to line up with SDA teachings. When we understand both new and old covenants then suddenly there is theological clarity which in turn will lead to experiential harmony. We will be able to answer the nagging questions of the heart. What must I do to be saved? How can I be ready for the coming of Christ? What do I have to do to be fully pleasing to God? How do I know when I have done enough? What if I am killed with an unconfessed sin?

By the way, Transitioning Adventists are not the only ones who need answers to these questions. As many of you know we have moved from hot and dusty Casa Grande to Camp Verde, a little community between Phoenix and Flagstaff. We have visited four of the main churches there. In a Sunday school class they were talking about how they never reached their sanctification goals. Their conversation was centered on their own performance and law keeping. I asked them "How do you know when you have done enough?" They were unable to reach any conclusion; there was no joy, only latent anxiety. Unless we have a good understanding of the new covenant, we never know when we have done enough. An understanding of the covenants helps us reach the answer that bring hope, faith and love as well as joy, peace and a motivation to live the Christ-like life.

My goal today is threefold: First, to help us better understand the covenants, second, to equip us to more effectively answer the questions and objections transitioning Adventists will be asked by their Adventist friends and relatives and third, it will help each of us to confront the growing messianic movement on the fringes of Adventism.

Before we get to covenant characteristics, a little quiz to sharpen our thinking? How many biblical covenants are you under?

How many think 1?

How many think 2?

How many think 3?

More than 3?

First of all, what is a covenant? Here is the best definition I could find. "A covenant is a divinely imposed legal agreement between God and man that stipulates the conditions of their relationship."

There are several covenants in the Bible. Some say only one, others teach seven or even eight. I do not remember of ever studying the covenants in any of my theology classes in college or even at the Adventist Seminary other than just a passing reference.

For our purposes we will look briefly at the covenants that need to be understood to meet the needs of transitioning Adventists. God made covenants with Noah, Abraham, and Christ.

Each covenant has specific covenant partners, each covenant has an **arbitrary but a contextually meaningful sign** and each covenant outlines the stipulations, if any, that govern the covenant relationship.

Covenant with Noah

Let's look briefly at God's covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:8-17). Look at verse 3 in passing.

Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as *I gave* the green plant (Gen. 9:3).

Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, "Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth. God said, **This is the sign of the covenant** which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; **I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.** It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud, and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth." (Gen 9:8-17)

Partners: God and all flesh: men, birds, cattle, beasts, animals and the earth itself.

Sign: Rainbow, note how meaningful to Noah this sign was!

Stipulations: What was Noah's part in this covenant? **Nothing**, look at the rainbow and remember God's promise.

Some years ago we spent a few days in Maui. We drove up to the summit of Haleakala and on the way down we must have seen at least a dozen beautiful rainbows. In 2009 when we took the long ministry trip we went through Yellowstone. One day there was the most brilliant rainbow we had ever seen. Every time we looked at these rainbows we remembered God's promise.

Are we under the Noetic covenant? Yes. And there is nothing we need to do. We just trust God's promise and enjoy the beauty of the rainbows. There will never be another universal flood.

Covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12:2.3; 15:1-6, 17; 17:1-11.)

We need to examine the covenant God made with Abraham a little more closely as there are several significant parts that relate to our understanding of the new covenant.

Promise regarding Abram's descendants:

Now the LORD said to Abram, Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the **land** which I will show you; And [1] I will make you a great nation, [2] And I will bless you, [3] And make your name great; [4] And so you shall be a blessing; [5] And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse (Gen. 12:1-2).

Promise regarding all mankind:

And in you **all the families** of the earth will be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).

Statement of Abram's faith and resulting righteousness (Gen. 15:3-6)

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great." Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir." Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." **Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness** (Gen 15:1-6).

God makes a covenant with Abram and clarifies His promise to Abram's descendants regarding the land.

So He said to him, "Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon." Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror *and* great darkness fell upon him. *God* said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. "But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. "As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. "Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, *there appeared* a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. **On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram**, saying, "**To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates**" (Gen. 15:9-18).

God gives Abram the right (statute) of circumcision as the sign of the covenant.

Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly." Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you will be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. "I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. "I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. "I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." God said further to Abraham, "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. **This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised.** And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and **it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.** And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a *servant* who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. A *servant* who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; **thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.** But an uncircumcised male who is **not circumcised** in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be **cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant**" (Gen. 17:1-14).

There are six important things that we need to note in this passage: (1) the Abrahamic Covenant is **made only with the descendants of Abraham**. (2) The Abrahamic Covenant deals with the **land** of Canaan. (3) The **sign of this Abrahamic Covenant is circumcision**. (4) Not keeping the sign of the covenant is breaking the covenant. (5) **Abram was counted righteous**

simply by believing the declaration of God that his descendants would number as the stars. (6) Abraham was counted righteous **before** he was given the sign of circumcision.

Paul builds Christian theology on these facts.

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT." Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." **How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.** For the **promise** to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith (Rom. 4:1-13).

But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the **promise** by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise** [not according to law] (Gal. 3:22-29).

It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace (Gal. 5:1-4).

Application to Christians:

1. We receive righteousness just the way Abram did—by believing the declaration of God.
2. All nations will be blessed in Abram's descendants—through Christ.
3. Christians may claim the **universal promises** made to the descendants of Abraham.
4. The Abrahamic Covenant dealing with the land and circumcision does **not** apply to Christians.

There is one more thing we should note before we leave this section. Adventists claim that Abraham kept the Sabbath. Ellen White states that all the patriarchs from Adam to Moses kept the Sabbath and they use the following statement made to Isaac to prove this.

I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws (Gen. 26:4-5).

They say these terms are terms used in relation to the Sinaitic Covenant, and they are. However, there is no record of anyone keeping the Sabbath, or any other day, before the time of Moses. Following is a partial list of commandments, statutes and laws God gave Abraham.

We understand what commands are. A statute refers to a specific law, and a law is a general law.

Go from your country (Gen. 12:1). (command)

To your descendants I will give this land (Gen. 12:7). (Repeated several times elsewhere)

Look at the land I will give you (Gen. 13:14). (command)

Do not fear (Gen. 15:1). (command)

Count the stars (Gen. 15:5). (command)

Walk before me and be blameless (Gen. 17:1). (command)

You shall keep my covenant (Gen. 17:9) (general **law**, it includes all the aspects mentioned before)

Circumcise all the males, including slaves (Gen. 17:6-13). (statute, a specific law)

Do not be distressed...whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her (Gen. 21:12). (Good advice!)

Take your son whom you love and offer him as a sacrifice (Gen. 22:2). (Command)

Do not stretch out your hand against the lad (Gen. 22:12). (command)

Sinaitic Covenant (Ex. 2:24—Deut. 30:19)

The Israelites are under the Abraham covenant.

So God heard their groaning; and **God remembered His covenant with Abraham**, Isaac, and Jacob. God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice *of them* (Ex. 2:24-25; cf. 6:1-5).

Note the importance of circumcision for the Israelites: (Ex. 12:44, 48).

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the ordinance of the Passover: no foreigner is to eat of it; but every man's slave purchased with money, after you have circumcised him, then he may eat of it (Ex. 12:43-44).

It is important to recognize that the Sinaitic Covenant was made with the descendants of Abraham and thus they were under the Abrahamic Covenant, but Abraham was not under the stipulations of the Sinaitic Covenant as some claim. Ellen White and Adventists teach that all the patriarchs were under the 10 Commandments including the Sabbath. When confronted with the following reference, they will claim that the "fathers" represent the people at Sinai who died in the desert during the forty years of wondering.

Then Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may learn them and observe them carefully. The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb [Sinai]. **The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers**, but with us, *with* all those of us alive here today. The LORD spoke to you face to face at the mountain from the midst of the fire, *while* I was standing between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain. He said, I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." (Deut. 5:1-6)

Adventists try to separate the covenant in Deuteronomy with the covenant in Exodus. Thus, they can say that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob kept the Sabbath.

However, it is clear from the usage of the term that “the fathers” referenced above does not refer to the Israelites who were present at the giving of the 10 Commandments at Sinai. Rather “the Fathers” refer to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

God, furthermore, said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations (Ex. 3:15).

That they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you (Ex. 4:5).

See, I have placed the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to them and their descendants after them (Deut. 1:8).

Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build (Deut. 6:10).

It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but *it is* because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (Deut. 9:5).

...by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them (Deut. 30:20).

The 10 Commandments are the words of the Sinaitic Covenant.

It is important that this point be nailed down thoroughly. I was discussing this with a close friend of mine and he insisted that this was not true. I read the Scriptures that clearly state that the 10 Commandments are the very words of the covenant but he still would not admit to it. He said “I don’t care what the Bible says here, I know it is not true.” He insisted that the covenant was the **promise** the Israelites made when Moses presented them with the covenant. “All that the Lord has said we will do.” This is not the covenant; rather, this speaks to the promise to keep the covenant.

Let me illustrate. If we purchase a car, home or most anything of substantial value, especially if we finance part of it, a contract is drawn up. It stipulates the agreement—we could call it a covenant—between us and the supplier. We sign and date on the bottom line. Our signature, however, is not the agreement; it is simply our acceptance of the agreement that is spelled out in the document.

In discussing the Sabbath, the gospel and many other aspects of Adventism, it seems to me that the fact that the 10 commandments are the very words of the covenant must be confirmed before meaningful discussion or study can proceed. This is stated six times in Scripture.

So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And he wrote on the tablets **the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments** (Ex. 34:28). See also Ex. 31:18; Deut. 4:13; 9:9, 11, 15; 1 kg. 8:9.

The other laws expand and interpret the 10 commandments for the nation of Israel and in Deuteronomy 29:1 the whole law is called “the words of the covenant”

These are **the words of the covenant** which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the sons of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He had made with them at Horeb [Sania] (Deut. 29:1).

Go back to Deuteronomy 5:1 and we will see that the whole section from Deuteronomy 5:1-29:1 is in quotes. This whole section can be called “the words of the covenant”.

“Law of God vs Law of Moses”

Many of you have encountered people who want to make a distinction between the Law of God (the Ten Commandments) vs the Law of Moses (The ceremonial law)? Many of us grew up with this understanding. I wanted to see if this is still being taught so I went to Google and put “Law of God vs Law of Moses” and was directed to a number of sites. The first one I went to was “Preparing for Eternity—bringing God’s last-day message to the world.” Nothing was said about who sponsored this site, but I knew immediately who it was. I clicked on a hyperlink (<http://www.preparingforeternity.com/mosevs10.htm>) and it took me to Amazing Facts. Here is a quote from the site:

Many people often confuse Moses Law with God’s Ten Commandment Law, but they are very different. Moses’ law was the temporary, ceremonial law of the Old Testament. It regulated the priesthood, sacrifices, rituals, meat and drink offerings, etc., all of which foreshadowed the cross. This law was added “till the seed should come,” and that seed was Christ (Gal. 3:16, 19). The ritual and ceremony of Moses’ law pointed forward to Christ’s sacrifice. When He died, this law came to an end, but the Ten Commandments (God’s law) “stand fast for ever and ever.”

Do you have a good answer **from Scripture** to show that this is false? Deuteronomy 5:6-21 repeats the giving of the Ten Commandments with a different version of the Sabbath commandment, and then we have the following insightful record.

These words [Ten Commandments] the LORD spoke to all your assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire, *of* the cloud and *of* the thick gloom, with a great voice, and He added no more. He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me. And when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. You said, “Behold, the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives. Now then why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer, then we will die. For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we *have*, and lived? Go near and hear all that the LORD our God says; then speak to us all that the LORD our God speaks to you, and we will hear and do *it*.” The LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me, “I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. **They have done well in all that they have spoken.** Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever! Go, say to them, “Return to your tents.” **But as for you, stand here by Me, that I may speak to you all the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which you shall teach them,** that they may observe *them* in the land which I give them to possess (Deut. 5:22-31).

So is there a difference in authority or authorship between the Law of Moses and the Law of God? The only difference is that God **spoke** the Ten Commandments audibly to the people and the rest of the law God spoke to Moses and told him to teach the people all the other laws so they could observe them.

The Sinaitic Covenant is one law.

The singular term “Law of the Lord” is used about 88 times in Scripture. The plural term “laws of the Lord” is used five times and never once to separate moral from ceremonial (See Lev. 26:46; Ps. 105:45; Ez. 45:5; Heb. 8:10; 10:16).

The term, “Law of God” is used eight times in Scripture. Four times it could be translated “truth” as it is undefined (Rom. 7:22, 25; 8:70). Once it refers to “the law of Christ” (1 Cor. 9:21). Four times it refers to portions of the Torah where the context is not the Ten Commandments (Josh. 24:26; Neh. 8:8, 18; 10:28).

While the Sinaitic Covenant has civil, moral and ritual laws, it does not separate them. They are mingled together and the Jews to this day recognize that there is one law, not one moral and another ceremonial or civil.

Jesus showed us that the greatest moral law in the Torah is not in the Ten Commandments but in the portion of Scripture Adventists would call “the ceremonial law”.

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And He said to him, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND. “This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ “On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets” (Mt. 22:36-40, quoted from Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:19).

The sign of the Sinaitic Covenant is the Sabbath (Ex. 31:12-18)

But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, “You shall surely observe My sabbaths; for this is a **sign between Me and you throughout your generations**, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. Therefore you are to observe the sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall surely be put to death. So **the sons of Israel shall observe the sabbath, to celebrate the sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel** forever; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, but on **the seventh day He ceased from labor, and was refreshed**” (Ex. 31:13-17).

In Deuteronomy Sabbath Commandment is clearly linked to the Israelite’s slavery in Egypt.

You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; **therefore** the LORD your God commanded you to observe the sabbath day (Deut. 5:15).

We can see that the sign of the Sabbath was very meaningful to the “sons of Israel”. They were to cease work on the seventh day just as God ceased creating on the seventh day. They were not to forget their many years of slavery in Egypt, nor were they to forget how God delivered them from slavery. No longer were they slaves of Pharaoh having to work seven days a week. Now they had a loving Master who gave them a day of rest!

Stipulations: Keep the commandments.

There are some 613 commandments in the Sinaitic Covenant. These are found in Genesis through Deuteronomy. A good book on the biblical basis for each of these 613 commandments is *Biblical Literacy* by Rabbi Joseph, (William Morrow and Co. Inc., New York, 1948). He lists the Scripture passage for each of the 613 biblical laws and gives the Jewish interpretation of it.

Christians are not under the Sinaitic Covenant

For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.” Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.” However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM.” Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE”—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Gal. 3:10-14).

See also: Rom. 6:14, 5; 1 Cor. 9:20, 21; Gal. 4:21; 5:18.

The New Covenant—God’s Covenant with Christ Covenant Partners: The Father and Jesus.

I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, **And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people**, As a light to the nations, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison (Isa. 42:6-7).

The writer of Hebrews quotes the promise of a new covenant found in Jeremiah 31:33, 34 and applies it to the church.

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, **My covenant which they broke**, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD (Jer. 31:31-32).

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, **which has been enacted on better promises**. For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. **For finding fault with them**, He says, “BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH (Heb. 8:6-8).

When He said, “A new *covenant*,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear (Heb. 8:13).

Christ is the one who promised obedience.

“THEN I SAID, ‘BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.’” After saying above, “SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE *in them*” (which are offered according to the Law), then He said, “BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL.” **He takes away the first in order to establish the second**. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:7-10).

I have kept My Father’s commandments (Jn. 15:10).

So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, **for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him**” (Jn. 8:28-29).

WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously (1 Pet. 2:22-23).

Entrance sign: Baptism. Every time “Into Christ” is found in the New Testament, it is in the context of baptism with the Holy Spirit being the baptizer.

Or do you not know that all of us who have been **baptized into Christ Jesus** have been baptized into His death? (Rom. 6:3)

For all of you who were **baptized into Christ** have clothed yourselves with Christ (Gal. 3:27).

In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead (Col. 2:11-12).

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13).

Repeatable Sign: The Lord ‘s Supper.

While they were eating, Jesus took *some* bread, and after a blessing, He broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My body. And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is My **blood of the covenant**, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins” (Mt. 26:26-28).

And when He had taken *some* bread *and* given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; **do this in remembrance of Me.**” And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the **new covenant** in My blood. (Lk. 22:19-20).

The Seal of the new covenant

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you **were sealed** [aorist passive] in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God’s own* possession, to the praise of His glory (Eph. 1:13-14).

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you **were sealed** [aorist passive] for the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30).

Stipulations of the new covenant: Believe in Christ as our Substitute and Representative.

Therefore they said to Him, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you **believe in Him** whom He has sent” (Jn. 6:28-29).

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who **hears** My word, and **believes** Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and **does not come into judgment**, but **has passed** [perfect active] out of death into life (Jn. 5:24).

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has [present continuous] eternal life (Jn. 6:47).

The Law of Christ—Love one another as He loved us.

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another (Jn. 13:34).

To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the **law of Christ**, so that I might win those who are **without law** (1 Cor. 9:20-21).

Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the **law of Christ** (Gal. 6:2).

The New Covenant assignment: Proclaim the gospel to the entire world.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Mt. 28:19-20).

The New Covenant believer's position: seated with Christ at the Father's right hand

...which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places* (Eph. 1:20).

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory (Col. 3:1-4).

Blessings of the New Covenant "in Christ"

1. We are made near to God in Christ, Eph. 2:13.
2. We are accepted (chosen, predestined) in Christ, Eph. 1:4-6.
3. We are raised up and seated with Christ in heavenly places, Eph. 2:6.
4. We are made complete, full in Christ, Col. 2:9, 10.
5. We have no condemnation in Christ, Rom. 8:1.
6. We are a new creation in Christ (or we are part of a new creation—the church), 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10; Gal. 6:15.
7. We died and were buried with Christ, Rom. 6:1-11.
8. We were resurrected in Christ, Rom. 6:4, 11; Col. 3:1, 2; 2:12.
9. We are made one with Christ and one another, Jn. 17:21-24; Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:18; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:13-16; Col. 3:15.
10. We are saints in Christ Jesus, Phil. 1:1; 4:21.
11. We have put on Christ as an outer garment, Gal. 3:26, 27.

These eleven items speak of our **position** in Christ. In addition to our positional blessings we have **present possessions** in Christ.

1. We possess all spiritual blessings in Christ, Eph. 1:3.
2. We possess the priesthood, 1 Pet. 2:4,5,9.
3. We possess the imputed righteousness of God, 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:9.
4. We possess positional sanctification, 1 Cor. 2,30; Heb. 10:10,14.
5. We possess complete redemption, Rom. 3:24, 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14.
6. We possess the maturity of sons and daughters of God, Gal. 3:26-28, 4:1-7.
7. We possess a spiritual gift, 1 Cor. 12:13, 18, 25, 28; Rom. 12:4.
8. We possess liberty in Christ, Rom. 8:2; Gal. 2:4
9. We possess a part of the building of God (the church), Eph. 2:21,22.

10. We possess forgiveness by God, Eph. 4:32.

Third, we have the many **declarations** made about grace believers in the New Testament.

1. We have eternal life, Jn. 5:24.

2. We have entered into Christ's rest, Heb. 4:3.

3. We are free from sin, Rom. 6:7,18,22.

4. We are free from the law, Rom. 7:6.

5. We now overwhelmingly conquer through Christ, Rom. 8:3.

6. God is now at work in our life to will and do His pleasure, Phil. 2:13.

7. We are reconciled to God, Rom. 5:10.

8. We have received the spirit of adoption, Rom. 8:15.

9. We are now qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. 1:12.

This is only a partial list. I suggest that you read through the New Testament, especially the epistles) and add to this list as you find more.