A Study in the Biblical Covenants

I. Introduction

A. The first mention of the word covenant in the Bible comes in Genesis 6:18 when God says he would establish a covenant with Noah (Gen 8:20-9:17, Isa 54:9). Hosea 6:7 does imply God made a covenant with Adam but could also be translated with men.

The word covenant (as translated in the NASB) is mentioned 316 times in the Bible. 282 of those times are in the Old Testament, therefore we must understand it is an important topic in the Bible.

We need to define the word covenant before proceeding. Brown, Driver and Briggs say the word translated covenant in the Hebrew means alliance or pledge made between men or between God and man. While there are covenants mentioned between men like Jonathan and David (1 Sam. 18:1-4) or the covenant of marriage for instance.

Also, the word covenant does not exist where we can clearly see a covenant is made. For instance, there the word covenant does not appear in the Davidic covenant or anything prior to the Noahic covenant.

Some covenants are conditional and some are unconditional. A conditional covenant is one where certain laws or conditions are in place while an unconditional one is free of any conditions and God simple makes it with Himself. Some covenants are universal while some are relate to a specific group of people.

Mediator

An important concept within a covenant is the mediator.

B. A word on Theological Frameworks built on the Covenants

Since clearly the Bible contains an underlying Covenant theme, many theological systems or frameworks are built around it.

1. Two Coventants (Covenant Theology)

Covenant theology arises from the logic that before the fall was one covenant and after the fall is another covenant of which all covenants are mentioned. The first, while in sinless perfection was a covenant of works and the second, after the fall of man, a covenant of grace. There is nothing taught in Scripture that would make one arrive at this and the many false conclusions this theology is built on. For instance, the church did not begin with Adam when clearly Jesus said, I will (future) build my church in Matthew 16.

1. Five Covenants
2. Seven Covenants
3. Eight Covenants

2. New Covenant Theology

New Covenant Theology is...

The New Covenant

When talking about the New Covenant, one of our first questions should be, what is the Old Covenant? Who was it with and what was involved? Why is it not still valid?

*The Old Covenant*

*Ex 19:5-8, Gal 4:21-31, Heb 8:5-9,13 2 Cor 3:6-8, 14,*

*It has been ratified:*

*Gal 3:15,*

*While in Jesus—the promised “seed” of Abraham (Gal 3:16), the anticipated prophet like Moses (Acts 3:22–23; cf. Deut 18:15; Matt 17:5), King David’s greater son (Matt 22:41–46), and the mediator of the new covenant (Heb 8:6)—God’s covenant promises for both Israel and the nations have come to fruition, the ultimate expression of God’s creative and redemptive goal awaits fulfillment in the eschatological reality of the new creation. - olivetree.com*

The Universal aspect of the New Covenant

While the New Covenant is made to the nation of Israel, going Back to the original Abrahamic covenant we see that there was an aspect that included the Gentiles somehow (Acts 3:25, Mark 14:24, Matt 26:28, ).

A correct understanding of the covenants puts the Sabbath in its place.