

The Covenantal Backbone
Understanding the Nature of Our Relationships
(Abrahamic, Old, and New Covenants)

1. What is the Abrahamic Covenant, and how does it fit?
 - a. An outgrowth of the Covenant of Creation.
Genesis 12:1-3; 15:17-21 (v 18 “made” is karath = cut, not kum = set up, stand up)
 - b. An application of the Covenant of Grace.
Genesis 3:15 (your seed) vs. Genesis 17:1-8 (your seed) → Galatians 3:16
 - c. A gospel message and forerunner of the New Covenant.
Galatians 3:8, 16, and 29; Revelation 21-22 (cf. Hebrews 11:15-16; 12:22-24)

2. What is the Old Covenant, and how does it fit?
 - a. We cannot understand this covenant apart from God’s greater purposes of redemption—it too has purpose in God’s greater plans.
Galatians 3:19 and 21 – “why the Law then?” and “is the Law contrary to the promise?”
 - b. It is related to and a reminder of the Covenant of Creation.
Just as Adam is God’s son, so Israel is God’s son.
There is a promise of land and life and flourishing for obedience.
 - c. It’s primary focus is national/ethnic and legal/external.
The national/tribal identity of Israel served the redemptive purpose of preserving a descendent of Abraham → Isaac → Jacob → Judah → David, etc.
The legal and external features served to highlight the depravity of mankind.
 - d. It is not contrary to the Covenant of Grace but is a key help to illustrate and instruct toward the redemption promised.
Galatians 2:24, the Law as tutor. Hebrews and the priesthood and sacrificial system.
 - e. It is the Custodian or Guardian in anticipation of the New Covenant.
Galatians 3:23-24 and 4:1-3a

3. What is the New Covenant, and how does it fit?

Jeremiah 31:31-34

- a. With whom is this covenant made?
 - i. With “the house of Israel and with the house of Judah” (Jeremiah 31:31).
 - ii. But Jesus is the new Israel and He is of the house of Judah.
 - iii. In the New Testament *all believers* are united to Him as participants of this New Covenant (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 9:15, etc.).
- b. What makes it “new”?
 - i. It is no longer made with a national people (a tribal people) but with all people and no longer mediated by prophets, priests, rulers but mediated by Christ the perfect Prophet, Priest, and King.
 - ii. It is no longer entered by physical birth but by spiritual birth (regeneration).
 - iii. It is no longer for a “mixed” people (believer and unbeliever alike) who are externally united to it by birth or external signs but is for those whose hearts have been circumcised and have been made new (Jeremiah 31:32).
 - iv. It no longer provides temporary cleansing but full forgiveness through the accomplished work of Christ (Hebrews 7:26-28).
 - v. The Holy Spirit is no longer only poured out on anointed leaders but would be poured out on all (Ezekiel 11:19-20; Joel 2:28-29).
- c. The New Covenant is a New Creation covenant and is the fulfillment of all previous covenants.
 - i. The Church is the new creation people and is the newly created Israel and will live in the new heavens and new earth (Galatians 6:15-16; cf. 3:29; Philippians 3:3; etc.).
 - ii. Israel and the Church are not two entirely distinct groups with two different plans for redemption and two different futures—the two have been made into one “new man” (Ephesians 2:15).