

Gentiles and Divine Covenants

1. The descendants of Abraham were not set apart by God until the Abrahamic Covenant. Thereafter the Mosaic, Land (Palestinian or Deuteronomic), King, and New Covenants were made with the Jewish nation. Study Gen 1:20-30; 2:15-17, 3:16-19; 9:1-17. Did God establish any covenants with Gentiles or anyone outside Jewish ethnicity?

Before the nation of Israel, God made a covenant with the following non-Jews: 1) Adam before the Fall (Edenic), 2) Adam after the Fall (Adamic), and 3) Noah and his sons (Noahic). In the case of the Edenic and Adamic Covenants, God does not state that He is making a covenant but characteristics of a covenant are present: God commands man to do certain things and God will do certain things. And Jeremiah makes an indirect reference to the Edenic Covenant as He calls Creation a covenant (Jer 33:20-26).

Edenic Covenant

"God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply,..." God blesses Adam and Eve and tells them to procreate (Gen 1:28).

"...and subdue it,..." God tells Adam to subdue the earth for the needs of a human race. Man has the responsibility to utilize the physical world to enable him to improve the quality of life spiritually and physically (Gen 1:28).

"...and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." God gives Adam the power of dominion over animals. Note the significance that animals were created "after their kind," and man was created in the "image of God"; man was a special creation with intellect (Gen 1:20-26, 28).

"Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food" God provides vegetation as food for both man and animal (Gen 1:29-30).

"Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it." God gave man the responsibility of cultivating and maintaining the Garden. Little is known about the Garden, but the ground was not cursed, the gardening wasn't difficult, and weeds did not appear to be present until after the Fall (Gen 2:15).

"From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." God tells Adam not to eat from one tree (Gen 2:16-17). Like a baby, Adam was born innocent; in the Garden, he did not need to be discerning of good and evil. Disobedience would take away his innocence and the offense meant punishment by death.

The Edenic Covenant provided life, fellowship, and food for man.

Adamic Covenant

"Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." God curses the serpent, Satan's tool: a) above all cattle, b) more than any beast of the field, c) condemned to crawl on his belly (does that suggest that he was once upright?) and eat the dust of the earth. Furthermore deep hatred would exist between the serpent and his offspring with: a) woman, and b) the offspring of the woman. In the coming conflict, the serpent will cause suffering ; however, Christ will prevail (Gen 3:14-15).

"To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you." God changes the woman's birth experience by magnifying the pain of childbirth and establishes a new order at home: the woman must now submit herself to the authority of her husband (Gen 3:16).

"Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat from it"; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return." God cursed the earth for Adam's transgression. Adam would now have to work hard, contending with weeds, to cultivate food to eat. God also said that physical death was inevitable (Gen 3:17-19).

The Adamic Covenant changed the status of the serpent, woman and man. From a life of fellowship with God: peace, provision, comfort, and life to one without the fellowship of God: hostility, pain, toil, and death.

The Noahic Covenant

"I will never again curse the ground on account of man..." God promises never to curse the earth again; his first curse at earth was in the Adamic Covenant (Gen 8:21).

"...I will never again destroy every living thing..." God promises to never destroy all living things (Gen 8:21).

"While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, And cold and heat, And summer and winter, And day and night Shall not cease." While the earth exists, God promises not to stop the diurnal cycle of time, and both agricultural and atmospheric seasons (Gen 8:22).

"And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth." God blesses Noah and his sons and commands them to procreate. This command is exactly the same found in the Edenic Covenant (Gen 9:1).

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"The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given." God adds to the Edenic Covenant: not only will man have dominion over all living creatures, but they will also fear man (Gen 9:2).

"Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant." God adds to the Edenic Covenant: not only will man have vegetation to eat, he will also have meat (Gen 9:3).

"Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood." God commands that man abstain from eating blood (Gen 3:4). Later in the Mosaic Covenant and codified into Jewish law, God reveals that blood is the means by which one can atone and cover for his sins (Lev 17:10-16, Deut 16: 23-25).

"Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man." God tells Adam that contempt for human life is contempt towards the image of God and establishes the beginning of capital punishment: execution for murder (Gen 9:6). Later in the Mosaic Covenant, this is codified into Jewish law (Ex. 21:12-15, 28-29).

"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." God makes a covenant with all living creatures in addition to man! He promises not to destroy all life by flooding, and He makes a rainbow as a sign to remind Himself of His Covenant (Gen 9:11-15).

In the Noahic Covenant, God blesses man with food, procreation, and promises to all living creatures never again to destroy life by catastrophic flooding. Furthermore, we learn that killing another person (because they have the image of God) is, in turn, punishable by death; the Noahic covenant intensifies our understanding of the sanctity of the image of God because it is linked with capital punishment.

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