

**SPIRIT OF LIFE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL
MINISTRY SCHOOL FOURTH EDITION
THE BIBLE - SESSION 2
GOD'S WORK IN THE PAST**

God's work in the past

God is timeless, but he reached down through time and spoke to men of old by His Holy Spirit to reveal himself to us. The Bible's revelation of God's work in the past provides an informative and exciting panorama of centuries of divine activity toward man.

First, the bible gives man an **education** in truths unknowable apart from divine revelation. For example, the creation of man described in **Genesis 1 and 2** answers man's most basic questions: "**Who am I?**" and "**Where did I come from?**" Only God Himself could disclose these facts.

Second, The Bible sets forth a mass of **historical evidence** for the truthfulness of the Christian faith. The most outstanding of this evidence is: **fulfilled prophecy, the miracles of Christ, and Christ's death, and resurrection.** The believer's faith is thus grounded in historical events and is far removed from what some have called "a leap into the dark."

Third, the Bible records **examples to help present-day Christians.** Various failures of Israel and the resulting judgments of God are often cited in the New Testament as things to avoid, for example, their idolatry and grumbling in the wilderness (**1 Cor. 10:5**), and their unbelief at Kadesh, (**Hebrews 4:11**).

Paul is said to be a living example for believers to follow (**1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1**) as is Jesus' humility in the midst of suffering (**1 Peter 2:21**).

Fourth, the Bible provides encouragement for Christians in their life and witness. If God could use an adulterer and murderer like David, then God can certainly use a struggling Christian today if he possesses David's devotion to the Lord. Likewise, if God saved Saul of Tarsus, the chief enemy of the early church, (**Acts 9:1-31**) then surely, He can save the people with whom Christians share their Faith.

God's Word tells us about God's Covenants

1. The Edenic Covenant

The covenant in Eden is the first of the general or universal covenants. In it, Adam is charged to:

- A. Replenish the earth: (repopulate) (Genesis 1:28)
- B. Subdue the Earth (Genesis 1:28)
- C. Exercise dominion over the animal creation (Genesis 1:28)
- D. Care for the Garden of Eden and enjoy its fruit (Genesis 1:29; 2:15)
- E. Refrain from eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil under penalty of death (Genesis 2:16, 17)

The **Edenic Covenant** was terminated by man's disobedience, when Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, resulting in their spiritual and physical deaths. This necessitated the establishment of the covenant with Adam.

2. The **Adamic Covenant**

The covenant with Adam is the second general or universal covenant. It could be called the covenant with mankind, for it sets for the conditions which will hold sway until the curse of sin is lifted (Isaiah 11:6-10 and Romans 8:18-23)

According to the Adamic Covenant, the conditions which prevail are:

- A. The serpent, the tool used by Satan to affect the fall of man is cursed. (Genesis 3:14). The curse affects not only the instrument, the serpent, but also the energizer, Satan. Great physical changes took place in the serpent. Apparently, it was created to stand upright, but now it will go on its belly. It was the most desirable animal of the animal creation; now it is the most loathsome. The sight or thought of a snake should be an effective reminder of the devastating effects of sin.
- B. Satan is judged -he will enjoy limited success: *"thou shalt bruise his heel,"* (Genesis 3:15), but ultimately, he will be judged – *"it shall bruise thy head"* (Genesis 3:15).
- C. The first prophecy of the coming Messiah is given (Genesis 3:15).
- D. There will be a multiplication of conception, necessitated by the introduction of death into the human race (Genesis 3:16; 19)
- E. There will be pain in childbirth (Genesis 3:16)

- F. The woman is made subject to her husband (Genesis 3:16)
- G. The ground is cursed and will bring forth weeds among the food which man must eat for his existence (Genesis 3:17-19).
- H. Physical Change takes place in man; he will perspire when he works. He will have to work all his life long (Genesis 3:19).
- I. In sinning, man dies spiritually and ultimately will die physically. His flesh will decay until it returns to dust from which it was originally taken. (Genesis 3:19)

3. THE NOAHIC COVENANT

The covenant with Noah is the third general or universal covenant. Noah has just passed through the universal flood in which all of the world's population had been wiped out. Only Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives – eight people – constitute the world's population. Noah might have thought that the things provided by the covenant with Adam had now been changed. However, God gives the Noahic Covenant so that Noah and all the human race to follow might know that the provisions made in the Adamic Covenant remain in effect with one notable addition: the principle of human government, which includes the responsibility of suppressing the outbreak of sin and violence, so that it will not be necessary to destroy the earth again by a flood.

The provisions of the covenant are:

- A. The responsibility to populate the earth is reaffirmed. (Genesis 9:1)
- B. The subjection of the animal kingdom to man is reaffirmed. (Genesis 9:2)
- C. Man is permitted to eat the flesh of animals. However, he is to refrain from eating blood (Genesis 9:3-4)
- D. The sacredness of human life is established. Whatever sheds man's blood, whether man or beast, must be put to death (Genesis 9:5-6)
- E. This covenant is confirmed to Noah, all mankind, and every living creature on the face of the earth (Genesis 9: 9-10)
- F. The promise is given to never destroy the earth again by a universal flood (Genesis 9:11). The next time God destroys the earth; the means will be by fire. (II Peter: 3:10)

G. The rainbow is designated as a testimony of the existence of this covenant and the promise never to destroy the earth by flood. As long as we can see the rainbow, we will know that the Noahic Covenant is in existence (Genesis 9:12-17)

4. The Abrahamic Covenant

The covenant with Abraham is the first of the ***theocratic covenants*** (***pertaining to the rule of God***). It is unconditional, depending solely upon God who obligates Himself in grace, indicated by the unconditional declaration, ***“I will,”*** to bring to pass the promised blessings. The Abrahamic covenant is the basis of all the other theocratic covenants and provides for blessings in three areas: National, Personal, and Universal.

A. National – *“I will make thee a great nation.”* (Genesis 12:2)

This covenant was first given in broad outline and was later confirmed to Abraham in greater detail (Genesis 13: 14-17; Genesis 15:1-7, 18-21; Genesis 17:1-8) The Abrahamic Covenant constitutes an important link in all that God began to do, has done through history, and will continue to do until the consummation of history. It is the one purpose of God for humans into which all of God’s programs and works fit.

B. Personal – *“I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing.”* (Genesis 12:2)

The personal aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant are fourfold:

1. To be the father of a great nation.
2. To receive personal blessing
3. To receive personal honor and reputation
4. To be the source of blessing to others

C. Universal – *“In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”* (Genesis 12:3)

The universal aspects of the covenant are threefold:

1. Blessings for those people and nations which bless Abraham and the nation which comes from him.
2. Cursings upon those people and nations which curse Abraham and Israel.
3. Blessings upon all the families of the earth through the Messiah, who, according to the flesh, is Abraham's son and provides salvation for the entire world.

See also **Galatians 3:6-9; 14.**

5. THE MOSAIC COVENANT (also called the LAW)

Exodus 19:5-8: *"5 now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, **then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:** 6) and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. 7) And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him, and all the people answered together, and said, 'All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.' And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord."*

The covenant with Moses is the second of the **theocratic covenants** (pertaining to the rule of God) and is conditional. It is introduced by the conditional formula, ***"If ye will obey my voice then ye shall be a peculiar treasure."*** This covenant was given to the nation of Israel so that those who believed God's promise given to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant (**Genesis 12:1-3**) would know how they should conduct themselves. The Mosaic Covenant in its entirety governs three areas of their lives:

- A. The commandments governed their **personal lives** particularly as they related to God (**Exodus 20:1-26**)
- B. The judgments governed their **social lives** particularly as they related to one another (**Exodus 21:1-24:11**)
- C. The ordinances governed their **religious lives** so that the people would know how to approach God on the terms that HE dictates (**Exodus 24:12-31:18**).

The Mosaic Covenant in no way replaced or set aside the Abrahamic Covenant. Its function is clearly set forth by Paul (**Galatians 3:17-19**), who points out that the law, the Mosaic Covenant, came 430 years after the Abrahamic Covenant.

The Mosaic Covenant was added alongside the Abrahamic Covenant so that the people of Israel would know how to conduct their lives until the "seed", the Christ, comes and makes the complete and perfect sacrifice, toward which the sacrifices of the Mosaic Covenant only point to.

The Mosaic Covenant was never given so that by keeping it people could be saved! It was given so they might realize that they cannot do what God wants them to do even when God writes it down on tables of stone. The Law was given that man might realize that he is helpless and hopeless when left to himself and realize that his only hope is to receive the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus (**Galatians 3:22-24**).

6. THE ISRAELI COVENANT (THE NATION OF ISRAEL)

Deuteronomy 29: 10-15 *"10 Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; and your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, 11) Your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water: that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his death, which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day: 13) that he may establish thee today for a people unto himself and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 14 Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; 15) But with him that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day:*

The covenant concerning Israel is the third of the **theocratic covenants** (pertaining to the rule of God). The Israeli Covenant has two aspects:

A. The legal aspects which are immediate and conditional (**Deuteronomy Ch. 27-29**)

B. The grace aspects which are future and unconditional (**Deuteronomy 30:1-9**)
The enjoyment of the immediate blessings is introduced by the conditional formula: (**Deut. 28:1**) *"if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth."*

Sadly, Israel did not meet the condition of obedience, and is still experiencing God's curses and punishment for their disobedience (Deut. 28:15-68). The unconditional grace aspects of the Israeli Covenant have yet to be realized. God will re-gather the scattered people of Israel and establish them in the land He has promised unconditionally to give them. Deuteronomy concludes the Israeli Covenant with a final warning and challenge for obedience. (Deuteronomy 30:1-20)

7. THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

2 Samuel 7:4-17 *“4 and it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, 5) go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? 6) Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle, 7) In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar? 8) Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the shepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: 9) and I was with thee withersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. 10) Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant thee, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime. 11) And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also, the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee a house. 12) And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13) He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14) I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: 15) But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. 16) And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. 17) according to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.*

The covenant with David is the fourth of the **Theocratic Covenants** (Pertaining to the rule of God). In this covenant David is promised three things:

A. A land forever (**2 Samuel 7:10**)

B. An unending dynasty (2 Samuel 7:11, 16)

c. An everlasting kingdom (2 Samuel 7:13, 16)

The birth of Solomon, David's son, who is to succeed him, is prophesied in verse 12. His particular role is to establish the throne of the Davidic Kingdom forever (v 13). His throne continues, though his seed is cursed in the person of Jeconiah (Coniah), who was the king under whom the nation was carried captive to Babylon. Jeremiah prophesies that no one whose genealogical descent would be traced back to David through Jeconiah and Solomon would ever sit on David's throne (Jeremiah 22:24-30).

Joseph, the legal, but not physical, father of Jesus traces his lineage to David through Jeconiah (Matthew 1:1-17).

David, however, had another son, Nathan. His line was not cursed. Mary, the physical mother of Jesus, traces her lineage back to David through Nathan (Luke 3:23-38). Notice the care and the extent to which God goes to keep his Word and to preserve its truthfulness. The **virgin birth** was absolutely essential not only to assure the sinless character of Jesus, but to also fulfill the Davidic Covenant. Jesus received his **"blood right"** to David's throne through his earthly mother, Mary, and His "legal right" to David's throne through his adoptive earthly father, Joseph. The virgin birth guarantees that one of David's lineage will sit on David's throne and rule forever, while at the same time preserving intact the curse and restriction on the line of descent through Jeconiah.

8. THE NEW COVENANT

The New Covenant is the fifth and last of the **theocratic covenants** (pertaining to the rule of God). Four provisions are made in this covenant:

Jeremiah 31: 31-34: "31 Behold, the days come saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: 33) but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts; and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34) and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

A. Regeneration: God will put His law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts. (Jeremiah 31:33)

B. National restoration: Yahweh (Jehovah) will be their God, and the nation will be His people. (Jeremiah 31:33)

C. Personal ministry of the Holy Spirit: they will all be taught individually by God. (Jeremiah 31:34)

D. Full justification: their sins will be forgiven and completely removed. (Jeremiah 31:34)

The New Covenant is made sure by the blood that Jesus shed on Calvary's cross. That blood which guarantees to Israel its New Covenant also provides for the forgiveness of sins for the believers who comprise the Church. Jesus' payment for sin is more than adequate to pay for the sins of all who will believe in Him. The New Covenant is called "new" in contrast to the covenant with Moses which is called "old." (Jeremiah 31:32; Hebrews 8:6-13) The New Covenant accomplishes what the Mosaic Covenant could only point to – that is, the child of God living in a manner that is consistent with the character of God. The old covenant is a teacher, teaching us what sin is. (Galatians 3:23-26)