

## **Great Doctrines of the Bible**

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### **God's Plan for the Ages The Major and Minor Covenants**

#### **Introduction**

A covenant is basically an agreement God makes with man. The Bible reveals eight of them. Some are conditional. Others are unconditional. Some are made with one person, like Adam. Some are made with an entire nation, like Israel. Four of the covenants are minor while four are major. Some are temporary, others are eternal, unchanging and irrevocable.

The covenants reveal God's plan for the ages. They cover the entire scope of history from the creation of Adam to the formation of the new heavens and earth. Bible-loving Christians, particularly dedicated Bible students, should familiarize themselves with these covenants. Our purpose and desire in presenting this lesson is to show you the great scope of biblical revelation and give you a sweeping view of God's eternal and glorious plan.

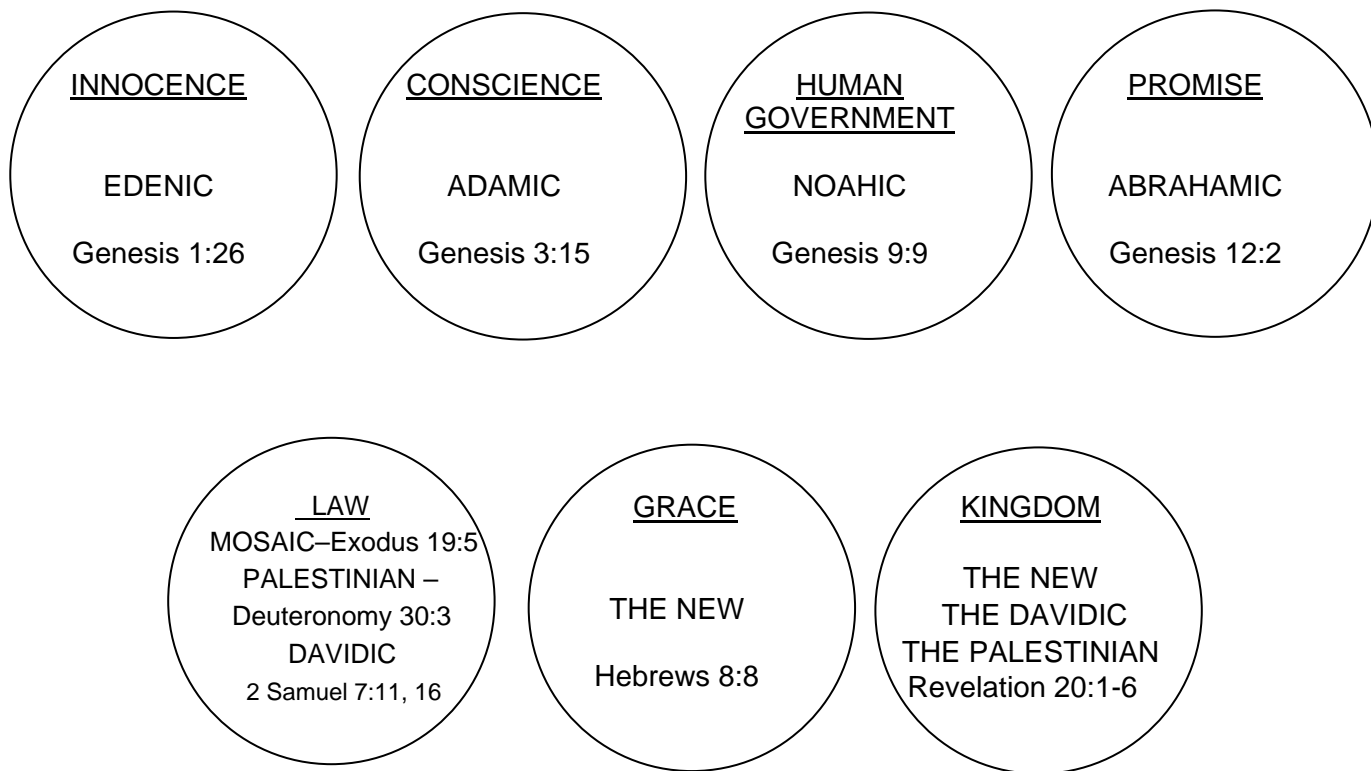
#### **Importance of this Lesson**

- ❑ The major importance of this lesson is the fact that there can be no complete or accurate understanding of scripture without acknowledging of the covenants God made with man.
- ❑ These covenants should be seen in their dispensational setting.
- ❑ The word "testament" means covenant. So our Bible contains the Old and New Testament or covenant. God's complete revelation was gradual and unfolding.
- ❑ It is important to see and understand this so we know what was done away with and what is eternal. May God give you much joy as you come to understand His covenants and plan for the ages.

#### **THE LESSON**

Due to the scope of these covenants, the vast amount of scripture involved and the need for careful study, we have decided to present them in two lessons. The final two studies will relate the glorious return of Jesus Christ.

**THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE COVENANTS TO THE DISPENSATIONS**  
**(Learn the names of these covenants and their relationship to the dispensation.)**



DEFINITION OF A MAJOR COVENANT

It is a sovereign act of God by which He established an unconditional covenant (contract or agreement) with man. It does not depend on man in any way. God bound Himself by grace when He said, "I will do this." This means He will bring definite blessings to pass. The Major Covenants are: the Abrahamic, the Palestinian the Davidic and the New Covenant.

DEFINITION OF A MINOR COVENANT

It is a sovereign agreement in which God offered to grant special blessings by saying, "If you will do this." It means that people had to agree to do certain things (conditions). The Minor Covenants are: the Edenic, the Adamic, the Noahic and the Mosaic.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A COVENANT

- (1) A covenant is an agreement made between God Himself and one person: Adam in the Edenic Covenant (Genesis 2:16).
- (1) A covenant is an agreement made between God Himself and all the people in the world: The Noahic Covenant (Genesis 9:9).
- (2) A covenant is an agreement made between God Himself and a Nation: Israel in the Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19:3).
- (3) A covenant is an agreement made between God Himself and a human family: Family of David in the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:16).
- (4) A covenant is an agreement made between God Himself and every person who believes in the blood of Christ for their salvation: The New Covenant (Hebrews 8:8; 1 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 9:20-23).

## THE PURPOSE OF THE EIGHT COVENANTS

### EDENIC

Genesis 2:16

Conditions the life of  
Man in Innocence

### ADAMIC

Genesis 3:15

Conditions the life of  
Fallen Man and  
promises  
a Redeemer

### NOAHIC

Genesis 9:16

Establishes the principle  
of Human Government

### ABRAHAMIC

Genesis 12:2

Founds the Nation of  
Israel –  
Confirms the Promise of  
Redemption with  
additions

### MOSAIC

Exodus 19:5

Condemns all

### PALESTINIAN

Deuteronomy 30:3

Secures the final  
restoration and  
conversion of Israel.

### THE DAVIDIC

2 Samuel 7:16

Establishes the perpetuity of  
the Davidic family,  
(fulfilled in Christ).  
Matthew 1:1; Luke 1:33 –  
and of David's Kingdom over  
Israel and over the whole  
earth to be fulfilled in Christ –  
Acts 15:14-17.

### THE NEW

Hebrews 8:8

Rests upon Christ's sacrifice  
and secures the eternal  
salvation of Israel under the  
Abrahamic Covenant –  
Galatians 3:13-19 ,  
of all who believe!  
Unconditional and final.

FROM THE DAWN TO THE DELUGE  
AN OUTLINE STUDY OF THE EDENIC AND ADAMIC COVENANTS

**THE EDENIC COVENANT**

- I. MADE WITH MAN BY GOD DURING THE DISPENSATION OF INNOCENCY
- II. CONDITIONED THE LIFE OF MAN ON THE EARTH DURING INNOCENCY
- I. CLIMAXED IN EXPULSION FROM THE GARDEN OF EDEN (Genesis 3:24)  
Scriptures: From Genesis 1:26-3:6. Key verses 1:28 and 2:15-17.
- IV. MAJOR ELEMENTS
  - A. Man was to propagate and “fill” or replenish the earth (Genesis 1:28). (The Divine Magna Carta for all true scientific and material progress.)
  - B. Man was to subdue the earth for himself (Genesis 1: 28).
  - C. He was to have dominion over the animal creation (Genesis 1:28).
  - D. He was to care for the Garden and eat of it (Genesis 2:15-16).
  - E. One simple test: He was to abstain from eating of the tree of “The Knowledge of Good and Evil” (Genesis 2:17).
  - F. Note Genesis 3:11-17. Man failed utterly (Genesis 3:6). (Eve was in the transgression, 1 Timothy 2:14). What sin does (Genesis 3:6-9). Here sin enters the world (Romans 5:12).
  - G. The dispensation ends in expulsion from the Garden (Genesis 3:24 – note verses 14-24).
  - H. Christ is seen as the Second Man – the Last Adam who regains all that the first Adam lost. (Note 1 Corinthians 15:44-49; also verses 20-22; Colossians 2:10, Romans 5:17-19).
    - 1. Adam was disobedient. Christ was obedient (1 Corinthians 15:22; John 4:34; John 17:3; Philippians 2:8-9).
    - 2. Adam submitted to Satan’s power. Christ triumphed (Matthew 4:10-11).
    - 3. Adam rejected God’s truth and goodness. Christ revealed it (John 1:17).
    - 4. Adam lost the presence of God. Christ regained it (Ephesians 2:13).
    - 5. Adam lost the fellowship of God. Restored in Christ (1 John 1:3-7).
    - 6. Adam lost his position and dominion. Through Christ we shall have it (Romans 8:16-17; Revelation 5:10; 2 Timothy 2:12).
    - 7. Christ identified Himself with all elements of Adam’s fall: thorns, sorrow, sweat, dust, curse.
  - I. God’s wonderful provision for man’s failure (Genesis 3:21).

**THE ADAMIC COVENANT**

- I. MADE WITH MAN BY GOD DURING THE DISPENSATION OF CONSCIENCE
- II. IT CONDITIONED THE LIFE OF FALLEN MAN AND PROMISED A REDEEMER  
It will continue until the Kingdom Age (Romans 8:21).
- III. SCRIPTURES: Genesis 3:14-19
- IV. MAJOR ELEMENTS  
Man was given stewardship of moral responsibility.
  - A. The Serpent was cursed (Genesis 3:14; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 12:9). The relationship of Christ and the Serpent (Numbers 21:5-9; John 3:14-15).
  - B. The first promise of a Redeemer (Genesis 3:15). The Seed line begins.
    - ◆ *Here the conflict of the ages began.*

- C. Woman's state is changed (Genesis 3:16).
  - 1. Multiplied conception
  - 2. Pain in child bearing
  - 3. The authority of man
- ◆ *Sin required a new order (Ephesians 5:22-25; 1 Timothy 2:11-14).*
- D. Easy work in Eden (Genesis 2:15) changed to burdensome toil (Genesis 3:18-19) because of the curse on the earth (Genesis 3:17).
- E. Inevitable sorrow of life (Genesis 3:17).
- F. Brevity of life – certainty of death! (James 1:15; Romans 6:23).
- G. Christ is seen as “The Seed of the Woman” (Galatians 4:4-5; Revelation 12:1-5).

### **THE NOAHIC COVENANT** **“God in the Rainbow”**

- I. WHERE IS IT FOUND?  
Genesis 9:1-17, 29.
- II. WHEN WAS IT GIVEN?  
After the flood. After man's dismal failure under the dispensation of conscience or moral responsibility. It ushered in the dispensation of Human Government.
- III. ITS MAJOR PURPOSE  
It instituted the principle of human government to curb sin and it re-affirms the conditions of life under the Adamic Covenant.
- IV. WITH WHOM?  
It was an agreement by God with the whole human race (mankind) (Genesis 9:9).
- V. ITS MAJOR PROVISIONS
  - A. Capital punishment is instituted. The highest function of government is to protect the sanctity of human life! Man is given the responsibility to govern and to protect that sanctity by orderly rule, even to the taking of a life for a life (Genesis 9:5-6).
    - 1. Heretofore, man was not allowed to take another man's life (Genesis 4:10-15, 23).
    - 2. Here, God, for the first time, delegates some of His authority to man.
    - 3. Man now had two restraints: conscience and government.
    - 4. Man now was obliged to obey his fellowman.
  - B. No further curse on the ground (Genesis 8:21).
  - C. The earth is never again to be subjected to a universal flood (Genesis 9:10-16).
  - D. Nature's order is confirmed (Genesis 8:22-9:2).
  - E. Animal flesh is to be eaten but not the blood (Genesis 9:3-4). Man had been vegetarian.
  - F. Various prophetic declarations are made.
    - 1. It is declared that one of Ham's sons, Canaan, and his descendants will be servants to their brethren (Genesis 9:25-26).
    - 2. It is declared that Shem was to have a peculiar relationship to the Lord (Genesis 9:26-27). All divine revelation has come to us through the descendants of Shem who is also the ancestor of our Lord Jesus Christ.
    - 3. It is declared that the larger races will descend from Japheth (Genesis 9:27). Almost all development of government, science, and art have been Japhetic. Thus, history records the exact fulfillment of these declarations.

VI. ITS CHARACTERISTICS

- A. Some aspects are temporal and will terminate with the return of Christ to rule personally on earth. (Note Revelation 19:11-16.) Responsibility to the government will prevail until then.
- B. The promises made are unconditional and are in effect today.

VII. ITS GUARANTEE

The Rainbow! (Genesis 9:12-17)

VIII. MAN'S FAILURE

Not ruling righteously. Babel – Genesis 11:9. Languages were now confused. Nations were begun.

IX. HOW CHRIST IS SEEN

The greatest son of Shem (Colossians 2:9; Note Colossians 2:3; John 1:17). Christ descended from Shem (Genesis 9:26-27).

**THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT**  
**“Abraham and the Promised Land”**

I. WHEN GIVEN

After man's failure at Babel. At the end of the dispensation of human government. It ushered in the dispensation of Promise.

II. WHERE FOUND

Genesis 12:1-3, 6, 7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-14; 22:15-18.

III. ITS PURPOSE

It founded the nation of Israel and confirmed the promise of redemption to Adam with additional revelation. It revealed God's sovereign purpose to fulfill through Abraham, His plans for Israel, and His promise to provide, through Christ, a Savior for all men.

IV. WITH WHOM

Abraham primarily, but its sweep involved the Israelite nation, the Gentiles and the Church. It was confirmed to both Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 17:19; 28:12-13).

V. KEY AREAS

- A. **Land** (Genesis 13:15-17; 15:7; 21:18) – The boundaries are given, eternally assured, fully developed in the Palestinian Covenant.
- B. **Seed** (Genesis 13:15; 15:5) – His natural physical descendants. Christ, the spiritual seed (Galatians 3:16). Every believer (Romans 4:13-16; Galatians 3:6-9). Fulfilled in the Davidic Covenant.
- C. **Blessing** – Fulfilled in many ways, to be fully realized under the New Covenant.

VI. ITS CHARACTER

Eternal and Unconditional (Genesis 12:2; 17:7-8)

- A. All the Major Covenants are eternal and unconditional.
- B. Not limited to the circumcision. (Compare Genesis 17:9-10 with Romans 4:9-12.)
- C. The promise was given before the rite was instituted.
- D. The New Testament says it was immutable (Hebrews 6:13-18).
- E. A literal interpretation of both Old Testament and New Testament revelation concerning Israel, requires an unconditional character.
- F. It has already been partially fulfilled “literally,” so, it is logical to assume the balance will be.

#### VII. OPPONENTS OF THIS VIEW SAY:

- A. It has already been fulfilled historically. *False.*
- B. Conditions may be implied without stating them. *This is building your case on silence.*
- C. Circumcision is a requirement for fulfillment. *False.*
- D. Obedience is always a condition of blessing. *False.*
- E. It was fulfilled in Christ. *Not fully – not the land promises.*

#### VIII. ITS PROVISIONS

- A. It guarantees the establishment and security of a great nation (Genesis 12:2).
  - 1. Primarily fulfilled in Israel to whom the land is eternally promised (Genesis 17:8).
  - 2. It assures Israel's permanent existence.
  - 3. It gives to them perpetual title to the land (note what is happening today).
  - 4. Abraham was to be the father of many nations (Genesis 17:4). Primarily fulfilled in Ishmael and Esau, in addition to Isaac.
- B. God gives several personal promises to Abraham (Genesis 12:2-3).
  - 1. The Father of many descendants (Genesis 17:16).
  - 2. To receive personal blessing, "I will bless you."
    - a) Through Israel.
    - b) Through Abraham's example (Romans 4:19-25).
    - c) Through Christ (Galatians 3:16).
- C. God makes certain promises to the Gentiles (Genesis 12:3).
  - 1. I will bless them that bless you.
  - 2. I will curse them that curse you. This has been evident through history and will yet be more evident. (Note: Joel 3:1-8; Zechariah 14:1-3; Matthew 25:33-46.)
  - 3. In you shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Here is the great Gospel promise that was fulfilled in and through Christ. So we see that this covenant has a great bearing on the doctrine of salvation (Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6-9, 14, 16, 29; 4:22-31).

#### IX. ITS PROPHETIC IMPLICATION

If literal and eternal:

- A. Israel must yet be preserved, converted, and restored – for her national existence and future is assured.
- B. Israel is guaranteed a title deed to the Land of Palestine.
  - ◆ *More fully developed in the Palestinian Covenant.*
- C. Then, these promises are not fulfilled in or by the church.
  - 1. Israel is addressed as a nation AFTER the establishment of the church.
  - 2. The term "JEW" continues, distinct from the church.
  - 3. The natural "SEED" will yet possess the land.
  - 4. Natural Israel and the Church are contrasted in the New Testament (Romans 11:1-25; 1 Corinthians 10:32). The Church, then, does not supplant Israel in God's Covenant program.
  - 5. The Church is the recipient of the blessings because of being "in Christ" the SEED (Galatians 3:16; 6-9).
    - ◆ *Praise God for Abraham's example of faith!*
    - ◆ *Praise God for the Promise of Righteousness! (Romans 3:22; 4:11)*

## **“Thunder From Sinai”**

### I. WHERE FOUND

Exodus 19:5-31:18. Note 19:16 and 20:18.

### II. WHEN GIVEN

- A. After failure under the dispensation of promise (Israel in Egypt).
- B. After deliverance from Egypt through the Red Sea.
- C. At the beginning of the dispensation of law.

### III. WITH WHOM

The Nation of Israel (Exodus 19:6).

### IV. ITS NATURE?

- A. Conditional (Exodus 19:5), “If ye will.”
- B. Compare the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:2-3), where God says, “I will.”
- C. Under this covenant the requirement precedes the promise. Under the Abrahamic the promise precedes the requirement.

### V. ITS SIGN?

The Sabbath (Exodus 31:12-17). It was a constant reminder of God’s promise, of their responsibility and of the rest from their burdens He had secured for them.

### VI. ITS SCOPE

It involved three sections:

- A. The COMMANDMENTS (Exodus 20:1-26). These expressed the RIGHTEOUS will of God.
- B. The JUDGMENTS (Exodus 21:1-24:11). These governed the SOCIAL life of Israel.
- C. The ORDINANCES (Exodus 24:12-31:18). These governed the RELIGIOUS life of Israel.
- D. These three sections form what is generally referred to as THE LAW (Matthew 5:17 -18).

### VII. ITS ONE SUPREME CONDITION

Obedience (Exodus 19:5).

### VIII. ISRAEL’S FAILURE AND GOD’S JUDGMENT

- A. 2 Kings 17:7.
- B. Deuteronomy 28:63. (Note also, 2 Chronicles 36:15-16 and Acts 7:41-42.)

### IX. DID THIS FAILURE RESCIND, ABROGATE, OR NULLIFY THE PROMISES MADE TO ABRAHAM?

Not at all (Galatians 3:17-18).

### X. ITS DURATION?

Until Christ!

- A. Matthew 5:17 – “To fulfill the law.”
- B. Galatians 3:24 – “Unto Christ.”
- C. Romans 10:4 – “Christ is the End.”
- D. Galatians 3:19 – “Added...until the seed should come.”

## XI. ITS PURPOSE?

It had both a POSITIVE and a NEGATIVE purpose.

### POSITIVE

- A. It was disciplinary and corrective.
  - 1. For their good (Deuteronomy 6:24).
  - 2. A schoolmaster until Christ (Galatians 3:24).
- B. It was given as a rule for living to a people already under the promise to Abraham and already covered by blood sacrifice. Note the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:13).
- C. It was given to reveal the holiness that should characterize a chosen people (Exodus 19:5-6).
- D. Through the ORDINANCES, Israel was provided with a representative with God in the High Priest and a cover (atonement) for their sins in the sacrifices (Leviticus 16:6 and 17:11).
- E. The sacrifices, the Tabernacle and the High Priest all anticipated Christ and the Cross (Hebrews 9:6-14).

### NEGATIVE

- A. It was added because of sin (Galatians 3:19; Romans 7:7; Romans 3:20).
- B. To silence every mouth (Romans 3:19).
- C. It had a ministry of condemnation (2 Corinthians 3:7-9).
- D. It wasn't given as a means of justification (Galatians 2:16, 21).

## XII. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE MOSAIC COVENANT

- A. Definitely NOT under LAW
  - 1. "But under grace" (Romans 6:14).
  - 2. Apart from the law (Romans 3:21-22).
  - 3. "Christ is the END of the law (Romans 10:4).
  - 4. Not my righteousness – of the law (Philippians 3:9).
  - 5. The NEW covenant of grace (Hebrews 10:11-17).

### B. Law and Grace:

#### Under Law

Sheep dies for the shepherd  
All die  
God says, "You shall not"  
All are condemned  
Is conditional  
Righteousness is required  
Is temporal

#### Under Grace

Shepherd dies for the sheep  
All made alive  
God says, "I will"  
Believers not condemned  
Is unconditional  
Righteousness is imputed  
Is everlasting

- C. The Jews failed to understand the purpose of the law and set about to establish their own righteousness by their works (Compare 1 Timothy 1:8-9 and Romans 9:31-10:4). Many are making this same mistake today.

**GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE**  
**EXAM – LESSON 33**

Questions to be answered by every student enrolled in the Rogma International Free Bible Study Course

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

1. In the Bible, a covenant is: (Value 4 points)
  - a. God's plan for the ages.
  - b. a law God makes for man.
  - c. an agreement between God and man.
  
2. The covenants can be divided into these two categories: (Value 4 points)
  - a. those given by God, and those made by man.
  - b. those that are temporary, and those that are eternal.
  - c. those that show God's plan for the ages, and those that show His plan for one generation.
  
3. It is important to study the covenants, in order to: (Value 4 points)
  - a. understand the word "testament."
  - b. be a more spiritual Christian.
  - c. gain an accurate understanding of the Bible.
  
4. Which of the following were the covenants God made? (Value 32 points)

|              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| a. Edenic    | g. Israelitic   |
| b. Adamic    | h. Aaronic      |
| c. Noahic    | i. Palestinian  |
| d. Judaic    | j. Davidic      |
| e. Abrahamic | k. New Covenant |
| a. Mosaic    |                 |
  
5. Man was to "fill" or replenish the earth according to Genesis 1:28. This was a major element of the: (Value 5 points)
  - a. Aaronic Covenant.
  - b. Edenic Covenant.
  - c. Adamic Covenant.
  
6. **Match** the following contrasts between Adam and Christ. (Open Bible)  
Place the letter in front of the reference on the line that describes Christ's contrast with Adam. (Value 12 points)

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| ___ Adam was disobedient – Christ was obedient                 | a. 1 John 1:3-7      |
| ___ Adam obeyed Satan – Christ won over Satan                  | b. Philippians 2:8-9 |
| ___ Adam lost fellowship with God – Christ restored fellowship | c. Matthew 4:10-11   |
  
7. The covenant described in Genesis 3:14-19 is the: (Value 5 points)
  - a. Edenic Covenant.
  - b. Judaic Covenant.
  - c. Adamic Covenant.

8. The first promise of a Redeemer was given under the: (Value 4 points)
  - a. Edenic Covenant.
  - b. Judaic Covenant.
  - c. Adamic Covenant.
  
9. The covenant that ushered in the dispensation of Human Government was the: (Value 5 points)
  - a. Judaic Covenant.
  - b. Adamic Covenant.
  - c. Noahic Covenant.
  
10. What does God say about capital punishment in the Noahic Covenant? (Value 4 points)
  - a. It is not allowed.
  - b. It is allowed for murder only.
  - c. It is instituted.
  
11. The guarantee of the Noahic Covenant is: (Value 4 points)
  - a. the rainbow.
  - b. God's promise of a Redeemer.
  - c. God's future plan of salvation.
  
12. The covenant God made to Abraham was: (Value 4 points)
  - a. conditional.
  - b. unconditional.
  - c. both conditional and unconditional.
  
13. The Mosaic Covenant made was made with: (Value 5 points)
  - a. Moses.
  - b. the nation of Israel.
  - c. the tribe of Judah through whom the Redeemer would be born.
  
14. The sign of the Mosaic Covenant was: (Value 4 points)
  - a. the rainbow.
  - b. the Sabbath.
  - c. the circumcision.
  
15. The Jews failed to understand the purpose of the law and therefore set about to: (Value 4 points)
  - a. build the temple.
  - b. make their own gods.
  - c. establish their righteousness by their works.

### DECISION TIME

I would like to ask you a question now that you have studied this lesson: **Where do you stand?** If you are still not "in" Christ, you are not His child. I would encourage you to become a child of God by accepting Christ as your personal Savior. You may pray something like this:

*"Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner who cannot earn salvation through good works.  
I believe Jesus Christ is God who died for my sin and rose again from the dead to give me eternal life.  
I confess my sins and turn away from them. Today I accept You as my Savior."*

(You may also use your own words, for there is nothing magic in the suggested wording.)

I \_\_\_\_\_ have accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior  
on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_\_.