

# 05 TBC

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## Introduction

### ▼ The "Better Covenant"

Let's establish an important point right from the start of our journey. We are providing a Study Guide for "The Better Covenant", the book that I wrote almost 10 years ago. So the topic of our studies here is the "New" or "Better" Covenant. When we speak of "New" or "Better" we are using the language of contrast. In the prophecies of Jeremiah and in the New Testament Epistle to the Hebrews, the point is to show the contrast between the Old and the New Covenants.

Some regard the New Covenant as a broadening or deepening on the Old Covenant. Some say that there is no difference in 'essence' between these covenants but only a difference in the 'externals' of ceremony. This cannot be true and "The Better Covenant" was written to underline that point. The New Covenant is different to and better than the Old Covenant. That is the basic theme of "The Better Covenant" and the theme of this Study Guide.

We have been tracing some basic ideas that are associated with the word 'Covenant'. There are more to follow, but let's catch our breath and take the time to see that although the New Covenant uses the language of many ancient covenants, it is different to and better than them all. Let's underline this truth.

But, in particular, it was distinctly New as Compared with the Old Covenant, and Better.

We need to identify which of the many covenants the Bible is referring to as the Old Covenant. Some bundle them all together in their minds, but the adjectives New and Better are pointing back in particular to the Old Sinai Covenant, often known as the Mosaic Covenant on account of its Mediator, Moses.

## Setting the scene - context, context, context

### ▼ Checking the calendar

Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. And this I say, that **the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later**, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. (Galatians 3:15–18 NKJV)

▼ There is a devotional series on the 'steps of Abraham' in our blogposts that covers these steps in detail. It will provide extra background to these events.

<https://biblebase.com/category/abraham/>

#### ▼ Abram's 'Jehovah' Covenants

Abram's "Amorite" covenant with the Amorite brothers was ended and Abram raised his hand in oath that his hope and loyalty was in Jehovah alone. This is Abram's response to the revelation of Melchizedek, but, at this stage, it is not a Covenant. But there follow two Covenants that link Jehovah and Abram.

Covenants with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

Abraham 70 years old when he left Ur (a00r9x)

Abraham 73 years old when he left Haran (approx)

### Abraham - 1st Covenant **Gen 15 - c1913 BC** (about 10 years after Abram left Haran)

#### ▼ Abram 83 years old (approx)

And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch that passed between these pieces. **In that day** Jehovah **made a covenant** with Abram, saying, **Unto thy seed have I given this land**, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenite, and the Kenizzite, and the Kadmonite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Rephaim, and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Girgashite, and the Jebusite. (Genesis 15:17–21 ASV)

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "**And to your Seed**," who is Christ. (Galatians 3:16 NKJV)

What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, **till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made**; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.  
(Galatians 3:19 NKJV)

Although Abram is the agent in this Covenant, according to Paul in Galatians, this covenant/promise was between Jehovah and Abram's Seed - Christ. This covenant was to give the land to the Seed that would come.  
the first reference to a covenant with Abram

▼ What day was that? a "Day in the Life of Abraham..."

- The Day of Jehovah's Promise to Abram to be his Shield and Exceeding Great Reward
- The Day the Abram was justified by faith
- The Day of a Mystical Event that Abram witnessed while in a 'trance'
- The Day that Jehovah '**cut a covenant**' with Abram

We will come back to this Covenant in due course.

## The Disaster of **Gen 16 - c1910 BC** (about 3 years after the 1st Covenant)

▼ Abram 86 years old

**Abram was eighty-six years old** when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.  
**When Abram was ninety-nine years old**, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.  
(Genesis 16:16–17:1 NKJV)

13 silent years

## Abraham 2nd Covenant **Gen 17 - c1898 BC** (about 15 years after the 1st Covenant)

▼ Abraham 99 years old

It was approx 30 years AFTER Abram's obedient journey from Ur that 'The Abrahamic Covenant' was 'cut'. It's sign was circumcision. Abraham's

'steps of faith' took 30 years before this Covenant was established.

and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised. (Romans 4:12 NKJV)

Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. (Hebrews 11:12–13 NKJV)

And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. (Exodus 2:24 ASV)

#### ▼ digging deeper

In the narrative the relationship with Isaac is called an Oath, but frequently the unbroken linkage from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob/Israel seems to be emphasised this referring to the covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob

Sometimes fact that there is no reference to a 'covenant with Isaac' in the narrative seems to be recorded precisely.

He is Jehovah our God: His judgments are in all the earth.

He hath remembered his covenant for ever, The word which he commanded to a thousand generations,

The covenant which he made with Abraham, And **his oath unto Isaac**,  
And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute, To Israel for an everlasting covenant,

Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, The lot of your

inheritance;  
(Psalm 105:7–11 ASV) cf 1Chr 16:14-18

## Wait for it...

But this is **not** the Old Covenant...

### ▼ Personal Promises/Covenants

And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.  
(Exodus 3:15 ASV)

### ▼ Transitions

1. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob/Israel - individuals
2. the 'children of Israel' - a family - patriarchal
3. 'children of Israel' **and their households** travel to Egypt - clans
4. the community of Israel in Egypt, **with their own elders** - an organised people group
5. a nation within a nation
6. God's Nation - the consequence of the Sinai Covenant