



Unit 4: Disciple of Christ

Live life as a disciple of Christ and intentionally make disciples for the glory of God.

Lesson 4 First Covenants

Day One *Covenant of Love*

Lesson 3, *Identity in Christ*, focused on the new self. We are given refined characteristics and personalities through the blood of Christ. When we come to the Father through Christ the Son, we are transformed in a way that we resemble our forever and holy family.

1. Read Ephesians 4:23–24. In Christ, you are made new in the attitude of your mind and have put on the new self, created to be like God in _____ righteousness and _____.

... to be made new in the attitude of your minds;²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:23–24

Being a new creature in Christ does not mean we will never sin again. We still have free will and can choose to disobey God. When we fall short, we confess our sins, agreeing with God about our wrongdoing, and receive His forgiveness (1 John 1:9–10).

God knows we need help and wants us to seek Him in the good times and the bad. He is the source of our well-being—not earthly families, friends, or possessions. He may give us various blessings of relationships and riches, but they are never to be substitutes for God Himself or our own self-worth.

A teenager from Nashville, Tennessee, was blessed to discover this truth at an early age. You may not relate to the seemingly charmed life Katie Davis lived early-on, but hopefully you will relate to the life she chose to live for Christ. In reading a little of Katie’s story, perhaps you will see that no matter where you start in life, at some point you must decide to identify with Christ and serve Him fully.

Katie was a popular senior in high school. She was president of her class and homecoming queen. She had a loving family, boyfriend, and many friends. Also during that year, December 2006, she took a three-week mission trip to Uganda to help at an orphanage.

During that time Katie lost part of her heart to a place she had never been before. She writes, “I fell in love with Uganda as soon as I arrived. After I woke up the first morning of our stay, I

looked around and saw glistening bright white smiles against ebony faces; I heard happy voices, lilting language, and gentle laughter. I saw strength and depth of character in people's eyes. I found Uganda to be a beautiful land filled with beautiful people."¹

After Katie finished high school, she returned to Uganda to teach at the orphanage. She left loving relationships, further education, pretty clothes, good food, and all manner of conveniences. This was a young woman who was not focused on self-identity but Christ-identity.

Katie writes in her memoir, *Kisses from Katie*, "I can't really explain in words the love I felt for these children or why I felt it. I think many people would have looked at them and seen only their filthy clothes, the ringworm on their heads, or the mucus that ended up in a crust around their nostrils. They would have looked around at the dormitories of the orphanage with its smooth, hard cement floor where rats and cockroaches make themselves at home and been a bit disgusted. By the grace of God, though, I didn't see these things."²

"The truth is, I saw myself in those little faces. I looked at them and felt this love that was unimaginable and knew that this is the way God sees me. The children would run to me with gifts of stones or dirt and I saw myself, filthy and broken, offering my life to the God of the universe and begging him to make it into something beautiful. I sit here in a broken world, small and dirty at His feet, and He who sits so high chooses to commune with me, to love me anyway. He blinds Himself to my sin and my filth so that He can forge a relationship with me. And this is what He did for me with these precious children. He blinded me to the filth and disease, and I saw only children hungry for love that I was eager to share with them. I adored them, not because of who I was, but because of who He is. I just sat right down on that cold, hard floor and snuggled my nose into their dirty necks and kissed their fungus-covered heads and didn't even see it. I was *in love*."³

Each day Katie began to see more and more needs of the children, not only in the orphanage, but in the village as well. This was an extremely poor area where people needed food and medical attention. She reached out to each person, young and old alike with food, medical help and, of course, love.

Katie had adopted 13 children by the time she was 22 years old! She started sponsorship programs to feed and teach hundreds of children. She brought the sick and needy into her home and taught everyone she met about the love of Jesus. Her identity is in the One who died for her. Therefore she lives her life loving God and loving her neighbor in Uganda.

"I do not claim to be 'doing it right.' I do claim to believe that the words of Jesus are absolutely true and apply to me, right now today. I want to give *everything*, no matter the *cost*. *No matter the cost*. Because I believe that nothing is a sacrifice in light of eternity with Christ."⁴

¹ Katie Davis, *Kisses from Katie* (New York: Howard Books, 2011), 3.

² Ibid., 6–7.

³ Ibid., 7.

⁴ Ibid., 232.

In 2015 Katie married Benji Majors, a man from her hometown in Nashville. She met him for the first time when he was on a mission trip to Uganda. As of 2022, Katie and Benji have 15 children—13 adopted children and two biological children. They continue to provide schooling and food for Ugandan children through their ministry, *Amazima*.

2. How does Katie’s story encourage you in your identity in Christ?

Our value is in Christ. *Our* identity is in Christ. God desires for us to identify and become one with Him—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He loves us and wants us to live joyful and holy lives.

God designed the covenant system as a way to help us live joyful and holy lives. It is a pledge of love—a sacred oath. Although believers now live under the New Covenant, it remains important to understand the earlier covenants. God’s Word is built around His conditional and unconditional promises. For some, this may serve as a simple review; for others, it may be the first time learning about God’s foundational covenantal design and its impact on all creation.

Definition: A *covenant* or testament is a solemn agreement, promise, pledge, or treaty made between two parties to bind them together. The two groups can be equal or unequal in power, strength, or authority.

God designed covenants to communicate His spiritual and divine intentions in a way that people could understand. He first used the form of a covenant with Adam and Eve to lovingly bind them to Himself. Without sin in the world, Adam and Eve had clarity of thought, clearly understood what God expected of them and had the free will and ability to obey.

God created them and desired a lasting relationship grounded in holiness and affection. We will take a closer look at this covenant, known as the Edenic Covenant, on page 4. Biblical scholars differ on whether God’s dealings with Adam and Eve formally constituted a covenant since the word *covenant* does not appear in Scripture until the time of Noah. However, in Hosea 6:7, God says, “*As at Adam, they have broken the covenant; they were unfaithful to me there.*”

We take the position that God did, in fact, establish a covenantal relationship with Adam and Eve, even though the term was not yet used. After the flood, as Noah and his family repopulated the earth, humanity began using covenants to establish social, political, and economic order.

The covenant concept was used as a basis for a wide range of interpersonal and social relationships. “Between one nation and another, a covenant was a treaty (Genesis 14:13, 31:44–55). Among individuals, a covenant expressed a pledge of friendship (1 Samuel 18:3, 20:8, 23:18) or served as a business contract. When a ruler and his subjects were the parties to a covenant, such a covenant served as a national constitution and spelled out the responsibilities of the ruler and the rules (2 Samuel 3:21, 5:3, 1 Chronicles 11:3).”⁵

⁵ Lawrence O. Richards, *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 194.

God modified and worked the various kinds of covenants together for His purposes. We will look at seven major ones that God used with His people. Some covenants are conditional upon people and some are unconditional. Conditional covenants are limited. Whether or not they are fulfilled may depend on human actions. Unconditional covenants are basically God's divine promises—they have no bearing on what we do or do not do.

Again, as a way of clarification—a covenant or testament is an agreement, promise, pledge, or treaty made between two parties to bind them together. The two groups can be equal or unequal in power, strength, or authority. In the case of God's covenants with us, we are clearly the inferior party. It is astonishing that God would bother to make covenants with us at all. It can only be explained in His divine nature and abounding love for us.

In the beginning, *if* Adam and Eve had lived according to their covenant agreement, we would have social, political, and economic order. *If* people today lived according to the New Covenant, we would have social, political, and economic order. However, from the time of Adam and Eve, humans have failed in our part of the agreement. Nevertheless, God in His *unfailing* love has always given us a way to succeed and enjoy a personal relationship with Him.

God's covenants are not secret—they are clearly described and have been meticulously (carefully) preserved in the Bible. God wants us to know, understand, follow, and remind Him of the terms. Not that God needs to be reminded, He knows and remembers everything. However, God desires us to remind Him for our benefit. He wants us to know why and how He is working in our lives. It is a way for us to succeed in life and receive His promised blessings. We need to know that our blessings and the good in our lives are a direct result of our covenant God.

3. What is a covenant and why did God use and record them in His Word?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to # 2–3 with your discipleship team.

Although we studied about Adam and Eve in *Unit One: Who Is God?, Lesson 1*, it is important for consistency and organizational integrity to review it now. This will aid in our overview of God's covenants and how they work together for humanity. Plus, it is always helpful to review any part of the Bible.

Seven Major Covenants

First: Edenic (Eden) Covenant

In His grace, God chose to create man and woman in His own image. He created us in love to be like Himself. That truth alone should cause us to bow down in worship, praise, and thanksgiving.

All seven covenants were initiated by God, beginning with the first—often called the Edenic or Creation Covenant—established in the Garden of Eden. It was conditional upon Adam's obedience—not eating fruit from a specific tree. There was no need for a blood sacrifice because there was no sin. The Edenic Covenant is often seen as a state of perfection and innocence before

the Fall, where blood was not yet necessary for atonement. Some scholars assert that the absence of blood in Eden serves as a symbol of purity and the direct communion that existed between God and humanity before sin corrupted that relationship.

In this pre-Fall agreement, God revealed His purpose for humanity. God commanded Adam and Eve to be fruitful, multiply, and have dominion over the earth (Genesis 2:16–17). Being made in God’s image, they were to reflect His character as they lived and ruled. They were to follow God’s instructions and display His likeness. We too are made in God’s likeness—so we are meant to think and act in godly ways.

Though no one has lived in the Garden of Eden since Adam and Eve, the call to live and rule this earth for Him remains. All humanity is made in God’s image and still charged with living for Him, ruling wisely, and walking in obedience.

Read Genesis 2:16–17 and answer questions 4–6:

And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” Genesis 2:16–17

4. What was the one condition or stipulation that God gave Adam for “living” and “ruling” from the Garden of Eden (v. 17a)?

5. What did God say would happen if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (v. 17)?

6. Are Adam and Eve physically alive today? Yes No (Underline One)

After God commanded Adam not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, He caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. While Adam slept, God took one of his ribs and closed up the place with flesh. While Scripture does not directly mention blood in relation to Eve’s creation, some theologians argue that a form of “sacrifice” could be inferred in the process itself. The rib was taken from Adam’s side, and in a sense, Adam “gave of himself” for Eve to be created, and this act could be viewed as a precursor to Christ’s sacrifice for the Church.

By taking one of Adam’s ribs to create Eve, God reminds us that men and women are of the same flesh and made in the same image. God designed us to serve Him together in unity, love, and holy relationship. Our slight differences in personality, gender, and talents should pale in comparison to the greatness of our Creator and His desire for a harmonious and sacred people.

We will finish the Edenic Covenant in Day Two and then move on to the second, or Adamic Covenant.

—End Day One—

Day Two

Promise of a Savior

Read Genesis 3:6–7 and answer questions 7–8:

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Genesis 3:6–7

7. How did Adam and Eve fail to keep the condition God set for them to live forever (v. 6)?

8. What was the outcome of their failure and sin (v. 7)?

Adam and Eve disobeyed God and caused sin to enter into Eden. Their eyes were immediately opened to it. In other words, they knew they had missed the mark of holiness God had set for them. This sin darkened their place in paradise.

Their home was no longer perfect and free from trouble. They were stricken with a guilty conscience and were afraid of God—they tried to hide from Him. When we are riddled with shame, we are not comfortable or assured of being in God's presence. This is a big problem because God's presence is the key to life.

Sin also takes away our confidence in God. We start looking to ourselves and relying on others rather than trusting in Him. This only compounds our error and takes us farther from His presence and relationship. Whether in sin or not, God is the only one who can help us.

Adam and Eve had messed up and neither one of them could fix it. Adam tried blaming Eve, and Eve tried blaming the devil. Nevertheless, God held them both fully responsible for their actions. They had put sin into motion and its effects were immediate.

Their relationship with God had been compromised. They had failed the *one* effortless condition of the Edenic Covenant—do not eat from the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. They now knew evil. They had turned from God. At that point, they did not live and rule Eden for God but instead, with willful intention, followed the devil. Adam and Eve had both failed to trust God.

9. Read Romans 5:12. What was the result of Adam's sin for all people?

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned— Romans 5:12 (The "one man" is Adam. Eve is included, as they were one in marriage and in their sin against God.)

10. Read Romans 5:17–21. How can you or anyone overcome the death caused by Adam’s sin?

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! ¹⁸ Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. ²⁰ The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, ²¹ so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5:17–21

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer #10 with your discipleship team.

Second Covenant: Adamic (Adam) Covenant

In love, God initiated another agreement. This unconditional covenant is the central theme of the Bible and brings us the awesome promise of a Savior. Even though man had failed, God would restore. Even though Adam and Eve sinned, God Himself would save them from the physical and spiritual death caused by their sin.

Read Genesis 3:14–15 answer questions 11–15:

So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” Genesis 3:14–15

When God tells Satan (serpent) that he will eat dust and crawl on his belly (v. 14), He is using figurative language meaning humiliation, rejection, and defeat. (See Psalm 44:25; Isaiah 25:11–12; Micah 7:17) Figurative means to represent one thing in terms of another.

Definitions: *Enmity* is a noun that means hostility and hatred between enemies. *Offspring* is a noun that refers to a person’s child or children

11. Who made the judgment, decided the punishment, and rules all, including Satan?

12. What did God put between Eve and her offspring, and Satan and his offspring (v. 15)?

13. Who will Satan strike and try to destroy (v. 15; Matthew 4:3–10; Luke 22:3–4)?

14. Who crushed Satan’s head and destroyed the power of death (v. 15; Hebrews 2:14–15)?

Genesis 3:15 is foretelling victory over the devil. Jesus is the offspring, the seed of God that was planted in the Virgin Mary's womb approximately 4,000 years later. The Lord Jesus paid the price for this first sin and all others by His death and resurrection. No matter how much time passes, God always fulfills His Word. Satan is defeated, but we are awaiting the final consummation (perfect ending) when creation is restored to God and the devil will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10, 21:1–4).

This is a crucial part of understanding our covenant God. He can be trusted and relied upon. What He says, He will do. Our heavenly Father wants us to take hold of this truth so we can remind Him of His faithfulness and goodness. God wants us to connect the dots between His character and His actions. He loves us and wants us to know Him. To know and serve God is to live a successful, victorious, and abundant life in Christ Jesus!

Make no mistake—the old serpent, Satan, hates us. He desperately wants to destroy us and all of humanity. Though we cannot see him, he is a real enemy, seeking to bring us down. He entices with pleasure and false promises but in the end, he turns on his victims, leading them to destruction.

Do not listen to the devil. Our sins, bad habits, and addictions are not worth being in his eternal camp of damnation. Even if our salvation is not in jeopardy, think about the time spent in our bad habit that could be used for building God's kingdom and snatching souls from the fiery flames.

Perhaps you are thinking: *Yes, I want to break my bad habits and I want to serve Jesus fully but I keep failing! I still do those things that I don't want to do. I feel like I don't have the power to stop.* Be encouraged. The covenants, specifically the New Covenant, covered in Lesson 6, will show you how to gain the victory you desire.

However, if you do not want to change and do not care that you are sinning, then you are hardening your heart. If you do not repent and change, God may harden your heart to the point where you cannot turn back. Pharaoh, during the time of Moses, provides an example of this (Exodus 8:15, 32; 9:12).

We pray that you *are* serious about Christ and excelling in holiness, love, and power. We pray for you to have a soft and pliable heart that God delights to work in and develop even more. We also pray that you are not an ordinary or lukewarm Christian in danger of Jesus spitting out of His mouth (Revelation 3:16).

There are consequences for sin, and a clear relationship exists between cause and effect. When we disobey God, something unpleasant or difficult often follows. Eve's sin led to increased pain in childbearing and Adam's rule over her. Adam's sin resulted in painful, difficult work. Both were banished from the Garden of Eden and barred from eating from the Tree of Life. They had free will to choose sin, but not their consequences. The same is true for us—we are free to disobey God, but we do not get to choose the consequences of our sinful choices.

15. Today, who are God's offspring and who are the devil's offspring (John 1:11–13; Galatians 3:26–29; John 8:44; Acts 13:10; 1 John 3:8)?

Godly offspring are believers and followers of Christ. The devil's offspring not only include the antichrist yet to be revealed, but liars and those who do his bidding. Jesus told the Pharisees: *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire* (John 8:44a).

16. Read Genesis 3:21. What do you think happened to the animal(s) that God used to make garments of skin for Adam and Eve?

The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. Genesis 3:21

God had an animal sacrificed in making His blood covenant with Adam and Eve and used the skins to cover their nakedness and their sin. Perhaps God told Adam to kill the animal and taught him the art of sacrifice. However, the Bible is not specific on this point so we really do not know. However, the first covenant in Eden *required* no blood because there was no sin, only the perfection of God's creation and relationship. Sin brings death; life is returned through the blood.

17. Read Leviticus 17:11. How did God make an *eternal* atonement for one's life and fulfill His promise and covenant of Genesis 3:15? (See Hebrews 9:12, 15)

Definition: *Atonement* is defined as compensation for a wrong or injury. The Hebrew word translated *atonement* in the Bible is *kaphar* (כַּפַּר). It means to cover over, pacify, propitiate (appease), the wrath of a king (e.g. by a gift). It also means to cover over and make amends or restitution for sin.

For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life. Leviticus 17:11

18. Memorize Leviticus 17:11.

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #15–17 and memory verse #18 with your discipleship team.

Christ Jesus used His life and His blood to pay for our wrongs and sins against God, our Creator. The cross was the altar He used to perfectly fulfill God's promise of a Savior (Genesis 3:15). Eternal, endless, and everlasting are forever words. Jesus' sacrifice never ends but continually covers the lives and sins of those who trust in Him.

—End Day Two—

Day Three

Divine Promises

Third Covenant: Noahic Covenant

The Noahic Covenant was made with Noah after God had destroyed the earth with flood waters. The people had completely turned away from God. They were so evil and wicked that the Lord rendered judgment on the earth. His judgment (decision) was to destroy all humanity except for a few. He decided to start over with the one “righteous” man named Noah and his family.

Definition: The word translated as *ark* in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word *tebah* (תֵּבָה), meaning a chest or box. This term is used in reference to the vessel built by Noah and the basket that carried baby Moses on the Nile River. A different Hebrew word, *aron* (אֲרוֹן), is used for the *Ark* of the Covenant. While *aron* can mean a coffin or money chest in everyday use, its biblical significance lies in its role as the sacred container for the tablets of the law—a chest where God’s presence dwelled and served as a visible symbol of God’s throne among His people.

“Noah’s ark was salvation from judgement and death, Moses’ basket/ark was deliverance from slavery and death; the Ark of the Covenant and tabernacle of meeting was a place where the people could be saved from the wages of sin, and be put right with God through the elaborate Mosaic covenant. It was a temporary, primary, initial stage of salvation from sin and judgement with working parts and tangible items that each represented something of God’s grand scheme of redemption. Each item and detail pointed to the ultimate Savior, who, funnily enough, arrives on planet earth, presented in a manger—not unlike Moses’ entrance in his “ark”.⁶

Definition: The word we translate *altar* in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word *mizbeah* (מִזְבֵּחַ), which means “a place of sacrifice.” The first mention of an *altar* in the Bible is the one Noah built after leaving the ark (Genesis 8:20). In early times, *altars* were typically constructed from elevated soil or uncut stones.

Definition: *Clean animals* were those God permitted for sacrifice in Noah’s time and later designated as acceptable for eating under the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 11). God instructed Noah to bring seven pairs of each clean animal so they could be used both for sacrifice and to repopulate the earth. Only *clean* land animals that chewed the cud and had a divided hoof—such as cattle, sheep, and goats—and certain birds like doves and pigeons were acceptable for sacrifice. Other *clean animals*, including chickens, ducks, fish with fins and scales (like bluegill and cod), and certain insects (such as grasshoppers and locusts), were allowed for eating but not for sacrifice. God established these distinctions to set apart His people for worship and to teach holiness through everyday practices.

God instructed Noah to build an ark to house his wife, his three sons, and their wives. According to the biblical description, the ark was a large, vessel-like structure—essentially a massive floating box. It was designed to be spacious enough to carry pairs of each kind of animal,

⁶ <<https://www.oneforisrael.org/bible-based-teaching-from-israel/why-is-it-called-an-ark/>>(assessed 11/5/2022)

preserving them from the floodwaters and destruction. Noah was commanded to take seven pairs of every kind of clean animal and one pair of each kind of unclean animal (Genesis 6–7).

God’s judgment on the earth stands as a warning for us today (2 Peter 2:5; 9–10). God will again judge the earth when this world comes to an end. However, the wicked will not go into floodwaters, but into the fires of hell.

After the floodwaters receded, God told Noah and everyone with him to come out of the ark. Noah then built an altar to the Lord and sacrificed a burnt offering with some of the clean animals and birds that had been on the ark. God was pleased with the offering, accepted the blood sacrifice, and revealed His covenant to Noah.

God made an unconditional promise to Noah, his descendants, and every living creature that had been with him on the ark. This covenant assured that God would never again destroy the earth with floodwaters as long as the earth endures (Genesis 8:21–22; 9:8–13). The pledge God made was not dependent on anything Noah or anyone else did. Additionally, God set the rainbow as a visible and meaningful symbol, sign, and seal of this covenant.

19. Read Genesis 9:1. How is the Noahic covenant similar to Edenic covenant (Genesis 1:28–29)?

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.” Genesis 9:1

Read Genesis 9:3–6 answer questions 20–21:

“Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. ⁴But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. ⁵And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each human being, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being. ⁶Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind.” Genesis 9:3–6

20. How is the Noahic covenant different from the Edenic Covenant (Genesis 1:29, 2:16–17)?

21. Why will God demand an accounting from every person or animal who kills a human being?

Fourth Covenant: Abrahamic Covenant (Two Parts: A & B)

Noah’s sons and daughters-in-law were fruitful and once again, people inhabited the earth. Unfortunately the people gradually began moving in their own direction and away from God.

They also began making idols and serving them. Satan is behind idol worship so we know he was busy leading men and women astray (1 Corinthians 10:19–20).

Definition: *Sovereignty* is an adjective that defines someone as having supreme and ultimate power. A *sovereign* refers to a king or supreme ruler. God, as our King and *sovereign*, exercises His supreme power over creation.

God's plan to return humanity to Himself has always been active and effective. In the Garden of Eden, God declared that the woman's offspring would crush the head of the serpent, pointing to a future victory over Satan. In His sovereignty, God chose Abraham to carry forward this promise. Through Abraham's descendants, the Savior would be born, and through them, God's blessing would once again be extended to all humanity (see Genesis 1:28a; 12:3).

Abraham and his wife Sarah's descendants would become the Jewish people. We do not know why God chose Abraham specifically—He could have chosen anyone—but Abraham was the one God sovereignly called. While Abraham responded in faith and obedience, God's purposes were not dependent on him. God's plans are never thwarted and do not hinge on human response.

When God called Abraham to leave his country, He gave him a sevenfold promise. After Abraham obeyed and left his homeland, God confirmed these promises through a blood sacrifice, turning them into a formal covenant. For clarity, we will divide the Abrahamic Covenant into two key parts: A. The Land and B. The Relationship. We will explore each of these individually on Day Four.

22. Read Genesis 12:1–3. God told Abram to leave his country and go to another land. List the sevenfold promise that God desired to fulfill for Abram and his descendants.

The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. ² I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Genesis 12:1–3 (Abraham's name was originally Abram—God changed it to Abraham. See Genesis 17:5.)

Notice that four of the seven divine parts of the promise have to do with the concept of blessing. 1. God will bless Abraham, 2. he will be a blessing, 3. God will bless anyone who blesses Abraham, and 4. all peoples on the earth will be blessed through him. We see that God blesses, makes people a blessing, and also makes a person a conduit (instrument) for blessing others.

Bless, in the context of the Abrahamic Covenant, means that God will bring Abraham into a deep and abiding relationship with Himself. With this relationship comes a rich and abundant life that

God watches over and protects. God, the source of all blessing, will provide peace, success, prosperity, offspring, and a long life.⁷

God used Abraham for the ultimate blessing for humanity. Through Abraham's descendants, the Savior promised in the Garden of Eden was born. The Holy Spirit came upon a Jewish Virgin and the power of the Most High overshadowed her—Jesus Christ was conceived fully man and fully God (Luke 1:34–35). Through Him, all who believe and follow are restored to the relationship with God that was lost in the Garden.

Acton Step

23. Read and meditate on Exodus 6:7; Jeremiah 7:23; Ezekiel 11:19–20; Zechariah 8:8; Luke 22:20; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Hebrews 8:10. What is the heart of God's covenant promise?

God desires to bless us with His presence and transform our hearts—not so we simply follow rules, but so we genuinely want to please Him through loving obedience. He loves us deeply, and His covenants are always for our good. Like a loving Father, He longs to walk with us, shape us, and draw near to us. Scripture shows that through Jesus, God made a way for us to be forgiven, adopted, and filled with His Spirit—so we can truly know Him, not just know about Him. This is the heart of His promise.

Abram responded to that kind of relationship. He genuinely wanted to please God through his obedience. Here was a man God could walk with in fellowship—a man He could make a covenant with and use to bless the nations.

24. Read Genesis 12:4. When God told Abram to leave his country and people and go to the land that God would show him, what did Abram do?

So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. Genesis 12:4

Abraham believed God (Romans 4:3, 18) and in total dependence took his wife, nephew, and servants on an unknown journey. He relied on God and placed his confidence in Him. Abraham received this important covenant by faith and believed the divine promise. Over and over again we will see that in all God's covenants, including the New Covenant, He expects our faith and trust. God expected it from the first man and woman and He expects it from you and me.

Read Galatians 3:6–9 and answer questions 25–30:

So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”⁷ Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham.⁸ Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will

⁷ Lawrence O. Richards, *New Encyclopedia of Bible Words* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1999), 130.

be blessed through you.”⁹ So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. Galatians 3:6–9 (See Galatians 2:20–3:5)

25. Abraham believed God, and how was it credited to him (v. 6)?

26. Those who have faith are _____ of Abraham (v. 7)?

27. How are we, Gentiles (non-Jewish), justified by faith (v. 8, Galatians 2:20–3:1)?

28. Regardless of being Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, male or female, how is a person justified and restored to a relationship with God (See John 3:16, 14:6)?

29. How are all nations blessed through Abraham (v. 9, Galatians 3:16)?

30. If you are a child of Abraham, have faith in Jesus Christ, and are blessed along with Abraham, how will the nations be blessed through *you*?

By faith in Jesus Christ, you and I are children of Abraham and children of the promise. I absolutely love this fact! The Bible contains stories of *our* family ancestors. God’s covenant promises belong to you, me, and anyone else who is faithfully following the Lord Jesus.

Often I will read and meditate on Genesis 12:1–3 and accept this covenant as my own because I am a spiritual offspring of Abraham. I know by sharing Christ with others, God is making me a blessing to the nations. Just think—we have the ability to tell people how to get back into a relationship with God and receive His mighty blessings and favor!

We may not be called to travel to another country, but there are still many ways to share Christ with the nations. We might share the gospel with someone locally who then takes it abroad. And with today’s technology, we have the ability to reach people around the world. We simply need to stay open to the Holy Spirit’s leading and trust God’s promise to make us a blessing to all nations.

Action Step

31. As a child of the promise (Abrahamic Covenant), be a blessing to someone this week and write of your experience.

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer #19–31 with your discipleship team.

—End Day Three—

Day Four

Divine Relationship

We continue our study of the Abrahamic Covenant. As mentioned in Day Three, we are dividing this covenant into two parts: A. *The Land* and B. *The Relationship*. Today, we return to the opening verse, where the Lord first spoke to Abraham about the land He would show him.

A. The Land

The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. Genesis 12:1

Abraham received the Lord’s promise when he was 75 years old. Upon receiving it, he promptly left his country as the Lord had commanded him. It was about ten years later that the covenant ceremony and God’s unconditional commitment to Abraham was recorded in Genesis 15.

In Abraham’s time, when men made covenants, they would slaughter an animal and cut it in half. Hence, the expression to “cut a covenant.” The pieces of the dead animal were separated and placed opposite each other on the ground. The men involved in the covenant would walk through the pieces and agree that if they did not keep their part of the treaty, they should end up like the dead animal. If the covenant was between tribes or nations, a representative chief or leader would walk among the animal parts.

32. Read Genesis 15:9–10. What did Abram do with the animals he brought to God?

So the LORD said to him, “Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰ Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. Genesis 15: 9–10

We are not told explicitly why the birds were not cut in half like the other animals. One practical suggestion is that they were simply too small to divide. Others see symbolic meaning: the birds may represent the future unity of the Jewish people, undivided in identity and purpose. Some theologians propose deeper spiritual symbolism—the dove and pigeon may point to the Holy Spirit, who brings unity and cannot be divided. Others see in the indivisible birds a picture of Christ’s human spirit, which remained whole and undivided even in death.⁸

Read Genesis 15: 17–18 and answer questions 33–35:

When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. ¹⁸On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates—” Genesis 15:17–18

⁸ <<http://biblehub.com/genesis/15-10.htm#>>(accessed 9/22/2015)

33. What passed through the animal pieces (v. 17)?

34. Where did the smoking firepot come from (v. 18a)?

35. What was God promising to give to Abram's descendants (v.18b)?

We know that the land described—from the Wadi of Egypt to the Euphrates—is *the Promised Land*, the region that became the nation of Israel. Abraham had a son named Isaac, who fathered Jacob. God later renamed Jacob "Israel," and his twelve sons became the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel.

God, symbolized by the smoking firepot with a blazing torch, made this unconditional agreement with Abraham and his descendants. Abraham was asleep when God moved through the animal parts. God did not require Abraham to walk through the pieces because God would be the only one upholding this promise of land.

36. Read Deuteronomy 5:32–33. The land was given unconditionally but in order to live, prosper, and have long days in the land, what were the Israelites required to do?

So be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. ³³ Walk in obedience to all that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.
Deuteronomy 5:32–33

B: Relationship with God

About fourteen years later, the Lord appeared to Abraham again to reaffirm the covenant. This time, God gave Abraham a specific sign to mark the covenant—a permanent physical symbol in his own body and in the bodies of his male descendants.

The rite or ceremony of circumcision involved cutting off the foreskin, the fold of skin covering the end of the male organ. This act was to serve as the sign of the blood covenant between God and Abraham's lineage. The shedding of blood from the incision symbolized the seriousness and permanence of the covenant. God instituted this physical sign when He confirmed His covenant with Abraham for the third and final time.

It is important to understand that circumcision was a sign of the covenant—it was not the covenant itself. The covenant was a solemn agreement: Abraham and his descendants were to walk in obedience and submission to God, and in return, God would be their provider, protector, and God.

Yet God has always desired more than outward signs—He desires the hearts of His people. While He gave them a visible symbol, what He truly sought was inward devotion. The prophet Jeremiah later urged the Israelites, “Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, circumcise your hearts” (Jeremiah 4:4). In other words, true covenant relationship with God is not merely physical or ritualistic; it must penetrate to the core of who we are—our minds, our will, and our hearts. His covenant is meant to be written not just on the body, but on the heart.

Read Genesis 17:7–11 and answer questions 37–40:

“I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.”⁸ The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”⁹ Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come.”¹⁰ This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised.¹¹ You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. Genesis 17:7–11

37. What was God’s *amazing* promise about divine relationship (v. 7)?

38. What were Abraham and his descendants required to do (vv. 9–10)?

39. What is circumcision?

40. Are the spiritual children of Abraham and male believers in Christ still required to be circumcised in the flesh (Acts 15:2–35)? Yes No (Underline One)

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answer #36–39 with your discipleship team.

The *circumcision sign* of the Abrahamic covenant is no longer required. The apostle Paul taught against the requirement of circumcision (Romans 4:11; 1 Corinthians 7:18). His teaching and understanding of this subject was confirmed, or ratified, by the Council of Jerusalem in 50 AD (Acts 15:2–35).

Read Genesis 17:21 and answer questions 41–42:

But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you [Abraham] by this time next year.” Genesis 17:21

41. Who were the birth parents of Isaac?

42. With whom did God establish and continue His covenant?

Read Romans 9:8–12 and answer questions 43–45:

In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. ⁹ For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son." ¹⁰ Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. ¹¹ Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: ¹² not by works but by him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger." Romans 9:8–12

43. Isaac and Rebekah had twin boys named Esau and Jacob. Which one of the two did God call to carry forth His covenant with Abraham (v. 12b)?

44. What is the reason stated in Scripture that the younger brother Jacob was elected or chosen by God (vv. 11–12a)?

45. Why or why are you not Abraham's offspring and child of God (Galatians 3:6–9)?

Action Step—Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is knowing and understanding ourselves so that we can pray and cooperate with the Holy Spirit in becoming like Jesus. In order to disciple others, it is important that we continue to grow in all areas of our walk with the Lord. One way to do that is to become aware of areas that need improvement by asking and answering questions about specific spiritual areas.

46. What has God revealed to you through studying these first 4 covenants?

47. How have you grown closer to our covenant God?

48. What will you do differently after thinking deeply about God and these covenants?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers #43–47 with your discipleship team.

—End Day Four—

Day Five

Mosaic Covenant

Fifth Covenant: Mosaic Covenant

(Also known as the Law Covenant, the Sinaitic (Sinai) Covenant, and referred to as the Book of the Covenant in Exodus 24:7.)

Read Exodus 19:1–6 and answer questions 49–51:

On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—on that very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai. ² After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain. ³ Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ⁴ ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, ⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.” Exodus 19:1–6

Definitions: A *priest* is one authorized to perform the sacred rites of a religion, especially as a mediatory agent between humans and God. A *mediator* is a go-between, a person who works with both sides in an attempt for reconciliation or agreement.

49. Three months after leaving Egypt, where did the Lord lead the Israelites (vv. 1–2)?

50. Moses went up on Mount Sinai to hear from God. What did the Lord want the house of Jacob and the people of Israel to know and understand (vv. 4–6)?

Remember, Abraham was the father of Isaac and Isaac was the father of Jacob (renamed Israel) and Jacob was the father of 12 sons who became the 12 tribes of Israel. These are the people of the covenant (treaty, pact, promise). The house of Jacob is the same as the people of Israel who are to participate in the divine promises and blessings originally given to Abraham.

51. How is verse 6 similar to what Christians are called to be under the New Covenant (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:5–6)?

“The priesthood in the *Old* Testament primarily involved sacrificing at the altar and worship in the shrine. Other functions were blessing the people (Numbers 6:22–26), determining the will of God (Exodus 28:30), and instructing the people in the law of God (Deuteronomy 31:9–12).”⁹

⁹ Trent Butler, Editor, *Holman Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers 1991), 1137.

(Shrine is the temple or sanctuary.) In addition, the Israelites were to be witnesses for the one, true, living God (Genesis 12:3; Psalm 22:27–28; Isaiah 42:6–7).

The priesthood of the *New Testament* has been given to believers. It means that Christians can “respond directly to the personal activity of God in their lives, through the Holy Spirit and through the written word of Scripture, and do not require a human priest to mediate authoritative communication with God. Christians have become a holy priesthood and can minister to one another and to the world. No longer does a professional priesthood have an exclusive channel for holy communication. Any believer can be the channel of God’s Spirit and mediate the grace of God in prayer, confession, or witness in particular situations.”¹⁰

52. How are *you* living up to your New Testament calling into the priesthood of believers?

Moses, a descendant of the tribe of Levi (Jacob’s son), was chosen by God to serve as the mediator of the covenant. Moses was given the honor of hearing from God and communicating to the people what God desired and how they could be in a healthy relationship with Him.

At that time in history, various treaty forms were common. The Mosaic Covenant followed a common ancient treaty structure known as the Suzerain-vassal pattern. In this type of covenant, the sovereign—in this case, God—declares what He has done for His people, what He promises to do, and what is required of them in response. It was a conditional covenant, meaning its blessings were dependent on the people’s obedience. This covenant could be thought of as Israel’s national constitution, forming the foundation for how they were to live as God’s chosen people. It defined their responsibilities to God as their King and guided their social, political, and economic life together as a nation.

It is important to understand that the law is a good and holy concept. The Hebrew word *torah* (תּוֹרָה) means instruction, direction, and law. God gave Israelites kind and loving rules and regulations for their wisdom, prosperity, health, and happiness. The Hebrew word translated teaching in Proverbs 3:1 below, is *torah*.

53. Read Proverbs 3:1–4. What advice might you give yourself from reading and meditating on this passage?

My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, ² for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity. ³ Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. ⁴ Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. Proverbs 3:1–4

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers #49–53 with your discipleship team.

¹⁰ Ibid., 1137.

The Lord gave Moses clear and divine instructions for the Israelites, outlining what it meant to obey and follow Him. In addition, God revealed to Moses the history of humanity, beginning with the creation of the world and the story of Adam and Eve. Moses faithfully recorded everything the Lord revealed, and these words are preserved for us in the first five books of the Bible, known as the Pentateuch. These books are also referred to as the Law or the five books of Moses.

Through Moses, the Lord not only renewed the Abrahamic Covenant but also established the Mosaic Law, which included the Ten Commandments, moral and social regulations, and the Levitical priesthood. Moses listened to God and faithfully taught His words to the people. He recorded God's instructions so they could be passed down to future generations. To the glory of God, more than 3,500 years later, we still have these teachings preserved in the first five books of the Bible.

We thank God for preserving His Word for us through His chosen people. God made sure that He always had a remnant to faithfully protect His Word from error, contamination, or corruption. A remnant refers to a smaller group of faithful people who continue to obey and follow God even when the majority of the people do not. It can also mean the faithful who remain after God's divine judgment for covenant violations. From the time of Noah, God has always had a righteous remnant that worshiped Him alone.

54. Are you part of God's righteous remnant? Yes No (Underline One)

55. In question #54, if you answered no, what will you do to make sure that you are part of God's righteous remnant?

Three Main Parts of the Mosaic Covenant

(Ten Commandments, Moral and Social Regulations, and Levitical Priesthood)

(1) The Ten Commandments

56. Read Exodus 20:1–17 and Deuteronomy 5:6–21 in your Bible. Briefly list the ten ways God commanded the Israelites to obey and follow Him.

57. Are we expected to follow the Ten Commandments today? Why or why not?

Moses received instructions—known as the Ten Commandments—directly from God, who wrote them on stone tablets (Deuteronomy 9:10–11). Moses remained with God on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights. During that time, the people became sinfully restless. In an act of disobedience, they created and worshiped a golden calf. This moment marked the beginning of a recurring pattern in Israel's history—turning to idols instead of remaining faithful to God. The people repeatedly broke their part of the covenant by failing to obey and seek the Lord.

(2) Moral and Social Regulations

God gave many wise and compassionate laws through Moses—providing instruction and direction for how His people were to live. For a good summary of these rules, read Exodus 20–23. You can also read Exodus through Deuteronomy for a more complete understanding. For now, we will focus on one specific example of God’s instruction.

Read Exodus 22:21–23 and answer questions 58–59:

“Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt. ²² Do not take advantage of the widow or the fatherless. ²³ If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry.” Exodus 22:21–23

58. Why do you think God reminded the Israelites, “*for you were foreigners in Egypt,*” when instructing them not to mistreat foreigners?

59. Does Jesus teach us to show kindness and mercy to those outside our community, group, or social club? (See Luke 6:27–35) Yes No (Underline One)

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers #54–59 with your discipleship team.

I hope you're beginning to see that God’s laws and commands are not only right—they are good for us and for others. At different times, we or someone we love might be the outsider, the widow, or the orphan. None of us would want to be mistreated, and we certainly wouldn't want our loved ones to be treated unfairly. *Do to others as you would have them do to you* (Luke 6:31).

As Christians, we are under grace. This means that God’s Spirit lives in us—guiding us, convicting us, and stirring our hearts toward righteousness. The truths from Exodus 22:21–23 should be written on our hearts, shaping a desire to help others, no matter how different they may seem.

Note: We will finish the third part of the Mosaic Covenant, the Levitical Priesthood in Lesson 5.

Making Disciples

In Lesson 3, Action Step #56, you prayed for someone to disciple. Now take the next step—invite them to grow in Christ alongside you. If you are already discipling someone, keep pressing forward. **If not, do not wait—talk with your team coach and start building your team today!**

—End of Day Five and Lesson 4—

Next—Lesson 5: Davidic Covenant, Unit 4: Disciple of Christ

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