

GOD ENABLES BELIEVERS
NOT TO LOSE HEART

2 CORINTHIANS 4

INTRODUCTION

- Paul wants his readers to know the immeasurable value of the Gospel.
- He presents the value of the Gospel in three ways.
- First, the content, not the delivery, is what makes the message special.
- Second, even though this world brings pain, the Gospel brings hope and healing.

INTRODUCTION

- Third, Paul shows us that we don't lose heart even though we are wasting away.
- Why?
- Because of the Resurrection of Jesus, believers can be confident in their own resurrection.
- Our value is not in us, but in God.

THE BELIEVER DOES NOT
LOSE HEART BECAUSE
THE GOSPEL IS
BRINGING ABOUT
INCREDIBLE CHANGES IN
A FALLEN WORLD

2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-6

DO NOT LOSE HEART

- Paul considers his task to preach the Gospel a blessing. It is more than enough compensation.
- The blessing outweighing the struggles he has experienced along the way.
- And these struggles are real.
- One such source of discouragement were the false apostles in Corinth.

DO NOT LOSE HEART

- These adversaries had levied accusations against Paul that he deceitfully used the Gospel to advance his own purposes. And the Corinthians church members didn't respond to these false charges.
- The verb translated “to tamper with” is found only here in the New Testament and was used to talk about dilution of wine.
- Paul had in mind the corruption of the word of God by mingling it with alien ideas.

DO NOT LOSE HEART

- The apostle defends himself against this accusation.
- Paul had no need to tamper with the Gospel in efforts to make it more palatable for those who hear it because he was not seeking the admiration of men or their money.
- Paul only preached the Gospel with boldness and openness: no secretiveness, no tampering, and no deception (verse 2).

LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL

- If Paul is preaching the Gospel with openness and boldness, then why do some still fail to believe when he preaches?
- Paul argues that those who do not respond to the Gospel are blinded by the evil powers at work in the world.
- The Gospel is veiled to them.

LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL

- The Gospel of Jesus Christ is Paul's life's motivation; he preaches and works to advance the cause of Christ, not his own interests (verse 5).
- As Paul serves Jesus, he also serves the Church.
- As difficult as it might be at times, Paul serves the Corinthians knowing that in doing so, he is serving the Lord (Matthew 25:40).

LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL

- God's radical work in Paul's life is the reason for the apostle's service. He cannot overstate how his salvation experience transformed his life (as it should be for all believers).
- In verse 6, he compared it to the way God brought light from darkness in Genesis 1:2–4.
- Through this incredible rebirth, the believer knows the glory of Jesus and through it, encounters the life-altering glory of God.

THE BELIEVER DOES NOT
LOSE HEART BECAUSE
HOLY SPIRIT ENABLES
HIM TO CONTINUE

2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-18

JARS OF CLAY

- The apostle could not get over the magnificence of the Gospel.
- Paul uses a metaphor to compare the value of the message of the Gospel and the results it produces with the relative worthlessness of the Gospel's ministers.
- He likens the Gospel to a treasure and the ministers to jars of clay.

JARS OF CLAY

- These jars were earthen and inexpensive. Once they were broken, they were worthless.
- Paul understands his unworthiness compared to the message he preached.
- This is by design so that no one would question the source of the Gospel and its power.
- Salvation is from God, not a work of men.

JARS OF CLAY

Human Limitations	God's Enabling
Afflicted in every way	but not crushed
Perplexed	but not driven to despair
Persecuted	but not forsaken
Struck down	but not destroyed

JARS OF CLAY

- Paul experienced suffering (2 Corinthians 1:8–9) and psychological affliction (2 Corinthians 7:5–6).
- He experienced hardship but was not thwarted; this was solely due to God's intervention.
- Paul's life was a mix of death and life.
- He carried around the death of Jesus, meaning he endured intense suffering for Jesus.

JARS OF CLAY

- However, the life of Jesus was also displayed in Paul as the apostle was clearly spiritually alive.
- This duality reminds the reader of one of the themes of 2 Corinthians: comfort in the middle of affliction.
- And this is Paul's thought in verse 12; the more Paul suffers ("death is at work in us"), the more divine comfort he receives, the more that he can pass on to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 1:4).

LIFE AND DEATH

- What enabled Paul to continue to minister even in the face of death?
- First, in verse 13 he expresses that he believes in the Gospel and so he must share it. Faith cannot remain unvoiced.
- Second, Paul continues to preach through suffering because he is convinced that Christ's Resurrection guarantees the believer's resurrection.

LIFE AND DEATH

- The Corinthians experienced the benefits of Paul's suffering: as Paul ministered to the Corinthians, the Corinthians matured and then ministered to others, and so God receives glory (v. 15).
- Paul does not lose heart, even though he is wasting away (v. 16). However, while he grew physically weaker, he was becoming spiritually stronger, being renewed each day and matured to look more like Christ (v. 16).

LIFE AND DEATH

- Verses 17–18 express an eternal view, a perspective that focuses on the unseen.
- When we focus on what is seen, suffering and struggle and earthly power are in view and cast shadows on all else.
- When what is unseen holds our attention and focus, suffering and trials and hardship lead to God's glory and our joy.

QUESTIONS:

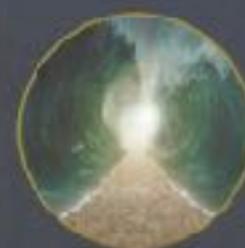
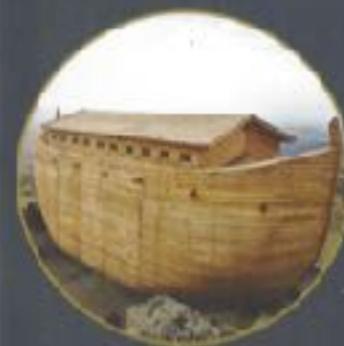
COVENANTS

DISPENSATIONS

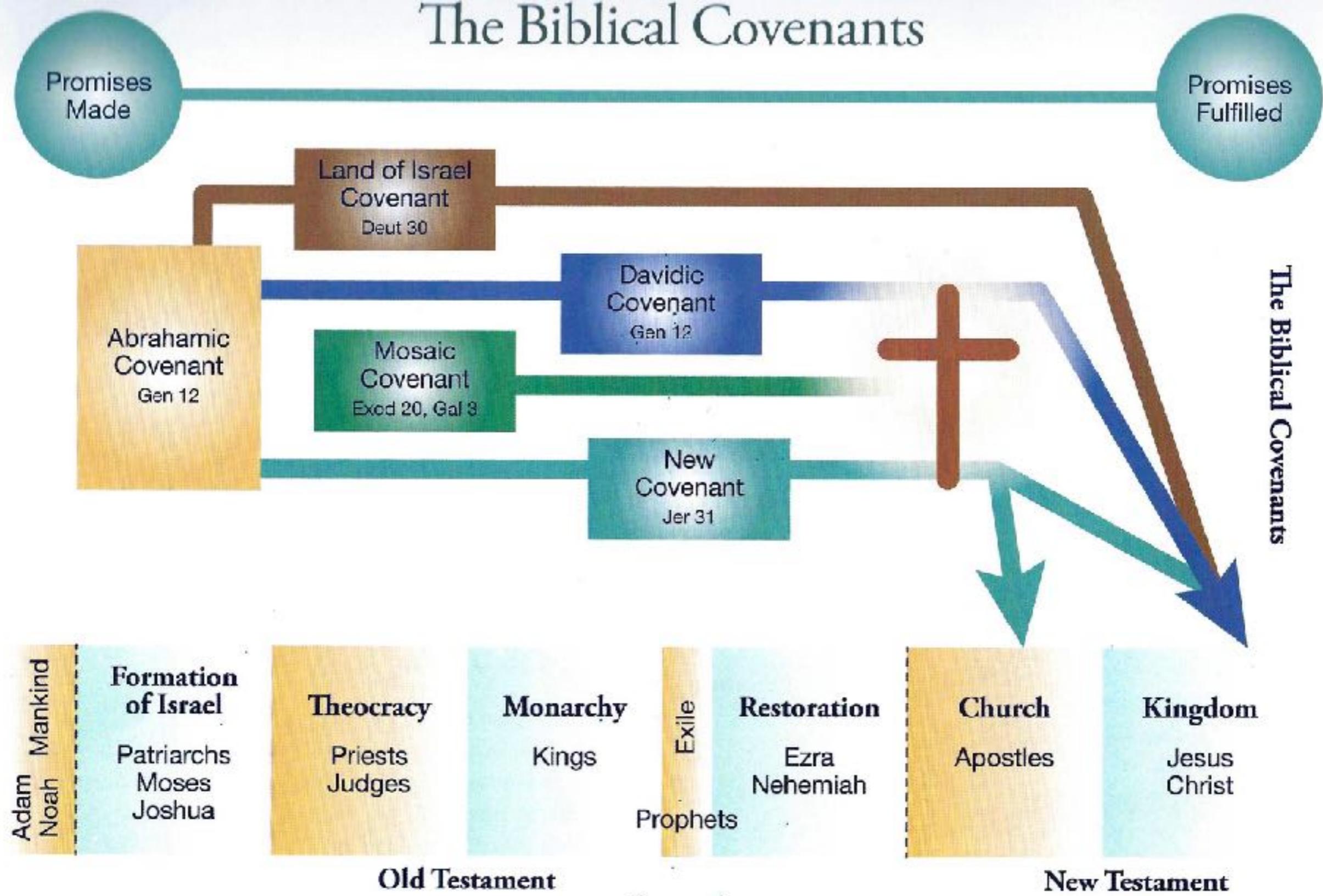
FEASTS

CHARTING THE BIBLE CHRONOLOGICALLY

A Visual Guide to God's Unfolding Plan



The Biblical Covenants



Adapted from Paul Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy: A Comprehensive Approach* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 50.

COVENANTS

- Most theologians list 7 specific covenants in the Bible.
- They may be general, conditional, or unconditional.
- Conditional covenants are based on certain obligations. If you disobey the requirements, the covenant is broken.
- Unconditional covenants are made with no strings attached regardless of your fidelity to them.

ADAMIC & NOAHIC

- Is found in Genesis 1:26-30 and 2:16-17, this covenant is general in nature.
- Gave a future provision for man's redemption (Genesis 3:15) and includes a covenant of grace.
- Was made between God and Noah following the departure of Noah, his family, and the animals from the ark. God gave the rainbow as a sign of this covenant (Genesis 9:1-17, 2 Peter 2:5).

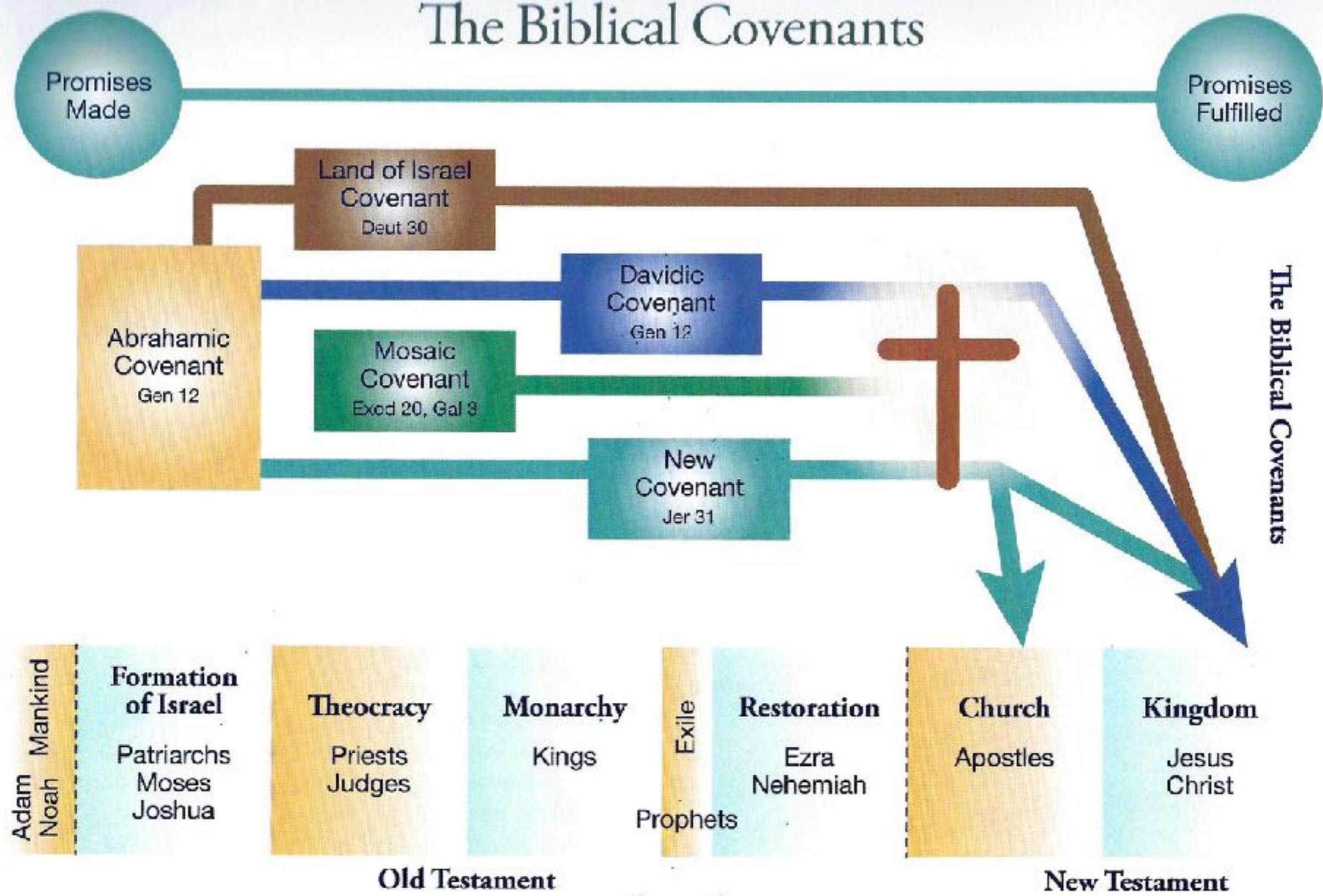
ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

- This is an unconditional covenant. It was first made to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, promised God's blessing upon Abraham, to make his name great and to make his progeny into a great nation.
- The covenant also promised blessing to those who blessed Abraham and cursing to those who cursed him. Further, God vowed to bless the entire world through Abraham's seed (Genesis 12:6-7; 13:14-17; 17:1-14; 22:15-18).

PALESTINIAN COVENANT

- This unconditional covenant (Deuteronomy 30:1-10) that is also called the Land Covenant. God said that He would scatter Israel if they disobeyed God, then to restore them at a later time to their land.
- This covenant has been fulfilled twice, with the Babylonian Captivity and subsequent rebuilding of Jerusalem under Cyrus the Great; and with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, followed by the reinstatement of the nation of Israel in 1948.

The Biblical Covenants



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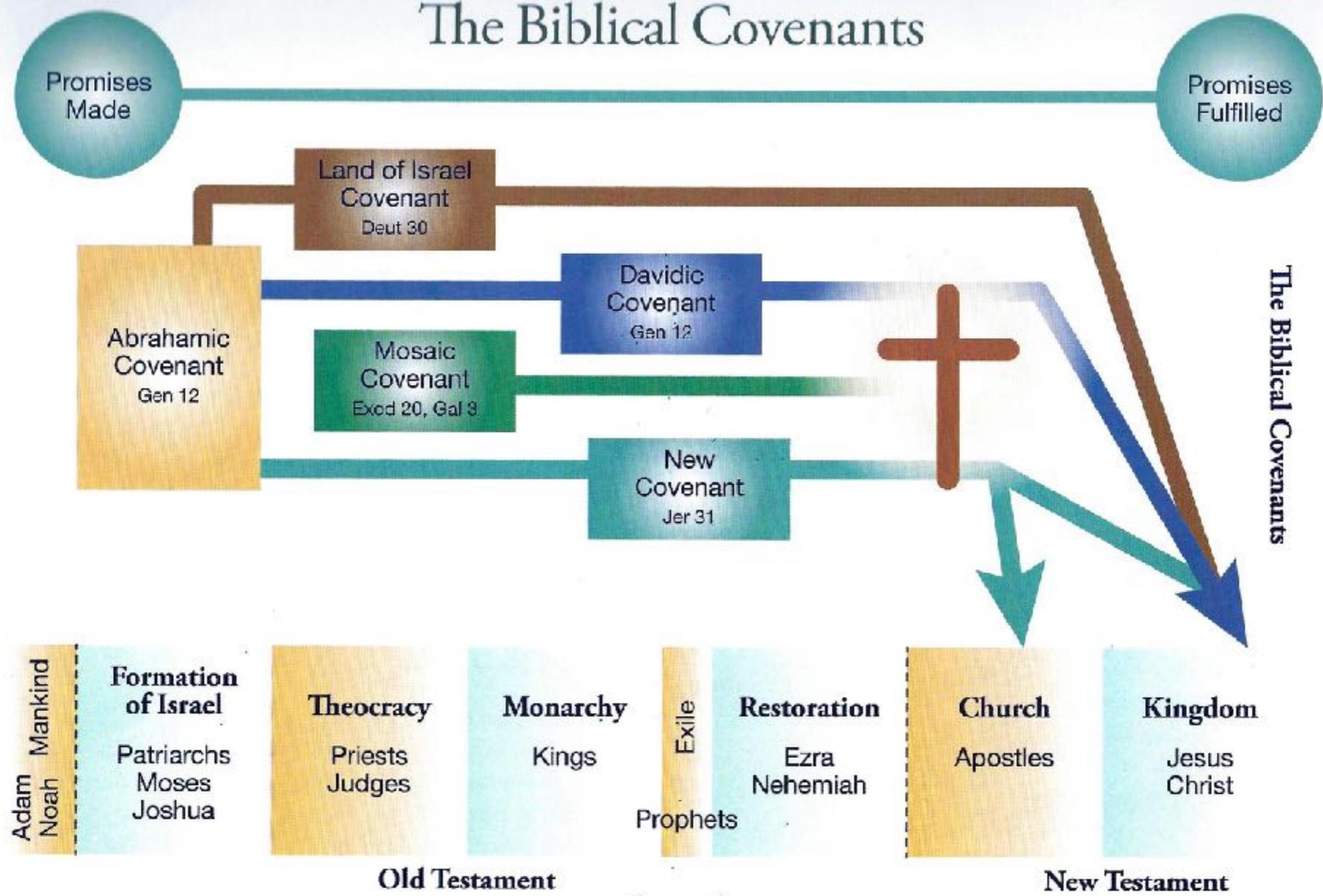
MOSAIC AND DAVID

- This conditional covenant promised the Israelites a blessing for obedience and a curse for disobedience.
- The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and the rest of the Mosaic Law is part of the Mosaic Covenant.
- The David covenant was also an unconditional covenant (2 Samuel 7:8-16) amplifies the aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant. It promised to bless David's family line and assured an everlasting kingdom.

NEW COVENANT

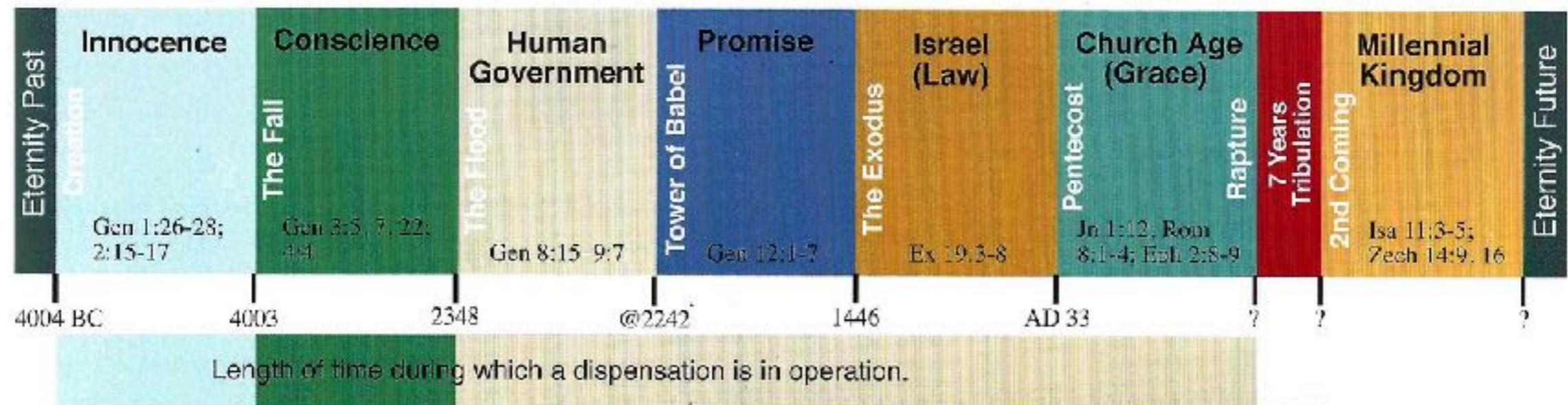
- Paul spoke of two covenants (Galatians 4:24-26) and argued that the covenant from Mount Sinai was a ministry of death (2 Corinthians 3:7-9)
- This covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34) promised that God would forgive sin and have a close, unbroken relationship with His people.
- The promise was first made to Israel and then extended to everyone who comes to Jesus Christ in faith (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:15).

The Biblical Covenants



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The Dispensations



DISPENSATIONS

- These dispensations describe the various stages of God's revelation over time.
- Charles Ryrie - “a stage in a progressive revelation, expressly adopted to the needs of a particular nation or period of time.”
- Various forms of the word *dispensation* are used in the New Testament twenty times.

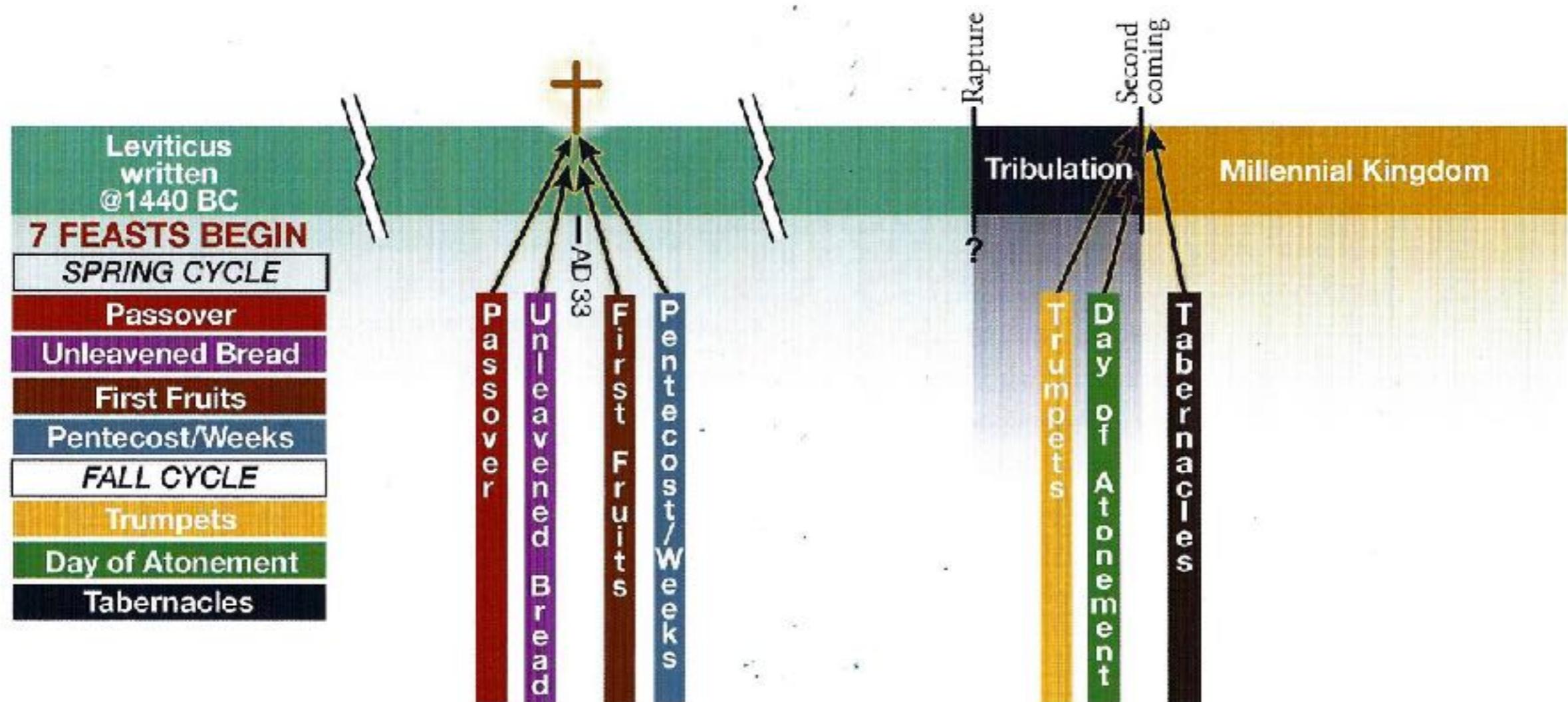
DISPENSATIONS

- Innocence – Adam prior to the Fall.
- Conscience – From the Fall to the Noah's Flood.
- Human Government – After the Flood to the dispersion at the Tower of Babel.
- Promise – From Abraham to Moses. Ends with the refusal to enter Canaan and the 40 years of unbelief in the wilderness.

DISPENSATIONS

- Law – From Moses to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
- Grace – From the cross (or Pentecost) to the rapture of the church. The rapture is followed by the Great Tribulation.
- Millennial Kingdom – A 1000 year reign of Christ on earth centered in Jerusalem. Ends with God's judgment on the final rebellion.

Israel's Feasts in History and Prophecy



FEASTS

- In Leviticus 23 God gave to Israel 7 feasts they were to celebrate. Each was to be celebrated annually.
- Spring: Passover (Leviticus 23:5), Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:6), First Fruits (Leviticus 23:10-11), and Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-17).
- Fall: Trumpets (Leviticus 23:24), Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27), and Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:39-43).

FEASTS

- These 7 annual feasts served to remind the people of the Abrahamic Covenant. These are promises from God that He will fulfill.
- Jesus Christ fulfilled the 4 feasts in the spring cycle at the exact times.
- Most theologians believe Jesus will fulfill the 3 fall feasts with His second coming.

Israel's Feasts in History and Prophecy

