The 7 covenants God made with people

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God has made several covenants with people over the years. In these covenants, God promised to bless the people as long as they would do what he asked them to do. But again and again, people broke the covenant. Therefore, they were punished.

The ***covenant with Adam*** which talked about obeying God: God blessed Adam and Eve and told them that they would be masters of the whole earth and get their food from the plants (Genesis 1:26-30). Then God asked Adam to be obedient and not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:15-17). When Adam and Eve broke that covenant, they were punished (Genesis 3:16-19,23).

The ***covenant with Noah*** which talked about not killing people: God promised to bless Noah and he allowed the people to eat not only from the plants, but to eat certain animals, too. He also promised that never again would he destroy all the people on the earth with a flood. God asked Noah and his descendants not to eat meat with blood in it and not to murder any person (Genesis 9:1-17).

The ***covenant with Abraham*** which talked ***about a land*** for the people of Israel: God promised Abraham that his descendants would receive their own land in which they were to live (Genesis 12:1-2; 15:18-21; 17:1-2). Then God asked Abraham to circumcise all the men and from now on all newborn boys were to be circumcised when they were one week old (Genesis 17:9-14). This covenant was later confirmed with Abraham's son Isaac and Isaac's son Jacob (Leviticus 26:42; 2 Kings 13:23). It is from this covenant that the Jewish people got their land and their position as God's chosen people on earth until Jesus came with a new covenant. That is why the people of Israel call Abraham their "father" (Matthew 3:9; John 8:39) and they call themselves "children of Abraham" (Acts 13:26). This covenant only applies to the people of Israel, and it is called the covenant of circumcision (Acts 7:8).

The ***covenant with Abraham*** which talked about receiving blessings on the basis of ***faith***: God made a different covenant with Abraham which was not focused on the people of Israel, but on all people of the world. God promised blessing to all people in the world through Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 12:3; 17:4-6). The only thing God asked of Abraham and his descendants in this covenant was to trust him (Genesis 15:6; 22:1-18; Romans 4:1-5; Galatians 3:6-14). This is why Abraham is called the "father of faith" and those who trust in God are the true "children of Abraham" (Romans 4:11-12; Luke 19:9; 13:16). When God renewed the covenant of faith through Jesus, many Jews did not accept this new covenant, but only kept to the old covenant of circumcision (John 8:31-41; Romans 4:9-25). This covenant of faith/trust applies to all people in the world, and those who accept it make up the new people of God (Galatians 6:15-16).

The ***covenant with the people of Israel*** based on ***keeping the laws*** given through Moses (The Mosaic covenant):
This covenant is a continuation of covenant number three above. It applies to the people of Israel, and God promised to bless them as his own people among all the people of the earth. The people of Israel had to obey all the commands that were given to them through Moses (Exodus 19:3-6; 24:3-12; 31:12-17; 34:10-27; Deutoronomy 4:13-14; 8:1-20; 29:9-29; Joshua 23:15-16). All these laws and regulations are described in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deutoronomy and they are often referred to in the New Testament as "the Law." If the people of Israel broke the covenant they would be severely punished (Leviticus 26:14-46). They often did break the covenant, so it had to be renewed several times by various kings (2 Chronicles 34:29-33; Jeremiah 11:1-17; 22:8-9).

The ***covenant with David*** to be the ***shepherd and ruler*** for God's people (The Davidic covenant):
King David was recognized as the greatest king in Israel through all times. God himself appointed David to be the shepherd and ruler over Israel (Deutoronomy 17:14-20; 1 Samuel 16:1-13; 2 Samuel 5:1-5; Psalms 78:70-72). King David was able to bring a certain amount of peace to the nation (2 Samuel 7:1). When David wanted to build a temple for God, God did not want a temple. (He would rather move around with the people than be restricted to one location (2 Samuel 7:6-7)). Instead God pronounced the blessings which were part of the covenant with David: God would bring complete peace, and after David was dead, one of his descendants would be king forever and he was the one to build a house (or temple) for God (2 Samuel 7:8-18). Although David's son Solomon did build a temple for God, the words here point to Jesus as the "Son of David" which means a descendant of David. It was Jesus who built the temple God wanted to live in, that is the Church, and it is Jesus who rules forever. It was Jesus who became the greatest shepherd and ruler of all times (Matthew 3:6).

The ***new covenant with everyone*** based on ***grace*** and the death of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice (The New Covenant):
Because the covenant based on keeping the law did not work and people used to forget those laws, God had already in the Old Testament promised that he would make a new covenant, which would never be forgotten. (Jeremiah 31:31-34; 50:5; Hoseah 2:16-20). This new covenant fulfills and to a certain extent replaces all earlier covenants. Jesus himself introduced the new covenant based on his own blood for the forgiveness of sin (Luke 22:20; Romans 11:27; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Hebrews 9:15-22). The purpose was to bring true and lasting forgiveness for sins (Romans 11:27; Hebrews 9:15-22). It is a continuation and fulfillment of the covenant made with Abraham based on faith (Matthew 1:1; Acts 3:24-26), and it is a fulfillment of the covenant made with King David (Matthew 1:1; 12:22; 21:6; 22:42-45). But it is very different from the covenant based on keeping the law of Moses (Galatians 3:15-18). Instead of having laws which were written down on stone or paper, now the will of God is written in the heart of the Christian by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:6-

18; 4:21-5:1). The covenant of law did not work. There was nothing wrong with the law, but because people are sinful, they were not able to keep the law. That old covenant of law has therefore been replaced by a completely new and much better covenant (Romans 5:20-21; 6:14; 7:4; 8:1-4; 13:8-10; Hebrews 7:22-8:13; 9:15-22). Christians go wrong if they try to live under the covenant of law which was given to Moses (Romans 6:14-15; 7:4; Galatians 5:1). They are expected to be led by the Holy Spirit who first came to the believers on the Day of Pentecost. God has called us to a higher level of righteousness that what could be accomplished by living under the law (Matthew 5:20).

Here are some differences between life under the old Mosaic covenant, the covenant of the law, punishment and failure, and life under the new covenant, the covenant of the Holy Spirit, forgiveness and victory:

Old covenant	**New covenant**	**Reference**
Leads to death	Leads to life	2 Cor 3:6-7, Rom 5:20-21; 7:25; 8:2
Brings condemnation	Brings acceptance by the grace of God	2 Cor 3:9, Rom 8:1
Life under a curse	Redeemed from the curse	Gal 3:10, 13-25
Blaming others	Forgiveness, reconciliation	Acts 13:38, 2 Cor 2:5-11, Eph 4:29-32, Jas 5:15, Matt 5:24; 18:21-35, 2 Cor 5:17-19
Highlights our sins	Highlights Jesus' righteousness	Matt 6:33; Gal 3:19, Rom 5:20-21
Was in effect for a time	Is eternal from the time of Jesus	2 Cor 3:11, Gal 3:23
Fading glory	Growing glory	2 Cor 3:7-8,11,13,18
Slavery	Freedom	2 Cor 3:17, Gal 4:21-5:1
Demand for perfection	Room for mistakes	Gal 6:1, 1 John 1:8-9
Built on rules	Built on relationships	2 Cor 6:18, Rom 8:15-17, Gal 4:6, 1 Thess 2:7-12
Requires you to follow the law	Asks you to have faith	Gal 2:16,20; 3:9-14,22-25; 5:6
Many rules to follow	One principle of love	Rom 13:8-10
External control, follow rules	Internal control, follow H. Sp.	Col 3:23, 2 Cor 3:6, 18b

It is also very helpful to look at the difference between life under the old and new covenant from the perspective of motivation and daily life:

Difference in motivation: duty *versus* love.

Difference in enforcement: threats and punishment *versus* encouragement and grief.

Difference in power: the power of the flesh *versus* the power of the Spirit.

Difference in feelings: misery *versus* joy

Difference in victory: defeated by evil and circumstances *versus* defeating the evil and the circumstances by the Spirit.