



COVENANT

PROMISE, PROVISION
& PROGRESSIVE PURPOSE

DIGGING DEEPER, BUILDING STRONGER.

#ROOTED

WHY STUDY COVENANT?

Because COVENANT fills the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation...and digging deeper will have multiple benefits:

- *Theology* - give us wonderful insights into the nature and purpose of God.
- *Knowledge and Understanding* - provide an overview and perspective of the whole biblical story and timeline and the major OT events.
- *Doctrine* - enrich our appreciation of the New Covenant, by expanding our understanding of the old covenants.
- *Worship* - deepen our love of Christ and His transforming work.
- *Discipleship* - trigger personal/practical implications and areas of growth.
- *Family and Career* - give vital perspective to marriage, parenting, work.
- *Mission* - reveal the ever-expansive, world-embracing purpose of God.



“THE BIBLE IS A BOOK OF COVENANTS.”

**“THE BIBLE SHOWS GOD TO BE A COVENANT-MAKING, COVENANT-KEEPING,
COVENANT-REVEALING AND COVENANT-ENABLING GOD.”**

**“THE MAJOR BIBLICAL COVENANTS PROVIDE PROGRESSIVE REVELATION OF THE
PURPOSES OF GOD IN CREATION AND REDEMPTION.”**

**“GOD HAS NEVER DEALT WITH MAN ON ANY BASIS OTHER THAN COVENANT,
FROM ADAM RIGHT UP TO THE PRESENT TIME.”**

COMING UP...

- Defining covenant
- Covenants or dispensations?
- Understanding hesed
- The OT covenants explained
- Lessons from the patriarchs
- The purpose of the Law
- Lessons from the kings
- Christ the fulfilment
- The New Covenant
- Covenant responsibilities
- Israel and the Church
- The covenant meal
- The marriage covenant
- Covenant in leadership

A person is walking away from the camera through a dense forest of tall, thin trees. The ground is covered in fallen leaves and branches. The trees are mostly bare, suggesting a late autumn or winter setting. The lighting is soft and diffused, with some light filtering through the canopy.

BREAKOUT GROUPS

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY
'COVENANT'? WHICH BIBLICAL
COVENANTS ARE YOU
AWARE OF?

#ROOTED

DEFINING 'COVENANT'

- Dictionary: A mutual understanding/agreement between two or more parties to do or not do something specified. A contract drawn up by deed; a formal agreement, contract, or promise in writing; a clause in a contract, etc.
- OT Hebrew: *berîyth* – covenant, alliance, pledge, treaty, league, pact, compact. Occurs 285 times in OT and translated 'covenant' on 276 occasions (NASB).
- NT Greek: *diathēkē* – disposition, arrangement, testament, will. Used to translate *berîyth* in Septuagint/LXX (OT in Greek) and occurs 33 times in NT, where it is 'covenant' on every occasion (NASB).

DIATHĒKĒ IN THE NT

Photo by Priscilla Du Preez at Unsplash

In the Gospels and Acts (6)

Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Lk 1:72,
22:20; Ac 3:25, 7:8

In Paul's Epistles (9)

Ro 9:4, 11:27; 1Co 11:25;
2Co 3:6, 3:14; Gal 3:15, 3:17,
4:24; Eph 2:12

In Hebrews (17)

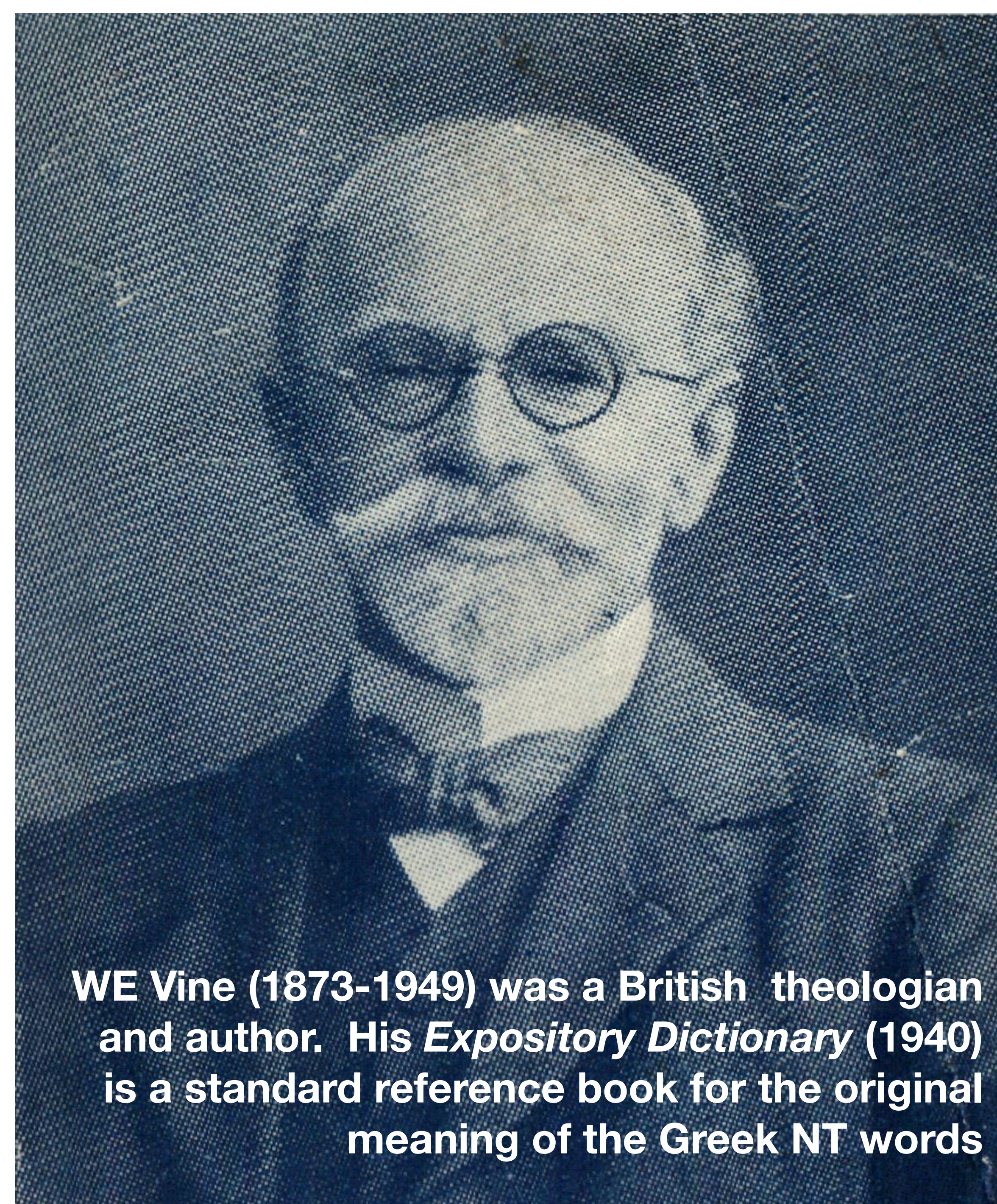
Heb 7:22, 8:6, 8:8, 8:9 (x2),
8:10, 9:4 (x2), 9:15 (x2), 9:16,
9:17, 9:20, 10:16, 10:29,
12:24, 13:20

In Revelation (1)

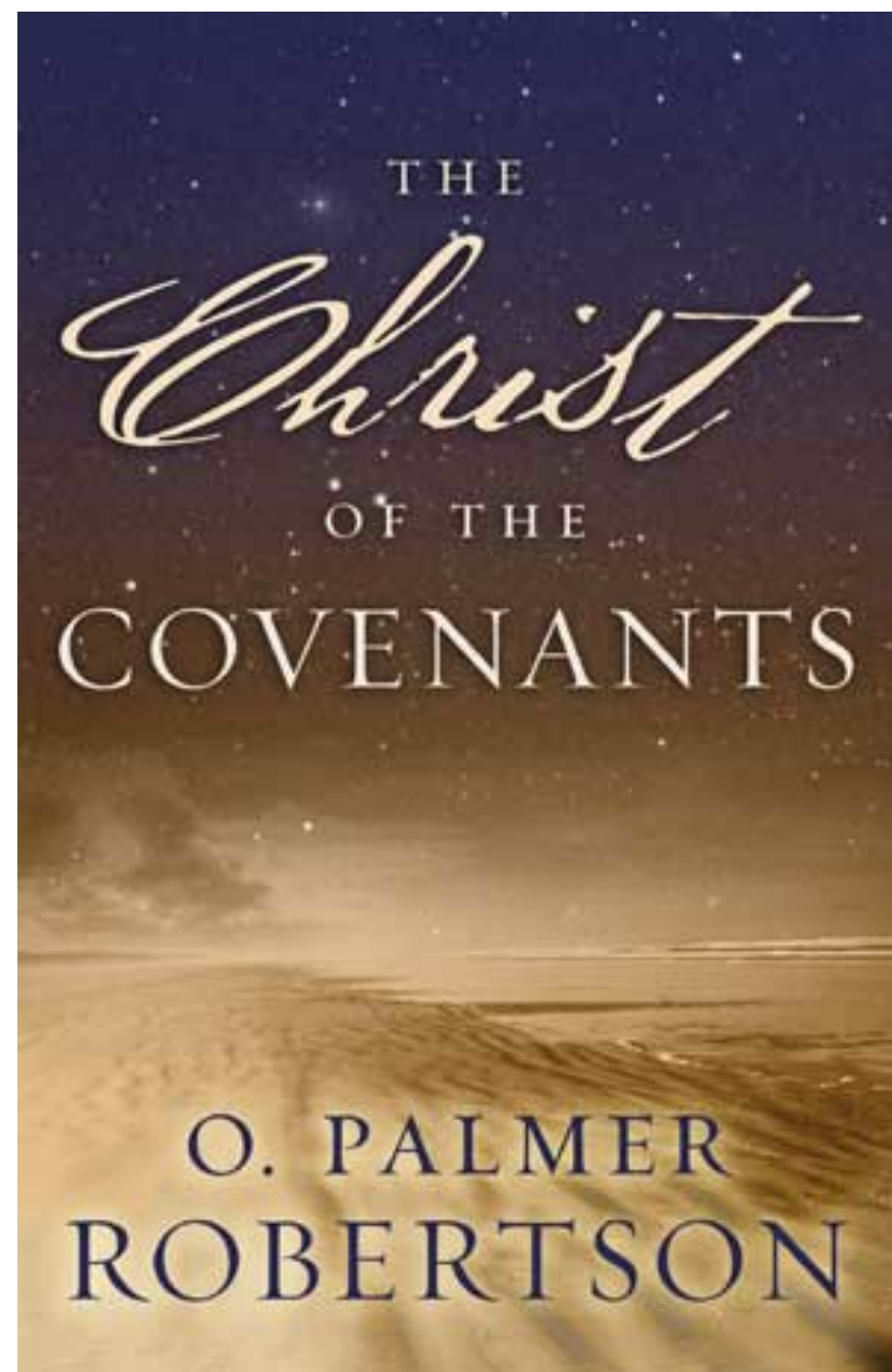
Rev 11:19

“IN CONTRADISTINCTION TO THE ENGLISH WORD
‘COVENANT’ ...WHICH SIGNIFIES A MUTUAL
UNDERTAKING BETWEEN TWO PARTIES OR MORE,
EACH BINDING HIMSELF TO FULFIL OBLIGATIONS,
DIATHĒKĒ DOES NOT IN ITSELF CONTAIN THE IDEA
OF JOINT OBLIGATION, IT MOSTLY SIGNIFIES AN
OBLIGATION UNDERTAKEN BY A SINGLE PERSON.”

W.E. VINE
EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS, 252-253

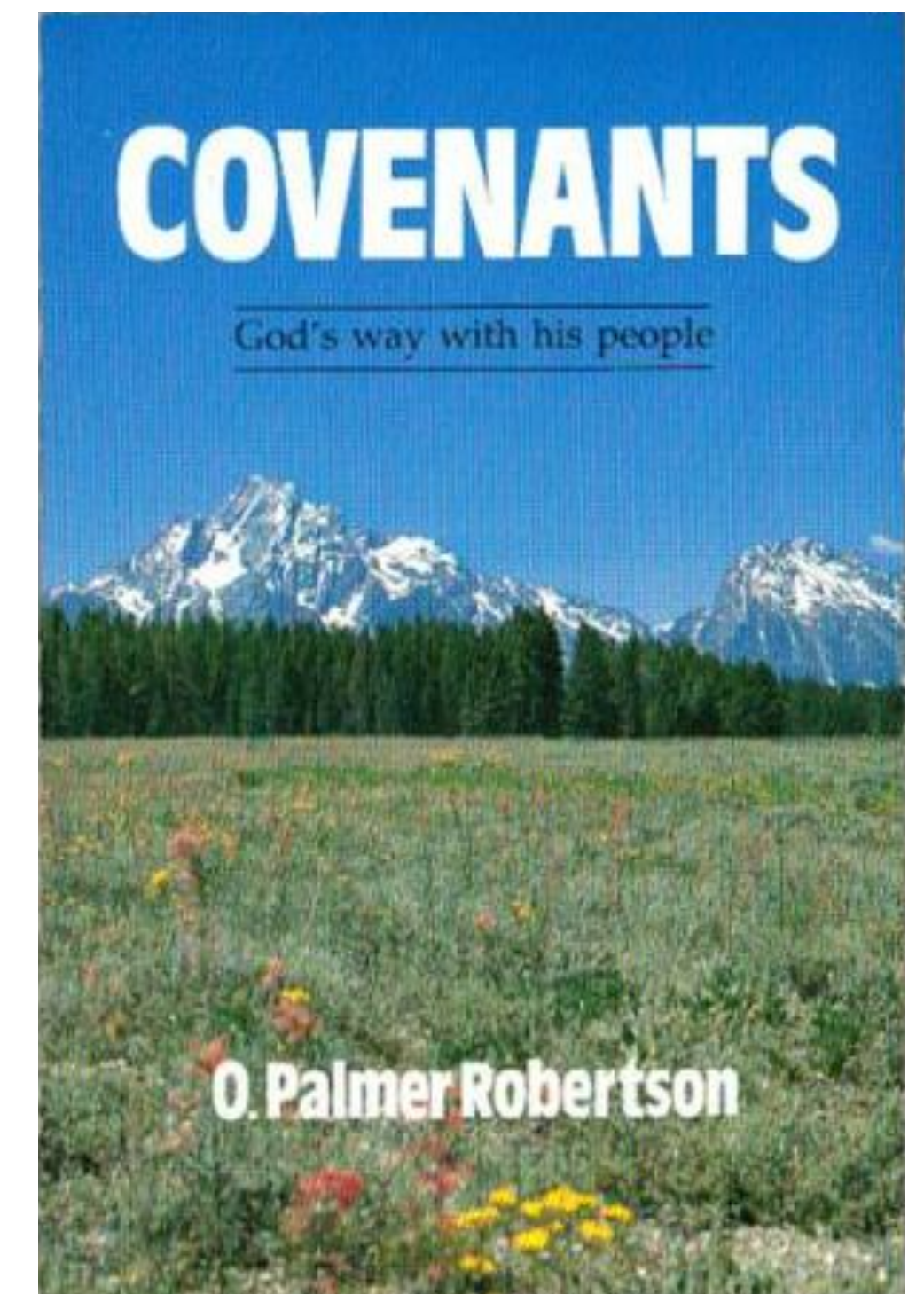


WE Vine (1873-1949) was a British theologian and author. His *Expository Dictionary* (1940) is a standard reference book for the original meaning of the Greek NT words

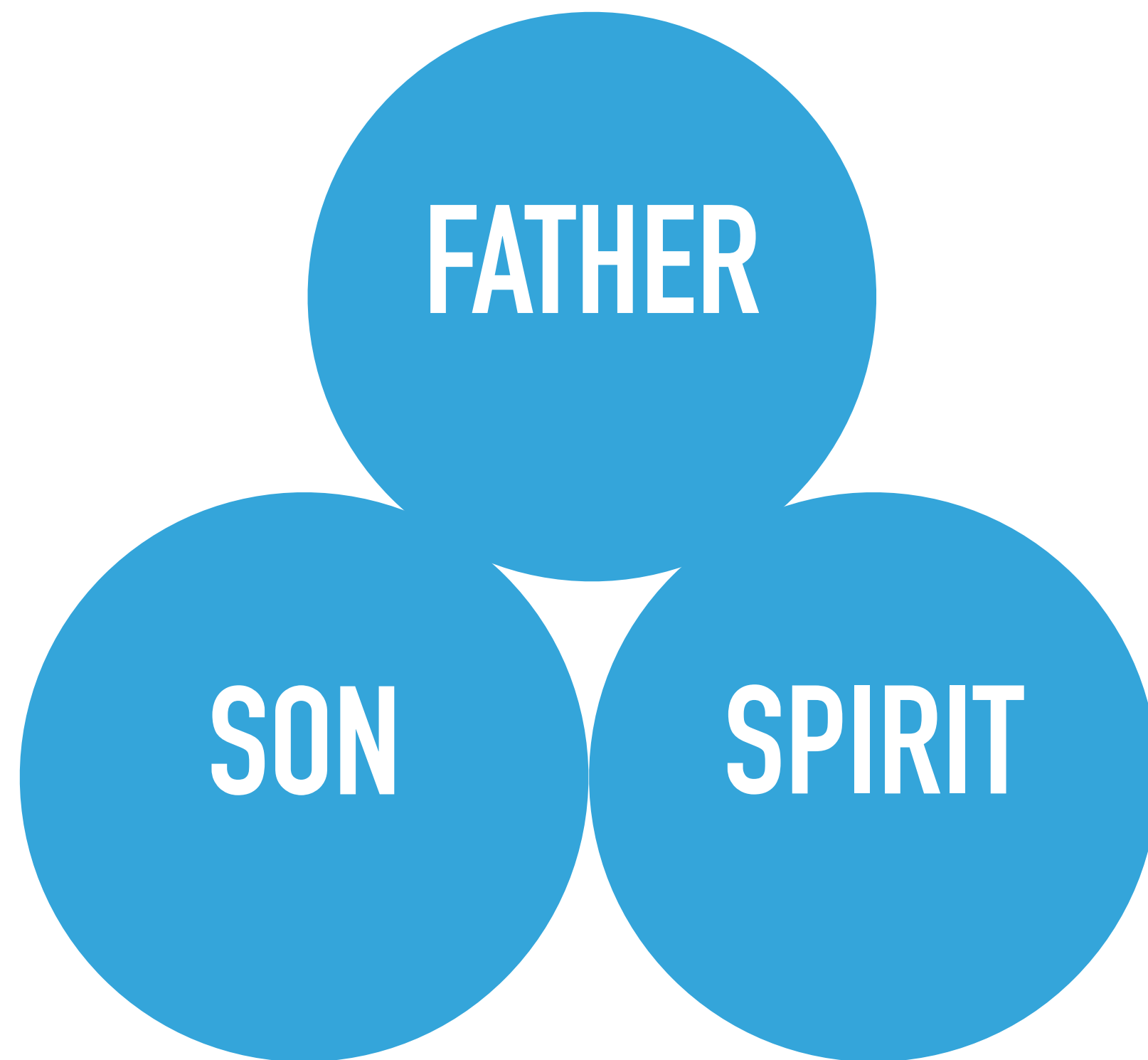


“IN ITS MOST ESSENTIAL ASPECT, A COVENANT IS THAT WHICH BINDS PEOPLE TOGETHER. NOTHING LIES CLOSER TO THE HEART OF THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF COVENANT THAN THE IMAGERY OF A BOND INVIOLEABLE..

“A COVENANT MAY BE DEFINED AS A BOND IN BLOOD, SOVEREIGNLY ADMINISTERED. LIFE AND DEATH ARE AT STAKE IN THE DIVINE COVENANTS. GOD HAS BOUND HIMSELF TO HUMANS AND THEM TO HIMSELF.”

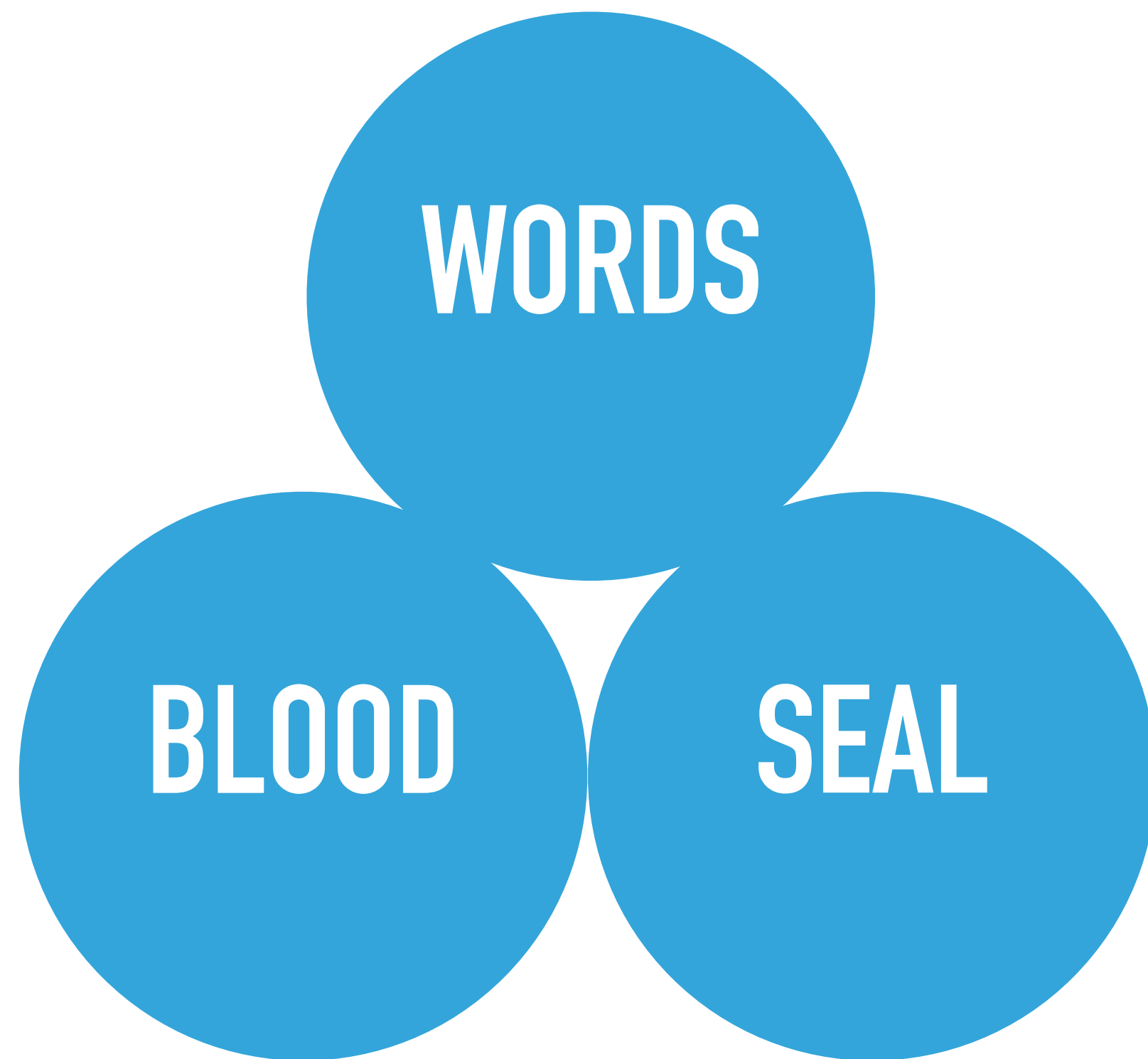


COVENANT IN THE GODHEAD



- Covenant is first revealed in the Trinity!
- Three Persons expressing mutual love and honour, headship and submission, plan and purpose...
- Eg see: Mt 12:28, 26:39; Jn 3:35, 5:19-23, 5:30, 6:38, 14:26, 15:26; Ac 2:33; 10:38; 1Co 11:3; Gal 4:6; Heb 9:14; 1Pe 1:2; 2Pe 1:17.
- And God said: *“Let us make man in our image...”* Ge 1:26.

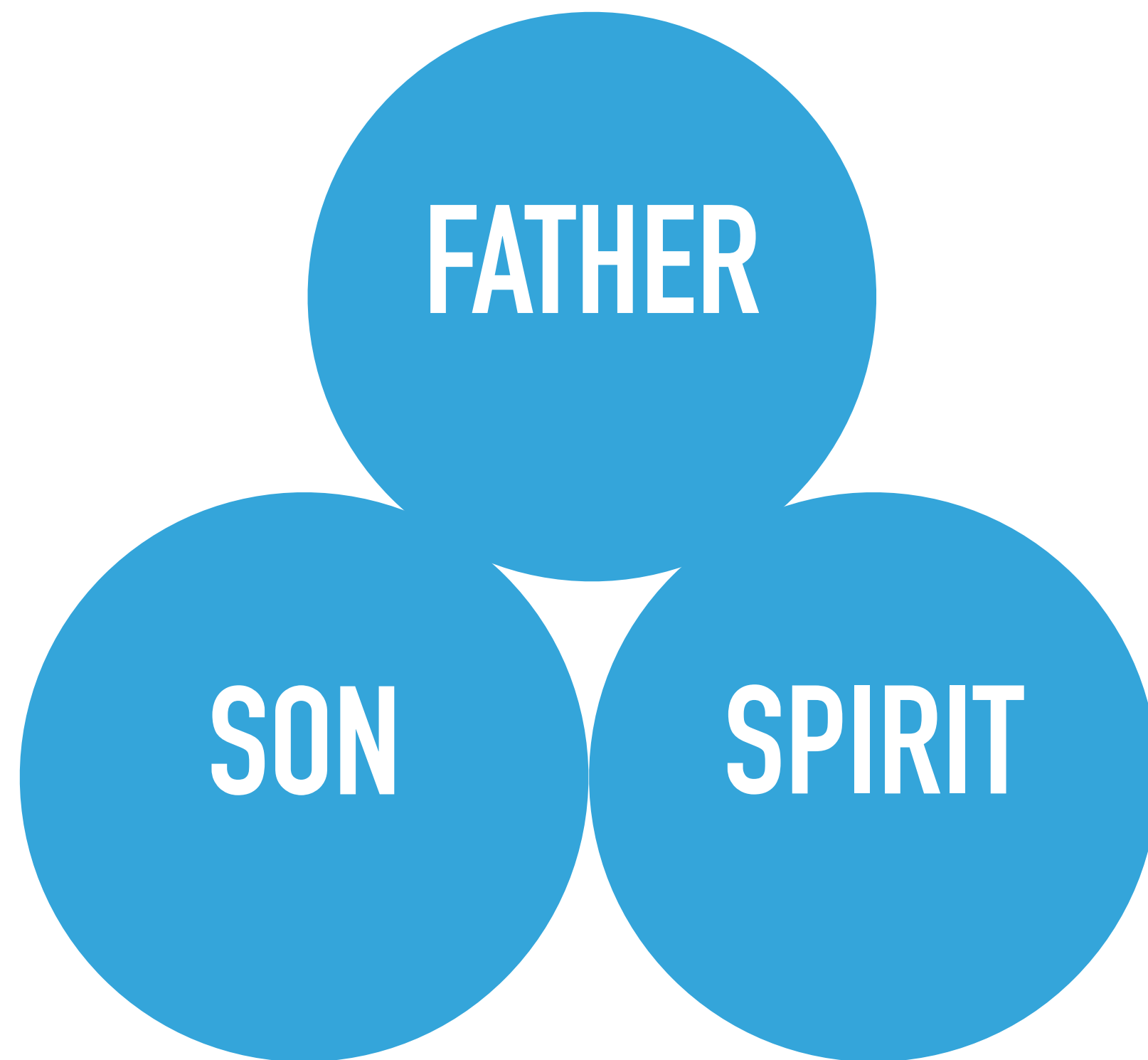
3 COVENANT CHARACTERISTICS



As we will see, all the Biblical covenants have three common features:

- **WORDS** spoken or written, to identify the parties and set out the promises, terms and oaths being agreed;
- **BLOOD** shed through death or sacrifice, sometimes involving a mediator or priest; and
- A **SEAL** or sign, which acts as a reminder of the covenant made.

THE GODHEAD IN COVENANT



- The FATHER *originates* and initiates; He creates by His spoken word and promises.
- The SON *mediates*; He is the Great High Priest and His blood was shed for us.
- The SPIRIT *administrates*; He completes God's work in us; He is God's sign and seal in our lives.
- Creation (Ge 1:1-3, Col 1:15-16, Heb 1:2);
- Salvation (Jn 3:16, 1Co 12:3)
- Pentecost (Ac 1:4, 2:33), etc...

OVERARCHING TWIN THEMES

KINGDOM

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- The *purpose* of God
- His Kingdom established on earth
- **Unshakeable!**

COVENANT

THE COVENANT OF GOD

- The *way* of God
- His People filling the earth
- **Unbreakable!**

Covenant is not so much an end in itself, but *the means* by which the end is fulfilled; covenant is God's way with His people...

DISPENSATIONS OR COVENANTS?

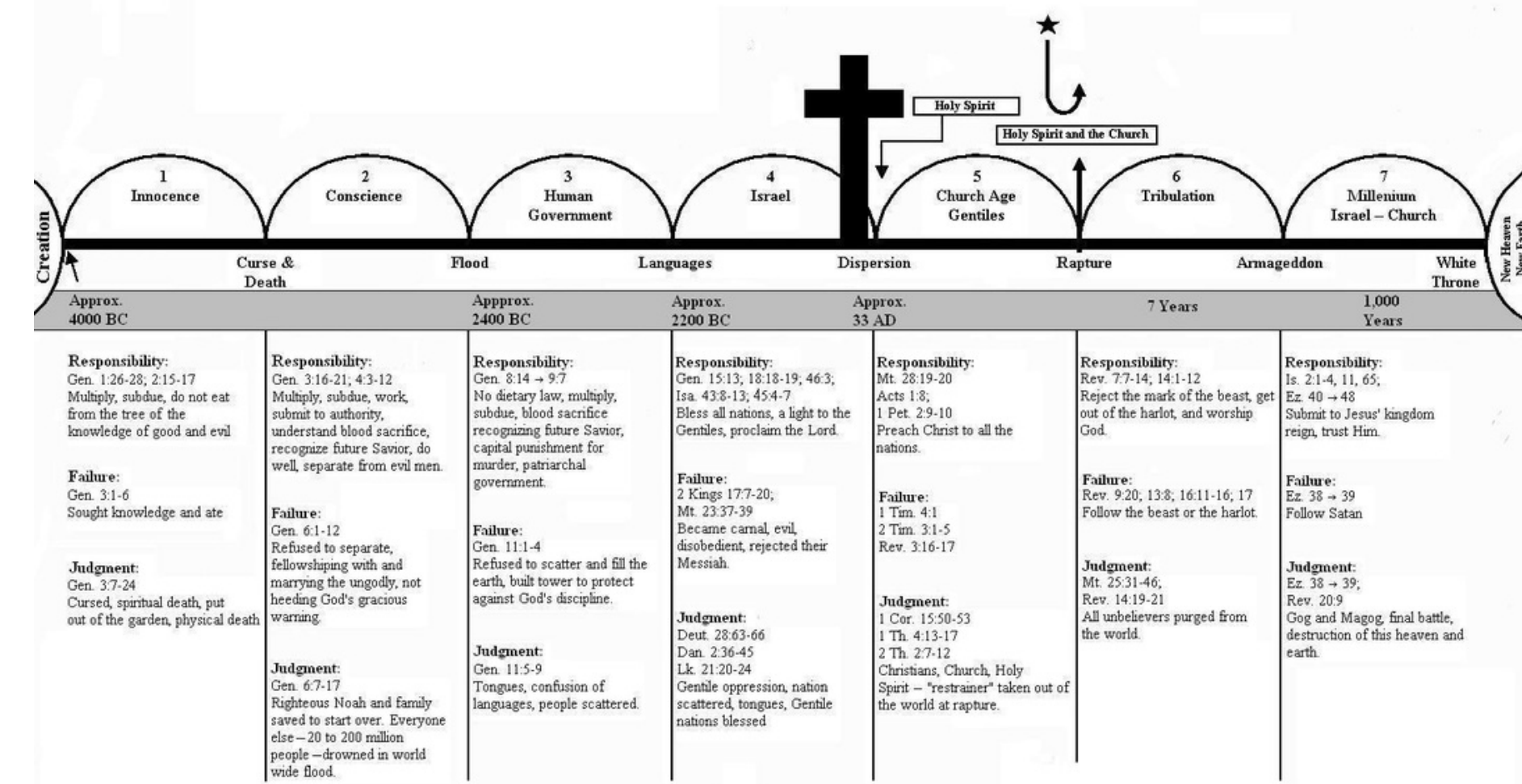
Dispensationalism

views past, present and future as a series of 'dispensations' - discrete administrations and periods of time in which God deals with mankind *in different ways* to fulfil *different purposes*.

Covenant Theology

sees that God has only *one purpose*, which unfolds through time in a series of *successive covenants*, each building on the one before and together unveiling a single, unified purpose.


IN PARTICULAR...



Classic Dispensationalism holds that:

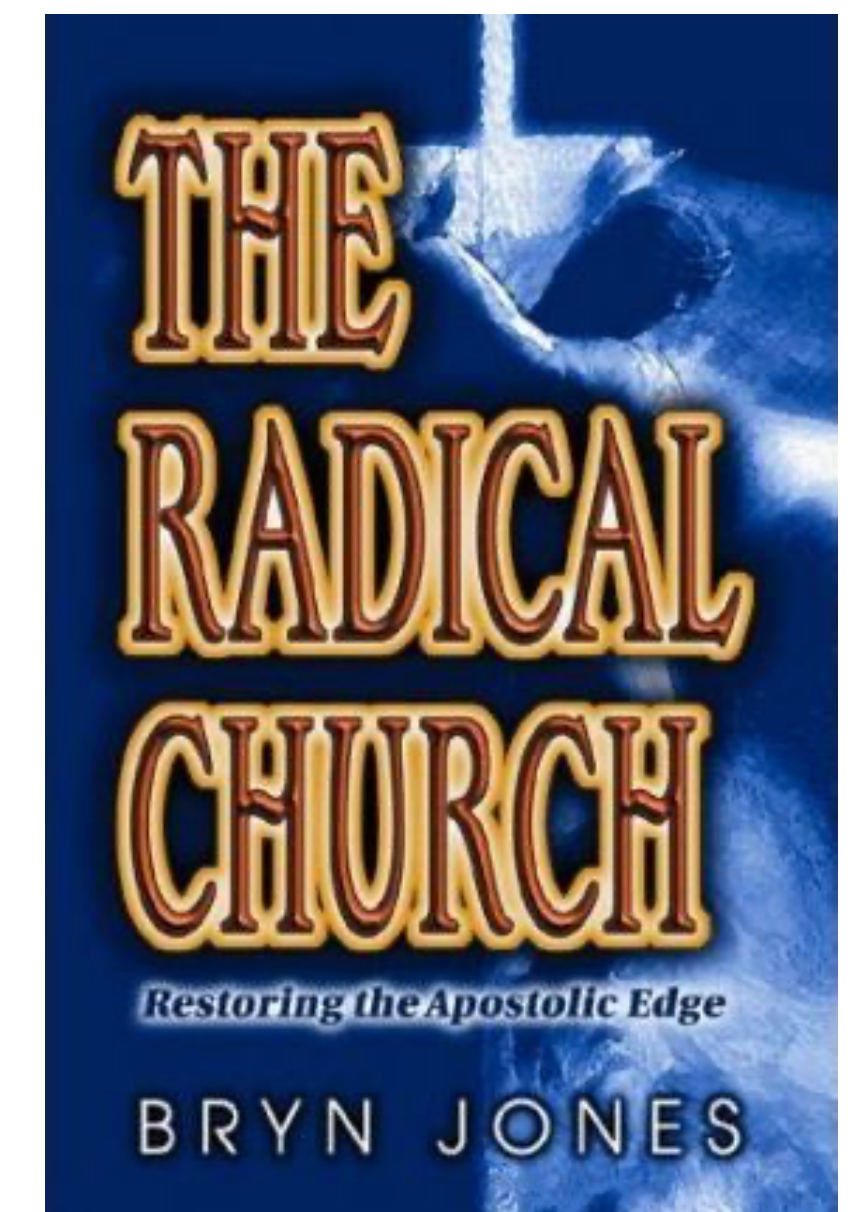
- Israel and the Church are *two distinct groups* in God's plan and purpose, each with their own history and destiny. The Church is a 'parenthesis' in God's plan, a result of Israel's rejection of Christ.
- Israel will enjoy earthly blessings and the Church will enjoy heavenly blessings.
- The Church will be (secretly) 'raptured' and taken to heaven before a seven year time of tribulation on earth...
- Then Christ will return publicly, judge the nations, and reign on earth for a thousand years over an earthly kingdom with Israel as a model nation; during this time there will be a literal fulfilment of prophecies made to her.

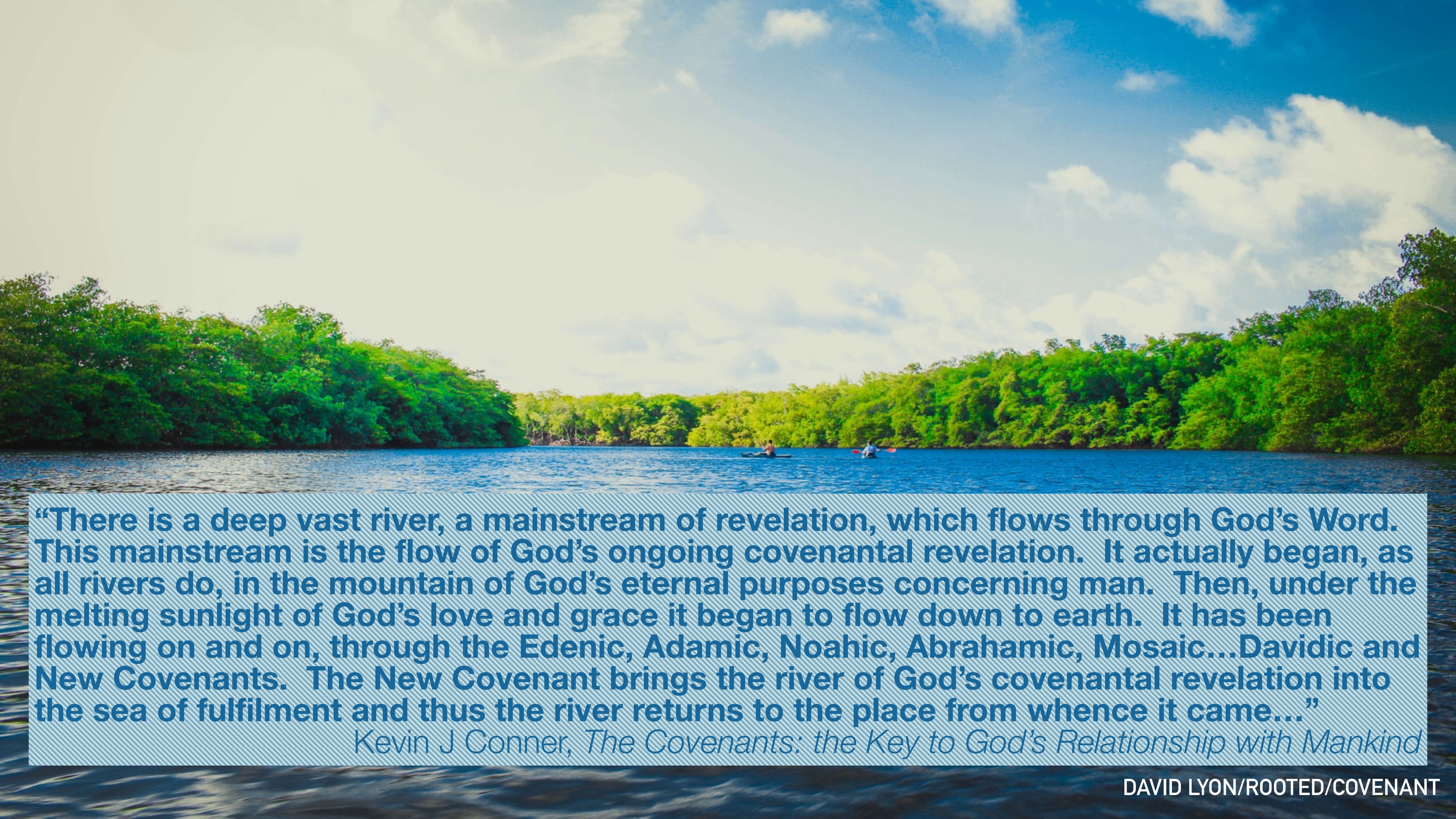
We will address these claims as we proceed...

A portrait of Bryn Jones, a man with light-colored hair, smiling, wearing a suit and tie.

“THE VARIOUS BIBLICAL COVENANTS SHOULD NOT BE UNDERSTOOD AS DISPENSATIONAL; THAT IS, EACH LASTING A FIXED PERIOD, ONLY TO BE CAST ASIDE AT THE ADVENT OF A NEW ONE. THE REVELATION OF GOD IS CONTINUOUS, AND THE CONTINUING REVELATION OF HIS PERSON AND PURPOSE IS ACCOMPANIED BY A CALLING TO A NEW DEPTH OF COVENANT COMMITMENT.”

BRYN JONES, THE RADICAL CHURCH, 106.





“There is a deep vast river, a mainstream of revelation, which flows through God’s Word. This mainstream is the flow of God’s ongoing covenantal revelation. It actually began, as all rivers do, in the mountain of God’s eternal purposes concerning man. Then, under the melting sunlight of God’s love and grace it began to flow down to earth. It has been flowing on and on, through the Edenic, Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic...Davidic and New Covenants. The New Covenant brings the river of God’s covenantal revelation into the sea of fulfilment and thus the river returns to the place from whence it came...”

Kevin J Conner, The Covenants: the Key to God’s Relationship with Mankind



THE CORE OF COVENANT?...

I COVENANT HEARTBEAT: RELATIONSHIP

- When God makes covenants He's establishing a *relationship* with His people. (“*I will be your God and you will be my people...*” Ex 6:7; Lev 26:12; 2Sa 7:24; Jer 7:23, 11:4, 30:22; Ez 36:28). Establishing His Kingdom requires us to live in right relationship with Him - through *covenant*.
- “How remarkable it is that a great God would stoop not only to create finite analogies of himself, but that he would condescend still further to establish a partnership with them, commissioning them to exercise his own righteous and generous reign over the rest of creation.” (Michael Horton, *Introducing Covenant Theology*, 10).

COVENANT LIFEBLOOD: HESED

- The Hebrew word *hesed* occurs 248 times in OT (126 in Psalms). NASB translates as “loving-kindness” (176). KJV has “mercy”, NIV “love”, RSV “steadfast love”, HCSB “faithful love”, etc. But its meaning is more extensive and it is notoriously difficult to translate...
- The LXX usually translates *hesed* using the Greek *eleos* (mercy, compassion), but there are also important parallels between *hesed* and *agapé* (unconditional love, divine love).
- Hesed is a vital ‘covenant’ word, and *one of the most important words in the Bible!* “Without the word hesed the Bible is a dead book, in which is no revelation of God at all.” (Rex B. Andrews).
- So, what does HESED really mean?...

UNDERSTANDING HESED

The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament

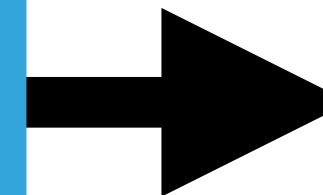
NORMAN H. SNAITH

“Hesed, in all its varied shades and meanings, is conditional upon there being a covenant. Without the prior existence of a covenant, there could never be any hesed at all. The word represents that attitude to a covenant without which that covenant could not continue to exist. It has no meaning apart from a covenant previously instituted, and...it is always conditioned by the terms of the covenant...Hesed is the means of [the covenant's] continuance...” (pp.94-95)

“In Hebrew the main factor is that it is used in connection with the idea of covenant. The root means ‘eagerness, steadfastness’ and then ‘mercy, loving-kindness’, but all within the covenant. It never means ‘kindness’ to all and sundry. Unless this close and unalienable connection with the idea of the covenant is realised, the true meaning of hesed can never be understood.” (p.98)

HESED? STUBBORN STEADFASTNESS!... EXTRAORDINARY PERSISTENCE!...

“The word represents a broad wedge of which the apex varies between ‘love, mercy’ at the one extreme, and ‘loyalty, steadfastness, faithfulness’ at the other. The word means ‘faithfulness’ rather than ‘kindness’, for we find the word to involve, in almost every case, a substratum of fixed, determined, almost **stubborn steadfastness**...The best word is ‘**covenant-love**’.” (pp.99-100)



“The renderings ‘loving-kindness, mercy’... are often far too weak to convey the strength, the firmness, and the persistence of God’s sure love...*The most important of all the distinctive ideas of the Old Testament* **is God’s steady and extraordinary persistence in continuing to love wayward Israel** in spite of Israel’s insistent waywardness.” (p.102)

KING DAVID:

“MY LIPS WILL GLORIFY YOU BECAUSE YOUR HESED IS BETTER THAN LIFE”.

PSALM 63:3

A person in a dark jacket and blue jeans is walking away from the camera through a dense forest of tall, thin trees. The ground is covered in fallen leaves and branches. The trees are tall and slender, with some showing signs of decay or hollow trunks. The lighting is soft and diffused, suggesting an overcast day or a misty atmosphere. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

BREAKOUT GROUPS

WHAT DOES THE STORY OF THE
PRODIGAL SON (LK 15) TELL US
ABOUT GOD'S COVENANT-LOVE?



FURTHER STUDY

USE BIBLE HUB OR SIMILAR TO
STUDY THE USE OF
HESED IN THE PSALMS

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