

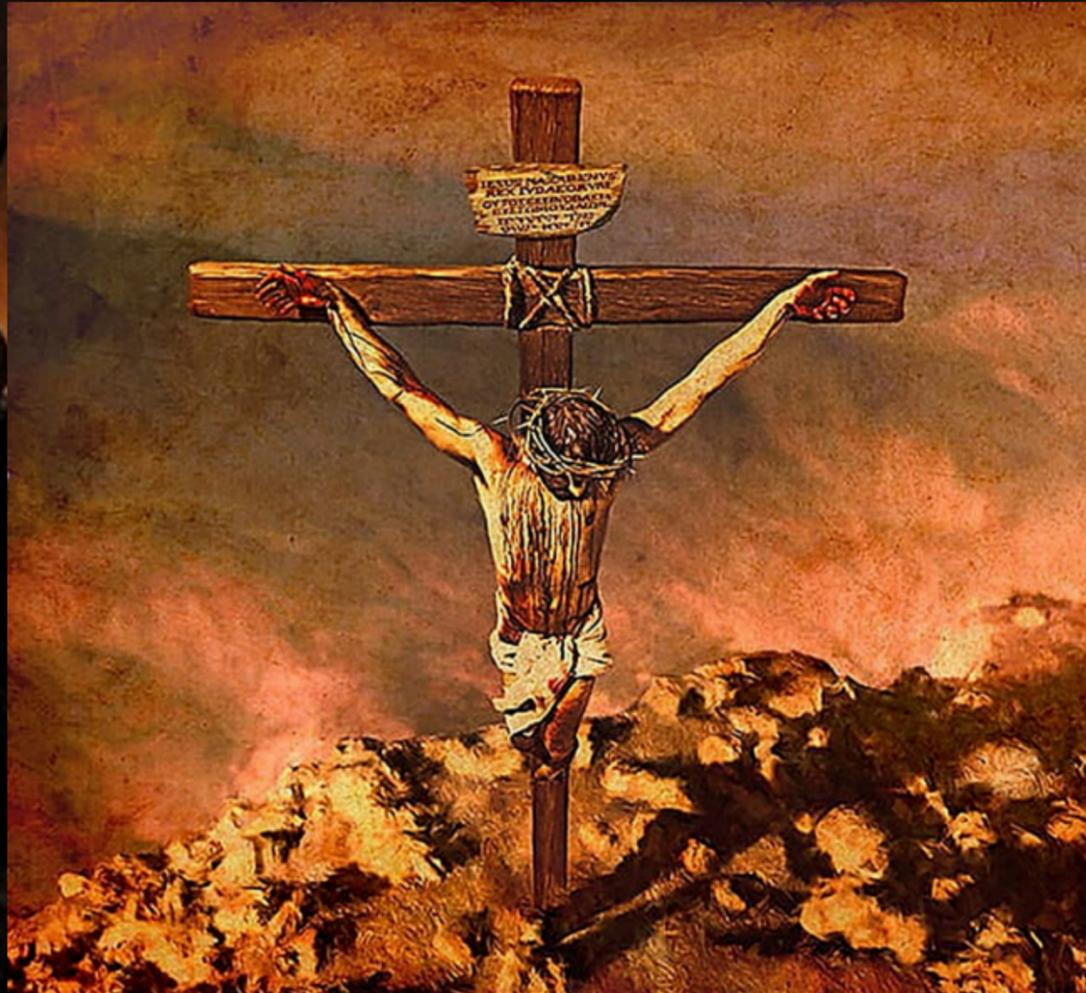
# Covenants

Deeper Theology - Bible Focus:

## *The Cross and the Covenants: Making sense of violence in the Bible*

Many people struggle with the violence depicted in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. This session will look at how Covenant Theology helps us navigate the tension between God's judgment and his love.

All Saints



# Paul on the Law

## 2 Corinthians 3:6

“He made us competent as ministers of a new covenant – not of the letter but of the Spirit; **for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.**”

## Romans 7:12

“So then, **the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.**”

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# Comfortable Words

Covenants are one-sided affairs

God does all the work

Grace is at the heart of every covenant

Dear Christian: stick to your covenant!

# **You ARE in a relationship with God**

No matter who you are or what you believe

Whether you like it or not...

# Spot the difference...

## *Before the Flood*

5 The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time...

7 So the Lord said, 'I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created.'

Genesis 6:5&7

# Spot the difference...

## *After the Flood*

21 The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart:

‘Never again will I curse the ground

because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood.

And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.

Genesis 8:21

**What changed?**

Humanity?

Humanity's relationship with God?

# How? - Covenant

11 I establish my covenant with you: never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.'

Genesis 9:11

# What is a Covenant?

- a contract between two parties;
- Hebrew - בְּרִית - 'cutting'
- obligations on both sides

# Mundane covenants...

- Isaac and Abimelech
  - *“I won’t hurt you if you don’t hurt me”*  
[Genesis 26:26-31]
- Ahab’s covenant with Ben-Hadad king of Syria
  - *“You give me land, I let you live”* [1 Kings 20:34]

**“Hey, Noah, this is God speaking...”**

- God talks to Noah (Genesis 6:13)
- Noah is God’s **“mediator”**



# Noah needs saving

- God: “There’s a flood coming”
- The old is going, the new is on the way



# God saves Noah

- “Build an **ark**” - altar/vessel
- “**Cover** it in pitch” - covering/atonement

## Result

Noah escapes judgement of the old,  
saved through water into the **new**

# Obligations Of Noah's Covenant

- Noah:
  - *“Don't eat blood, don't murder people”*  
[Genesis 9:4-6]
- God:
  - *“No more giant floods for **you or your descendants**”* (i.e. everyone) [Genesis 9:9-11]

A vibrant rainbow arches across a hazy sky above a lush green field. In the foreground, a wire fence with wooden posts is visible. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

# God's Sign

**12 And God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come:**

**13 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. [Genesis 9:12-13]**

# Covenant with Noah

	1) Gentiles/Everyone (Universal)	Reference
<b>Mediators</b>	Noah	“I am establishing my covenant with you...” - Gen. 9:9
<b>Who’s descendents?</b>	Noah’s descendents	“...and your descendents after you” - 9:9
<b>Atonement/Covering</b>	Pitch	“cover it inside and out with pitch” - 6:14
<b>Altar/Vessel</b>	Ark	“make yourself an ark” - 6:14
<b>Sign</b>	Rainbow	“This is my sign...my bow” - 9:12-13
<b>Transition</b>	Flood	“I am going to bring a flood” - 6:17
<b>Laws</b>	No murder and eating blood	“you shall not eat...its blood” - 9:4
<b>God’s Promises</b>	“No flood”	“never again shall there be a flood” - 9:11

# Observations

- Covenants with God are VERY one sided in YOUR favour
- People aren't faithful, but God is (hence one-sided).

- Literally two chapters later, *after* God has said “I’m not going to flood the world”, they’re building a tower to get to where God lives, so as to avoid another flood.
- Again...people aren’t faithful, but God is.
  - People don’t hold their end of the bargain, God does not break his side.

# **3 REALLY IMPORTANT covenants...**

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1) Noah

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2) Abraham & Moses

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1) Noah

2) Abraham & Moses

3) Jesus

# The 3 Covenants

	1) Gentiles/Everyone (Universal)	2) Jews (Peculiar)	3) Christians (New)
<b>Mediators</b>	Noah	Abraham/Moses	Jesus
<b>Who's descendents</b>	Noah's descendents	Abraham's descendents	Born of the Spirit
<b>Sign</b>	Rainbow	Circumcision	Sanctification
<b>Atonement</b>	Pitch	Blood	Blood
<b>Altar</b>	Ark	Doorpost/Ark	Cross
<b>Transition</b>	Flood	Red Sea	Baptism
<b>Laws</b>	No murder and eating blood	Torah	Law of the Spirit
<b>God's Promises</b>	"No flood"	"Blessing in the Land"	"Eternal Life"/Beatific Vision

A woman with voluminous, curly brown hair is looking through a magnifying glass held over her right eye. Her left eye is closed, and her hand is resting near her chin in a thoughtful pose. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The word "OBSERVATIONS" is overlaid in large, bold, black capital letters across the center of the image.

**OBSERVATIONS**

# **1) Grace**

Salvation first, law second

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**Justified by Law?**

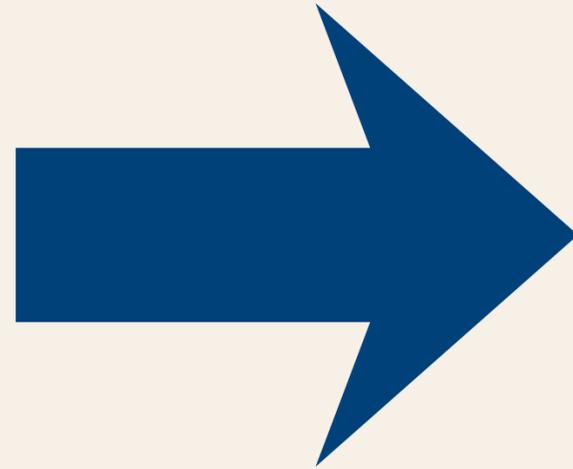
**Galatians 3:17**

# Justified by Law?



**Abraham**

**430 Years**



**Moses**

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## 2) How do I enter a covenant?

More simple than you think...



# “You are here...”

- 1) Noah:** Descended from Noah (Everyone)
- 2) Israel:** Descendants of Abraham (Peculiar)
- 3) Christ:** “You must be **born** again.” (John 3:7) (Church)

# So what?

You did *nothing* to merit the blessings  
that come with your covenant.

Nobody brings about their own birth.

# Speaking of Blessings...

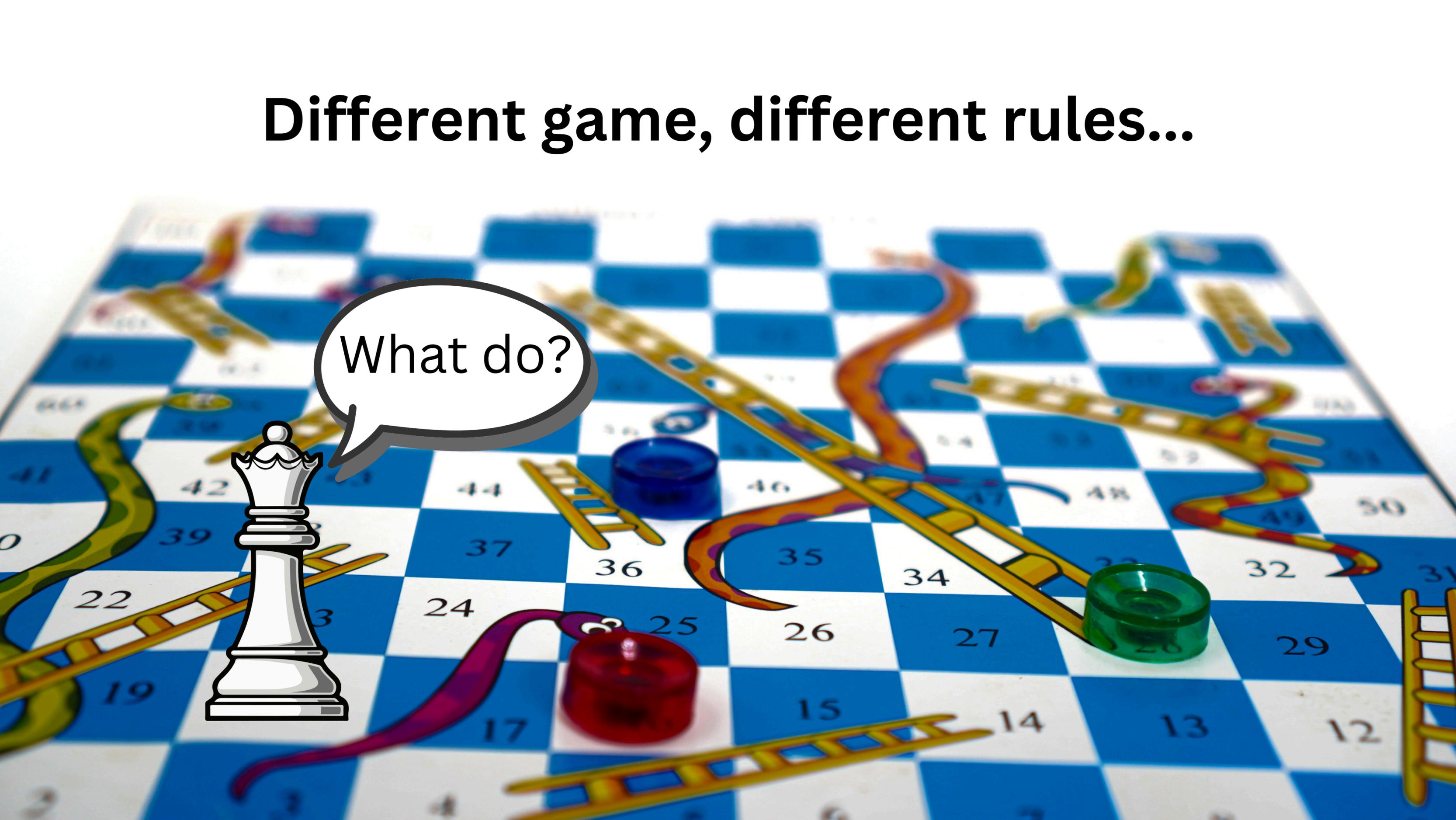
Each covenant has it's own blessing:

1) Noah - **No flood**

2) Abraham & Moses - **Blessing in the promised land**

3) Jesus - **Eternal Life/Beatific Vision**

# Different game, different rules...



What do?

**The requirements of one can't lead to the  
blessings of the other.**

**Eternal Life NOT here...**

**Circumcision**

**Eating Shellfish**

**Mixed Garments**

**Temple Offerings**

**Keeping Sabbath**

**Paul: “What then?...”**

**2 Corinthians 3:6**

**“...for the letter kills.”**

Column 3 -

**Romans 7:12**

**“the law is holy...righteous and good.”**

Column 2 -

# Summary

Covenants are one-sided affairs

God does all the work

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