

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF MISSION

Class 8a: The Adamic Covenant And The Messianic Hope

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I. INTRODUCTION: COVENANTS AS THE BACKBONE OF THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

I will establish my covenant (Hb. berith) between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant (Hb. berith)... (ESV Genesis 17:7)

- <1285> tyrlB. *berith* {ber-eeth'}

Meaning: 1) covenant, alliance, pledge 1a) between men 1a1) treaty, alliance, league (man to man) 1a2) constitution, ordinance (monarch to subjects) 1a3) agreement, pledge (man to man) 1a4) alliance (of friendship) 1a5) alliance (of marriage) 1b) between God and man 1b1) alliance (of friendship) 1b2) covenant (divine ordinance with signs or pledges)

Origin: from 01262 (in the sense of cutting [like 1254]); TWOT - 282a; n f

Usage: AV - covenant 264, league 17, confederacy 1, confederate 1, confederate + 01167 1; 284

A. Covenants Primarily Governmental Realities

1. Though theologians have for centuries recognized the centrality of the covenants in biblical theology, there has always been a void of understanding concerning the basic nature and purpose of a covenant in and of itself. Though it has generally been assumed to be an "agreement" of some kind,¹ the question is what was the *context* of that agreement? What roles did the parties play, and why did they make such agreements?
2. It was not until the work of George E. Mendenhall in the early 1950s that the fundamental nature and function of the biblical covenant was recovered.² After researching Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) Hittite treaties, he found that all of the major biblical covenants, especially the "book of the covenant" (Ex 19:1-23:19), were in the same format as the corresponding *international political treaties* of their era.
3. He and those who followed in his research labeled this relationship between Yahweh and Israel as "Suzerain-vassal," because the medieval feudal system is the closest equivalent we have to ANE political alliances.³ Moreover, the chronological similarity of ANE treaties is one of the most conclusive evidences to the chronological validity of the Old Testament.⁴

¹ "1297, from O.Fr. *covenant* 'agreement,' originally prp. of *covenir* 'agree, meet,' from L. *convenire* 'come together' (see *convene*). Applied in Scripture to God's arrangements with man, as a translation of L. *testamentum*, Gk. *diatheke*, both rendering Heb. *berith* (though *testament* is also used for the same word in different places)." (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, Douglas Harper ed., "Covenant," available from <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=Covenant>.)

² George E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition" *BA* 17(2): 26-44 (May 1954); 17(3):49-76 (September 1954); archived at http://home.earthlink.net/~cadman777/Law_Cov_Mendenhall_TITLE.htm. His work was published the next year in *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: Biblical Colloquium, 1955). Born in 1916, he is presently Professor Emeritus at the University of Michigan's Department of Near Eastern Studies.

³ Other research includes, Herbert B. Huffmon, "Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets," *JBL* 78:285-295 (1959); Meredith G. Kline, *The Treaty of the Great King* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963); Walter Beyerlin, *Origins and History of the Oldest Sinai Traditions* (Oxford, 1965); Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (London: Tyndale Press, 1966); and Moshe Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *JAOS* 90(2):184-203 (1970).

⁴ See Kenneth A. Kitchen, "The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?" *BAR* 21/2:48-57, 88 (March/April 1995); see also Kenneth A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

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THE SUZERAIN/VASSAL TREATY FORMAT of the LATE SECOND MILLENNIUM

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|------|---|--|
| I. | Preamble/Title
introduces the superior party
<i>Exod 20:2a/Deut 5:6a</i> | "I am Yahweh your God ..." |
| II. | Historical Prologue
furnishes the basis of obligation
and the motive for accepting the
covenant's stipulations as binding
<i>Exod 20.2b/Deut 1-3, 5:6b</i> | "... who brought you up out of the land
of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." |
| III. | Stipulations/obligations imposed
<i>Exod 20:3-17/Deut 5:7-21; chptrs 12-26</i> | "... you shall have no other gods before me ..." |
| IV. | Deposition and/or reading of the document
provision for the deposit of the treaty text in the temple of the gods used as witnesses
<i>Exod 25.21;40:20/Deut 10:5</i> | |

"Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the **two tablets** of the testimony in his hand, tablets which were written on both sides; they were written on one side and the other. And the tablets were God's work, and the writing was God's writing engraved on the tablets" (Exod 32:15,16)

provision for the periodic reading of the treaty to the people
Exod 24:7/Deut 27:2-8; 31:11,12/Josh 8:30-35

"...when all Israel comes to appear before Yahweh your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this law in front of all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, the men and the women and children and the alien who is in your town, in order that they may hear and learn and fear Yahweh your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law" (Deut 31:11,12)

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| V. | List of Witnesses
<i>Deut 4:26; 30:19-20; 31:28/I Sam. 1:2,3</i> | "... I call heaven and earth to witness against you today" |
| VI. | Curses & Blessings
<i>Deut chptrs 27-28 (specifically, 28:1-6,15-19)</i> | |

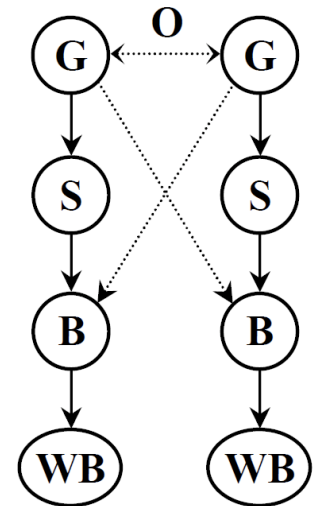
The act of treaty-making is sealed by means of an **Oath** accompanied by a **Ratification Ceremony (sacrifice)** whereby the Vassal (and in biblical texts, the Suzerain) pledges his obedience to treaty
Exod 24:3-8/Genesis 15/Josh 24:24/Matt 27:22-25

"Then Moses recounted to the people all the words of Yahweh and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, 'All the words which Yahweh has spoken we will do!' ...
Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.'" (Exod 24:3,8)

Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty & Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the OT* (Rome: Pontifical Institute, 1963), 3, 28-29; Meredith Kline, *The Treaty of the Great King* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963); Moshe Weinfeld, *tyr b TDOT* 2: 253-79; G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition" *BA* 17 (1954): 50-76. The format may be found in K. Kitchen's article, "The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?" *BAR* 21/2 (1995):48-57, 88 and Jon Levenson, *Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1985), 26-36.

Sandra Richter, 2003

4. Thus, covenants were not arbitrary “promises” made by God with biblical characters.⁵ They must be interpreted as the biblical characters themselves would have understood them—*governmentally*. Even the English word “covenant” assumes a governmental context.⁶
- Covenants are thus “governmental agreements,” which can take place in any arena of life in which government functions: political (e.g. city, state, nation, etc), professional (education, business, military, etc), and private (civic, religious, recreational, family, etc).
 - All covenants incorporate the same basic elements: two governments (G) take an oath of loyalty to each other (O) and agree on some set of stipulations (S). If the stipulations are met, then benefits (B) are given, which ultimately lead to well-being (WB).
5. However, with the severe disintegration of society after the Enlightenment, covenants hold much less power within interpersonal relationships since one area of life generally functions independently from all other areas of life.



B. Biblical Covenants Made within Integrated Societies

- The covenants were given in the context of ANE society and culture, which was economically agrarian (vs. industrial) and governmentally tribal (vs. bureaucratic).⁷ Tribal settings as such were:
 - Patrilocal – the family unit and living space were built around the oldest male.⁸
 - Patrilineal – ancestral decent and inheritance were traced through the male line.⁹
 - Patriarchal – authority within the household belonged to the oldest male.¹⁰

⁵ Within the metaphysical context of Christonaturalism, divine sovereignty as existential causation determines the overarching framework within which covenants are interpreted. Thus, covenants are generally seen within the context of foreknowledge and predestination and are thus relegated to simple “promises” concerning the future that God has already determined (monergism) or that God desires all to be included in (synergism).

⁶ “1) A signed written agreement between two or more parties (nations) to perform some action; 2) (Bible) an agreement between God and his people in which God makes certain promises and requires certain behaviour from them in return.” (HyperDictionary.com, “Covenant,” available from <http://www.hyperdictionary.com/search.aspx?define=covenant>.)

⁷ See Lawrence E. Stager, “The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 260 (Autumn, 1985), 1-35.

⁸ Families consisted of the “immediate family” of the oldest male, which lived in the *bet’ab* (ba tyb), lit. “father’s house(hold)”. Up to three generations consisting of up to 30 people would collectively farm the land it jointly owned, sharing in its produce. Thus, the *bet’ab* could accurately be described as a “family compound.” (cf. Jn. 14:1-2; Rev. 21:2-3)

⁹ The primary resources in ANE society were land and children. Thus, God implemented such things as the “inalienable land law” (Lev 25:13-28) and “levirate law” (Deut 25:5-10) to protect and sustain continuity within the society.

¹⁰ The oldest male, i.e. patriarch, was the center of the household with all authority and responsibility for the household resting on him (thus, the eldest son was given “special treatment” since he would eventually inherit all authority and responsibility). The “extended family” consisted of a progressively inclusive series of groups emanating from the patriarchal leader: 1) *bet’ab* (ba tyb), “father’s house(hold)”, 2) *mishpahah* (hxpvm), “clan”, 3) *matteh* (hjm), “tribe”, 4) *am* (~[]), “people/nation” (cf. Josh 7).

2. In this context, ANE covenants implemented *fictive kinship* to strengthen the bonds between the king and his vassal.¹¹ The use of covenant thus practically established familial bonds, which assumed all the obligations and loyalties common to the family structure.¹² Moreover, “love” (Hb. *chesed*) within the kinship structure was primarily expressed through *loyalty* to the covenant obligations.¹³

...they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, "He is good; his love (Hb. *chesed*, i.e. covenant faithfulness) endures forever." (NIV 2 Chronicles 7:3)¹⁴

II. THE COSMOGENICAL "COVENANT OF CREATION"

A. The Reality of the Covenant of Creation

Thus says the LORD: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night (cf. Gen. 1:5), so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, ²¹ then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken... ²⁵ **Thus says the LORD: If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the fixed order of heaven and earth, ²⁶ then I will reject the offspring of Jacob... (ESV Jeremiah 33:20-26)**

Preserve my life according to your love (Hb. *chesed*, i.e. covenant faithfulness), and I will obey the statutes of your mouth. ⁸⁹ Your word (i.e. covenant), **O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm (“is firmly fixed” ESV/NRSV) **in the heavens.** ⁹⁰ **Your faithfulness** (to Your word/creation) **continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures.** ⁹¹ **Your laws endure to this day, for all things serve you** (“are your servants” NASB/KJV/NKJV/ESV/NRSV, i.e. the heavens and the earth). (NIV Psalm 119:88-91)**

Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, ¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. (ESV Genesis 9:9-10)

¹¹ See Frank Moore Cross, “Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel” in *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 3-21.

¹² “In tribal societies there were legal mechanisms or devices—we might even say legal fictions—by which outsiders, non-kin, might be incorporated into the kinship group. Those incorporated, an individual or a group, gained fictive kinship and shared the mutual obligations and privileges of real kinsmen. In the West Semitic tribal societies we know best, such individuals or groups were grafted onto the genealogies and fictive kinship became kinship of the flesh or blood. In a word, kinship-in-law became kinship-in-flesh.” (Ibid., 7.)

¹³ “The word is used only in cases where there is some recognized tie between the parties concerned. It is not used indiscriminately of kindness in general, haphazard, kindly deeds; this is why Coverdale was careful to avoid using the word ‘kindness’ in respect of God’s dealings with his people Israel. The theological importance of the word *chesed* is that it stands more than any other word for the attitude which both parties to a covenant ought to maintain towards each other. Sir George Adam Smith suggested the rendering ‘leal-love.’ The merit of this translation is that it combines the twin ideas of love and loyalty, both of which are essential... God’s loving-kindness is that sure love which will not let Israel go. Not all Israel’s persistent waywardness could ever destroy it. Though Israel be faithless, yet God remains faithful still. This steady, persistent refusal of God to wash his hands of wayward Israel is the essential meaning of the Hebrew word which is translated loving-kindness.” [Norman H. Snaith, *Theological Word Book of the Bible*, ed. by Alan Richardson (New York: MacMillan, 1951), 136-7.]

¹⁴ Note the many covenantal references of “his love [Hb. *chesed*] endures forever”: 1 Chr. 16:34, 41; 2 Chr. 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21; Ezra 3:11; Ps. 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 117:2; 118:1ff, 29; 136:1ff; 138:8; Jer. 33:11.

1. The Parties Involved in the Covenant of Creation

Realms Created	Rulers of Realms Created
Day 1: light; day and night	Day 4: sun, moon and stars
Day 2: sea and sky	Day 5: sea creatures; birds
Day 3: land and vegetation	Day 6: land creatures; man
Days 1-6: heavens and earth	Day 7: God

God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky..." And it was so. ¹⁶ God made two great lights... to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. (NIV Genesis 1:3-18)

And God said, "Let the water teem (i.e. fish rule the water) with living creatures, and let birds fly (i.e. birds rule the sky) above the earth across the expanse of the sky." ... ²² God blessed them (governmentally, cf. v.28) and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number (cf. v.28) and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth (unto rulership)."... ²⁴ And God said, "Let the land (Hb. *erets*) produce living creatures (cf. creation of adam)... and all the creatures that move along the ground (i.e. living creatures rule the land)." (NIV Genesis 1:20-24)

2. Adamic Order the Height of the Covenant of Creation (cf. Gen. 1:26-2:25)

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."... ²⁹ Then God said, "I give you (adam) every seed-bearing plant... ³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground-- everything that has the breath of life in it (cf. 2:7)-- I give every green plant for food." And it was so. (NIV Genesis 1:26-30)

- **When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him... ⁶ You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: ⁷ all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, ⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea... (NIV Psalm 8:3-8)**
- **Why do the nations say, "Where is their God?" ³ Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him. ⁴ But their idols are silver and gold... ¹⁵ May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. ¹⁶ The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man. ¹⁷ It is not the dead who praise the LORD, those who go down to silence; ¹⁸ it is we who extol the LORD, both now and forevermore. (NIV Psalm 115:2-18)**

B. Cosmogenical Covenant Restored Eschatologically

1. All biblical covenants are ultimately fulfilled in the eschatological Messianic Kingdom, which is simply the restoration of the original Adamic Kingdom. Under the leadership of a

Righteous Adam, creation as a whole is restored to its original glory, both governmentally and existentially.

...that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things (i.e. creation), which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets (cf. covenants, cf. v.25) since the world began (cf. Adamic Covenant) . (NKJV Acts 3:20-21)

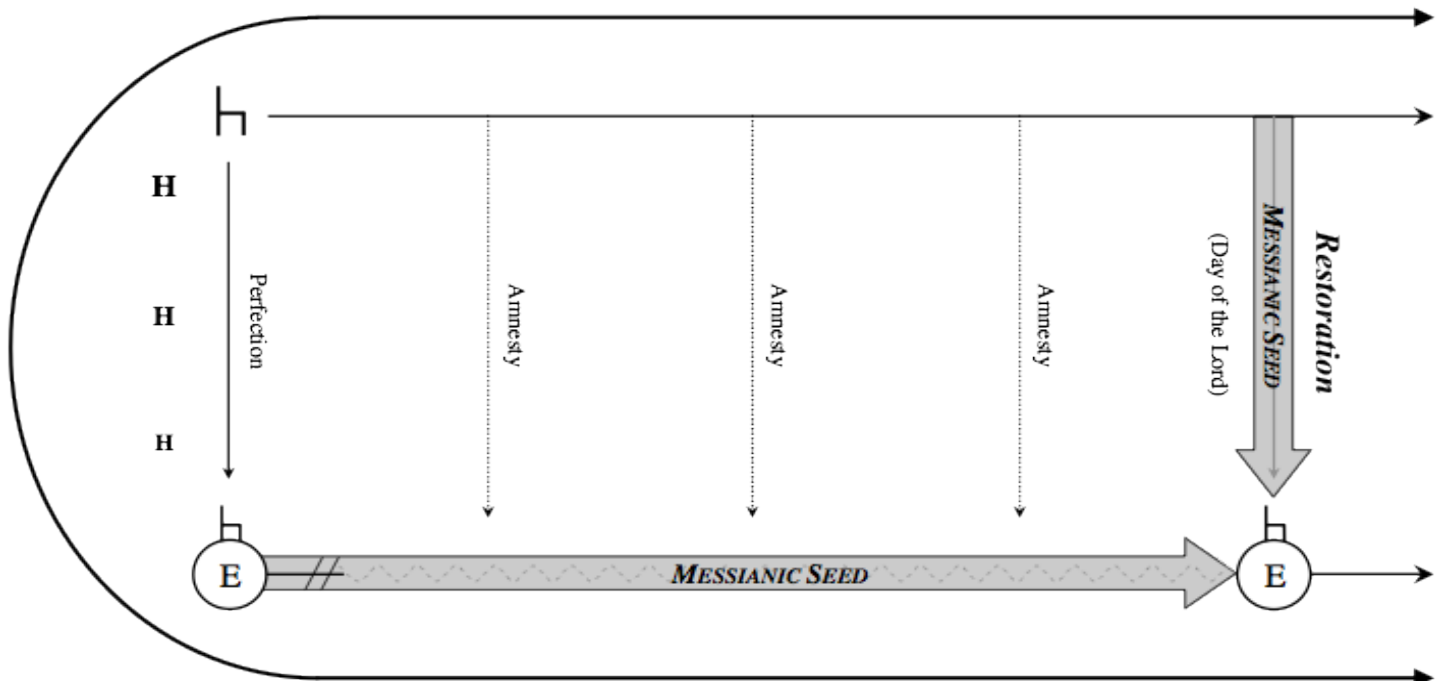
"What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? ⁷ You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor ⁸ and put everything under his feet." (cf. Ps. 8:4-8) In putting everything under him (Jesus, cf. Adam), God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. (NIV Hebrews 2:6-8)

2. The rest of the covenants are simply *reaffirmations* and *amplifications* of the Adamic Covenant, and thus they are ultimately referenced to that covenant and its fulfillment.

For since death came through a man (cf. Adamic Covenant), the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man (cf. Restored Adamic Covenant). ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power (cf. Abrahamic/Davidic Covenants, Is. 9:7; Ps. 89:3ff; Rom. 4:13ff; etc.). ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For he "has put everything under his feet." (cf. Ps. 8:6) (NIV 1 Corinthians 15:20-27)

3. Therefore, Abraham is not the reference point of the covenants, nor the conquest of Canaan, nor the Davidic kingdom, nor the Cross, nor an etherealized "Heaven," etc. The covenants are not based on nor fulfilled in these people, places or events, but rather, they are based on the original Adamic Kingdom and fulfilled in the Restored Adamic Kingdom, i.e. the Messianic Kingdom. In other words, all covenants find their base of interpretation cosmogenically and look forward eschatologically for their fulfillment.

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom (Gk. *basileia* nNFS) of the world (i.e. Adamic Kingdom) has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ (i.e. Messianic Kingdom), and he shall reign forever and ever." (ESV Revelation 11:15)

Messianic Centrality Diagram

III. THE MESSIANIC SEED AS THE CENTRAL THEME OF ALL THE COVENANTS

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) and her Seed (Hb. zera, nMSC); He (Hb. hu, p3MS) shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel. (NKJV Genesis 3:15)

A. Introduction: The “Seed” and “Corporate Solidarity”

The promises (about the Messiah) were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say (i.e. interpretation/translation) “and to seeds,” meaning many people (cf. translation: “descendants” or “offspring”), but “and to your seed,” meaning one person (cf. translation: “seed”), who is Christ (i.e. Messiah). (NIV Galatians 3:16)

1. When interpreting the biblical term “seed,” some have argued for the concept of “corporate solidarity” in which the whole is represented by the singular, and both are equally part of the said noun.¹⁵ However, corporate solidarity is ultimately a biological reality within the biblical worldview, in that all human beings are literally the seed (Hb. zera, Gk. *sperma* LXX) of Adam, and thus all human beings literally have the DNA of Adam passed down through the generations.

¹⁵ “‘Corporate solidarity’ is that the *one* who represents the group and the *many* who are represented are equally a part of the same single meaning intended by the author. Usually these two aspects are incorporated into a collective singular noun, just as in the English phrases ‘one deer’ or ‘ten deer,’ the noun remains the same!” [Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 25.]; see also D. Joyce, “The Individual and the Community,” in *Beginning Old Testament Study*, ed. J.W. Rogerson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982).

2. The existential reality of Adam and his means of reproduction are the basis of the biblical concept of corporate solidarity. When a man and woman come together and become one flesh (cf. Gen. 2:24), they literally produce flesh from the connection of their flesh. Thus, the child and the parents are literally of the same flesh and could thus be considered of one "seed."
3. Thus, when God makes promises concerning the "seed" of Adam (Gen. 3:15), Noah (Gen. 9:9), Abraham (Gen. 17:7), etc., He is speaking both of the *individual man* and *all of those* (i.e. descendants) who come forth, literally by his seed/zera/sperma. From the foundation of this biological corporate solidarity, the governmental concepts of "adoption", "engrafting" or "immigration" into that literal lineage is later introduced (cf. Rom. 8:15ff; Rom. 11:17f; Eph. 1:5; 2:12f; Gal. 4:6f; etc.)

B. Old Testament Survey of the Messianic Seed

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth (Hb. sheth; "Appointed"), "for God has appointed (Hb. shith) another seed (Hb. zera, nMSA) for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." ²⁶ And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then ("At that time" NIV) men began to call on the name of the LORD (i.e. in hopes of the Seed). (NKJV Genesis 4:25-26)

- ***When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah ("Man of the dart"—Strong's; alternatively "when he dies—he will send it" or "when he dies—it will come"). ²⁴ Enoch walked with God (cf. Jude 14-15); then he was no more, because God took him away. (NIV Genesis 5:21, 24)***
- ***He (Lamech) named him Noah ("Comfort/Rest") and said, "He will comfort us (as the Seed) in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed (cf. Gen. 3:17-19)." (NIV Genesis 5:29)***

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth (cf. Gen. 1:28)... ⁹ And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) after you." (KJV Genesis 9:1, 9)

And the LORD said unto Abram... "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: ¹⁵ For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) for ever." (KJV Genesis 13:14-15)

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed (zera, nMSC) after thee. ⁸ And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (KJV Genesis 17:7-8)

By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: ¹⁷ That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his

enemies; ¹⁸ And in thy seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed (cf. Gen. 12:1-3); because thou hast obeyed my voice. (KJV Genesis 22:16-18)

And he (Jacob) dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. ¹³ And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, "I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed (Hb. zera, nMSC)... and in thee and in thy seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) shall all the families of the earth be blessed. (KJV Genesis 28:12-14)

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) may live... that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them. (KJV Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

Joshua said unto all the people, "Thus saith the LORD God of Israel... ³ 'I took your father Abraham from the other side of the [Euphrates], and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed (Hb. zera, nMSC), and gave him Isaac. ⁴ And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau... ⁵ I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt... ⁸ And I brought you into the land of the Amorites... ¹³ And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour... ¹⁴ Now therefore fear the LORD... choose you this day whom ye will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (KJV Joshua 24:2-15)

When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever... ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever. (NKJV 2 Samuel 7:12-16)

I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, ⁴ Thy seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations... ³⁵ Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. ³⁶ His seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. (KJV Psalm 89:3-4, 35-36)

Thus saith the LORD, "As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, 'Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it': so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all. ⁹ And I will bring forth a seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. (KJV Isaiah 65:8-9)

Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; ²⁶ Then will I cast away the seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) to be rulers over the seed (Hb. zera, nMSC) of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them. (KJV Jeremiah 33:25-26)

C. The Messianic Seed/Son of Adam

In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son (Hb. ben ~ Hb. zera) of man, coming with the clouds of heaven... ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. (NIV Daniel 7:13-14)

- ***And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son (Hb. ben) and named him Seth, "For God has appointed another seed (Hb. zera) for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." (NKJV Genesis 4:25)***
- ***Yet I will also make a nation of the son (Hb. ben) of the bondwoman, because he is your seed (Hb. zera). (NKJV Genesis 21:13)***
- ***And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seed (Hb. zera) after you, who will be of your sons (Hb. ben); and I will establish his kingdom. (NKJV 1 Chronicles 17:11)***
- ***But draw near hither, ye sons (Hb. ben) of the sorceress, the seed (Hb. zera) of the adulterer and the whore. (KJV Isaiah 57:3)***

D. Adamic Covenant Titles: "Son of Man" = "Son of Adam" = "Son of God" = "Messiah"

1. "Son of Man" = "Son of Adam"

- <0120> ~d'a' 'adam {aw-dawm'}

Meaning: 1) man, mankind 1a) man, human being 1b) man, mankind (much more frequently intended sense in OT) 1c) Adam, first man 1d) city in Jordan valley

Origin: from 0119; TWOT - 25a; n m

Usage: AV - man 408, men 121, Adam 13, person(s) 8, misc 2; 552

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground (Hb. adamah) all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man (Hb. adam, "Adam" KJV/ NKJV) to see what he would name them... ²⁰ So the man (Hb. adam, "Adam" KJV/ NKJV) gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam (Hb. adam, "the man" NRSV) no suitable helper was found. (NIV Genesis 2:19-20)

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of adam (Hb. ben-adam), that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it? (ESV Numbers 23:19)

Behold, even the moon is not bright, and the stars are not pure in his eyes; ⁶ how much less man (Hb. enowsh), who is a maggot, and the son of man (Hb. ben-adam), who is a worm! (ESV Job 25:5-6)

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is man (Hb. enowsh) that you are mindful of him, and the son of man (Hb. ben-adam) that you care for him? ⁵ Yet you have made him (i.e. Adam, et al.) a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him

with glory and honor. ⁶ You have given him (i.e. Adam, et al.) dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet... (ESV Psalm 8:3-6)

O LORD, what is man (Hb. adam) that you regard him, or the son of man (Hb. ben-enowsh) that you think of him? ⁴ Man (Hb. adam) is like a breath; his (i.e. Adam, et al.) days are like a passing shadow. (ESV Psalm 144:3-4)

Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man (Hb. ben-adam), in whom there is no salvation. ⁴ When his breath departs he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish. (ESV Psalm 146:3-4)

I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you are afraid of man (Hb. enowsh) who dies and of the son of man (Hb. ben-adam) who is made like grass. (NASB Isaiah 51:12)

Blessed is the man (Hb. enowsh) who does this, and the son of man (Hb. ben-adam) who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath, not profaning it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil. (ESV Isaiah 56:2)

As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring cities, declares the LORD, so no man (Hb. iysh) shall dwell there (Babylon), and no son of man (Hb. ben-adam) shall sojourn in her. (ESV Jeremiah 50:40)

And he said to me, "Son of man (Hb. ben-adam), stand on your feet, and I will speak with you." (ESV Ezekiel 2:1)¹⁶

2. "Son of Man" = "Messiah"¹⁷

The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man (Gk. huios tou anthropou; orally Hb. ben-adam). ³⁸ The field is the world (Gk. kosmos, cf. Gen. 2:1), and the good seed is the children of the kingdom... ⁴¹ The Son of Man (orally Hb. ben-adam) will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴² and throw them into the fiery furnace. (ESV Matthew 13:37-42)

When the Son of Man (orally Hb. ben-adam) comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations... (ESV Matthew 25:31-32)

And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man (orally Hb. ben-adam) to be glorified..." ³³ He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. ³⁴ So the crowd answered him, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man (orally Hb. ben-adam) must be lifted up? (ESV John 12:23-34)

¹⁶ Cf. Ez. 2:3, 6, 8; 3:1, 3f, 10, 17, 25; 4:1, 16; 5:1, 6:2; 7:2; 8:5f, 8, 12, 15, 17; 11:2, 4, 15; 12:2f, 9, 18, 22, 27; 13:2, 17; 14:3, 13; 15:2; 16:2; 17:2; 20:3f, 27, 46; 21:2, 6, 9, 12, 14, 19, 28; 22:2, 18, 24; 23:2, 36; 24:2, 16, 25; 25:2; 26:2; 27:2; 28:2, 12, 21; 29:2, 18; 30:2, 21; 31:2; 32:2, 18; 33:2, 7, 10, 12, 24, 30; 34:2; 35:2; 36:1, 17; 37:3, 9, 11, 16; 38:2, 14; 39:1, 17; 40:4; 43:7, 10, 18; 44:5; 47:6.

¹⁷ "Son of Man" is a title used 86 times in the NT: Mt. 8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 11:19; 12:8, 32, 40; 13:37, 41; 16:13, 27f; 17:9, 12, 22; 19:28; 20:18, 28; 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44; 25:31; 26:2, 24, 45, 64; Mark 2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21, 41, 62; Luke 5:24; 6:5, 22; 7:34; 9:22, 26, 44, 58; 11:30; 12:8, 10, 40; 17:22, 24, 26, 30; 18:8, 31; 19:10; 21:27, 36; 22:22, 48, 69; 24:7; John 1:51; 3:13f; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23, 34; 13:31; Acts 7:56; Heb. 2:6; Rev. 1:13; 14:14.

3. "Son of Adam" = "Son of God"

Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened... ²² and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

²³ Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli... ³⁸ the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God (cf. Gen. 1:26; 5:3). (ESV Luke 3:21-38)

- Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. (ESV Genesis 1:26)

- When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. (ESV Genesis 5:3)

For all (sons of Adam) who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear (of death), but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs- heirs of God (sons of God) and fellow heirs with Christ (Son of God), provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him (i.e. resurrected, cf. v.23)... ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. (ESV Romans 8:14-19)

Thus it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being"; the last Adam (cf. "son of Adam") became a life-giving spirit (cf. "son of God")... ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust (cf. son of Adam), we will also bear the image of the man of heaven (cf. son of God). ⁵⁰ What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable (cf. Jn. 3:3-15)... ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. (NRSV 1 Corinthians 15:45-53)

4. "Son of God" = "Messiah"

Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ. (NIV Luke 4:41; cf. Mt. 8:28-29; Mk. 3:11)

Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" ⁶⁸ But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ "Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (NKJV John 6:67-69)

"Yes, Lord," she (Martha) told him (Jesus), "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." (NIV John 11:27)

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (NIV John 20:31)

At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God... ²² Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ. (NIV Acts 9:19-22)

5. "Son of Man" = "Son of God" = "Messiah"¹⁸

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" ... ¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah..." (NIV Matthew 16:13-17)

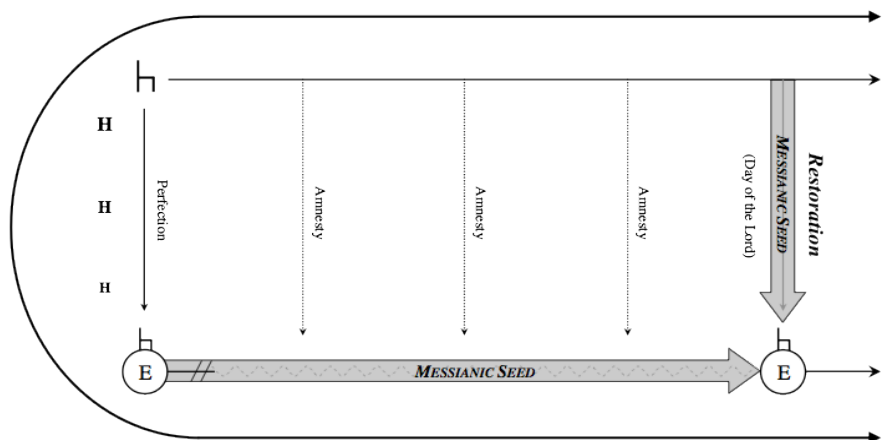
And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." ⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." (ESV Matthew 26:63-64)

Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel (i.e. Messiah)!" ⁵⁰ Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." ⁵¹ And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." (ESV John 1:49-51)

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life... ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (ESV John 3:14-18)

Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father... ²⁵ I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live... ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. (NIV John 5:22-27)

Messianic Centrality Diagram



¹⁸ The terms "Son of God" and "Son of Man" were not used as equivalents of "divine nature" and "human nature" until the fourth century (though of course, there are many passages, both Old and New Testament, that clearly express or assume Messiah's divinity). In the Old Testament, YHWH never talks about himself in ontological terms, but rather *functional* (e.g. Ex. 34:6-7). He does often reference the exalted nature of his being (i.e. ontological), but it is always in reference to his exalted position as Lord (i.e. functional). It's only in the 3rd and 4th century when metaphysical dualism sets in and God no longer plays a real existential function in the redemption of the earth that the ontological nature of God becomes the primary focus. In other words, in the OT the ontological serves the functional, but in Hellenism God plays no part in the functional, so the ontological is the ultimate end.