

ISRAEL

God's Chosen

The Mosaic Covenant

Israel - both the land and the people - are chosen by God. First, we see this in the Abrahamic Covenant. Among other things, God promised Abraham that His physical descendants would possess the land forever. The Bible goes on to show that this is referring to the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Israelites. The Abrahamic Covenant chooses the Israelites before they ever even existed. The Mosaic Covenant chooses the Israelites once they are actually a people. You could say that the Abrahamic Covenant was God's promise of a people and the Mosaic Covenant was God's taking possession of those people once they existed.

When you study something, start out asking questions about your topic. What is the Mosaic Covenant? Why is it called that? When was it formed? Who was it formed with? Why was it given? Is it still in effect or is it over with? What relationship does the Mosaic covenant have with the Abrahamic, the Davidic, and the New covenants? Is there a connection with the Mosaic covenant and the Millennial Kingdom? Is the Church under the law of Moses? For a Christian to grow spiritually, be sanctified and please God do we need to follow the Mosaic requirements: circumcision, feast days, Sabbath days and years, dietary laws, New Moons, etc?

The Mosaic Covenant Explained

- At Mount Sinai
- Right after deliverance from Egyptian slavery

- Through Moses (so its called the “Mosaic”)
- A new and different covenant than the Abrahamic (Dt 5:2-3; Gal 3:16-18)
- The covenant confirmed (Ex 24; Lev. 26; Dt. 29:9, 12-15)
- Established “legally,” or “duly” (Gal 3:15-18).
- Established the terms of blessing and punishment
- Established the Law: moral, ceremonial civil.
- Establish the Jewish calendar of feast days
- Establish the Sabbaths requirements
- Established the Aaronic and Levitical priesthood
- Established the temple worship regulations
- Established the animal sacrificial system
- Incorporated circumcision
- Incorporated universal moral laws that were laws before Moses and after

The Mosaic covenant is different from the Abrahamic covenant and it was formed later (Gal. 3:16-18). Nonetheless, the two are related. Leviticus 26:40-45 and Deuteronomy 29:12-13 speak of both covenants. Leviticus has the land of Israel in view while Deuteronomy’s focus is the people and God being their God. The Abrahamic covenant promised descendents to Abram. The Mosaic Covenant was made with those descendents. The Abrahamic covenant promised those descendents would live in the land forever. The Mosaic Covenant set the terms for them to live in the land.

***How could God promise Abraham unconditionally that his descendents would live in the land forever and yet tell those descendents that they could only live in the land if they obeyed the newly formed Mosaic covenant? The answer is that the Mosaic covenant had temporary effect, and was not the vehicle

by which God was going to use to bring the descendents of Abraham into the land permanently. Those who live in God's land (Lev 25:23) must be righteous. The Mosaic Covenant's purpose was to demonstrate the unrighteousness of man (particularly the Israelites), and thus how unfit for the land they were. But to make good on his promises to Abraham, that his descendents would live forever in the land, God had to provide a way for those descendents to be righteous. The Mosaic Covenant could not do that, so another way had to be provided (Rom 3:20-22; Php 3:9; We'll come back to this at the end when we talk about the "failure" of the Mosaic Covenant.

The Mosaic Covenant's Purpose

- Distinguish Israel from all other nations (Dt 4; Rom 9). The Mosaic covenant singles out the people of Israel as unique to God. It was not made with any other nation. Not then, not now.
- Show the righteousness of God (Rom 3; 7; Gal 3)
- Show what sin is, the sinfulness of man and how it separates from God (Rom 3:20; 5:13; 7:6-7; Gal 3:19; 1 Tim 1:7-10; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb 10:1-3)
- Show need for salvation
- Show how salvation is done: through a holy priest, blood sacrifice, in the temple... (Hebrews 9)
- Serve as a custodian of the Jews (Gal 4; Heb 9:8-10)
- Foreshadow and anticipate the Christ: law, priesthood, substitutionary sacrifice, temple... (Hebrews 9:8-10; John 5:39-41)
- Formed the basis for Israel's right to live in the land or not

***Related to the purpose of the Law is the purpose of Israel the nation: to be the channel for the true God's self-revelation and the

entrance of the Messiah into the world for the redemption of man. Israel was to be a light shining to all other nations. The Messiah who would ultimately come from her would be “the” light to all nations. Israel is the holy nation of God, and they serve as a firstfruits of the full harvest of all nations to come.

NOT the MC’s Purpose:

- Did NOT abrogate the Abrahamic Covenant (Gal 3; Rom 4)
- Did NOT apply to any other nation at that time, or in the future (only Israel)
- NOT a way for man to be declared righteous/saved (Rom 9:30-32; Gal 2:15-16; 3:1-4; 5:1-4; Heb 7:11, 18-19, 22; 8:6-7, 13;
- NOT a guide or binding set of rules today for the Church to live by so we can live sanctified lives (we are FREE from the Law - Rom 7:6; Gal 3:1-4; 5:1-4; Col. 2:16-17)
 - No circumcision (Gal 5:1-4), priests, sanctuary, animal sacrifice, calendar of festivals, dietary restrictions, Sabbaths (Mark 7:19; Acts 10:9-16; Rom 14:1-6; Col. 2:16-17)
- Did NOT establish a monarchy

The Mosaic Covenant’s Failure

- Could not purify anyone inwardly - only outwardly/ ceremonially (Heb 9:9, 13)
- Could not perfect anyone (Heb 7:11, 18-19; 10:1)
- Could not cleanse a man’s conscience (Heb 9:9, 14; 10:2)
- Could not take away sins (Heb 10:11)
- Could not give access to the Most Holy Place (Heb 9:8)
- Could not declare a man righteous (Rom 9:30-32; Gal 2:15-16; 3:1-4; 5:1-4; Heb 7:11, 18-19, 22; 8:6-7, 13)

The MC success is also its failure: justly condemning man's sin and making men self-conscious of their sin (Heb 10:3). If all God sought was the just condemnation of man for his sin then the Law would be all that was needed. But God's plans are more than that. He plans salvation for man. That requires something other than the Law because the Law cannot make the unrighteous righteous - it can only condemn to death the unrighteous. It shows man for what he is: a sinner justly condemned and deserving of death. (Gal. 3:21)

- The MC could condemn, but it could not make righteous.
- The MC could declare a man righteous if a man could be righteous. But no man is righteous under the law. All men are sinful and therefore all the Law can do is condemn man.
- Who is the only man in history who fulfilled the Law perfectly? Meaning, who did not in one jot or tittle violate anything in the Law? Jesus.
 - He said, "I have not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it." "Christ is the culmination of the law..." Romans 10:4 says. That was not an example for us to follow. He came to fulfill the Law, which we can never do, so that His perfect divine righteousness could be proven. When the Law required a spotless lamb for a sacrifice it foreshadowed Christ's moral spotlessness. You could say the Law "inspected" him in every way and found Him righteous. But this was so that he could be offered as a righteous substitute in place of everyone else whom the Law condemned as sinners deserving death. The only one the law declared righteous is the one who suffered the death penalty that the law demanded from everyone else whom it declared guilty!

THE SOLUTION TO THE MC FAILURE:

Here's the point: the MC couldn't make a man righteous, only condemn him to death. So how is God going to save a man from death? How is God going to solve this problem of man's sinful and unrighteous standing so that that man can have life everlasting and not be thrown to death? The answer is another covenant. A New Covenant. Which we'll look at next time.

"If the MC gave the Law to the Israelites, and they were unable to carry out the requirements of the Law and so bring guilt upon themselves, then how could they have any hope? If Christ was not to come for many years into the future and take away sin and guilt, then what allowed Israel to "live" in the meantime?"

The answer is found in passages like Romans 3:24-26; Hebrews 9:8-10, 13. Until Christ would come, the sacrificial system made temporary atonement (covering) for the sins of the Israelites. They not only atoned for, but they also foreshadowed the coming Christ and His once for all sacrifice (Rom 3:23-26; Heb 7-10).

The people and land of Israel are chosen by God and belong to Him uniquely. Through the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants we see the special relationship God formed with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. While we are in a chapter of human history where they are "set aside" (Rom 11:25), this by no means should be understood as permanent rejection (Rom 11:26-32). God's purpose to establish them in the land forever still stand: "It does not depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy." (Rom 9:16).