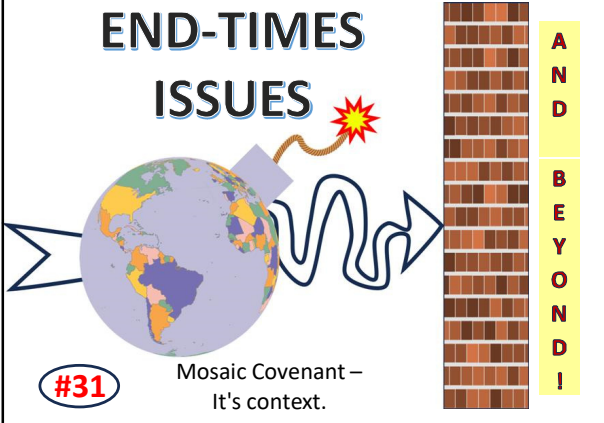


END-TIMES ISSUES



#31 Mosaic Covenant – It's context.

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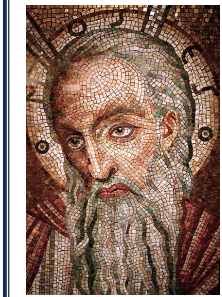
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Beginning with a parenthesis!

- ✓ A **MOSAIC** is an artform, which uses small pieces of material (such as colored glass, pebbles, ceramic) to form a pattern or image.
- ✓ The **MOSAIC COVENANT** is about the covenant that was given to Israel, by Moses (ultimately from God).

The word is a combination of the name "Moses" and the suffix "-ic" (which means "connected to, or associated with").

Here is a **MOSAIC** of the human author of the **MOSAIC COVENANT**!



WHEN ALL HUMANITY UNITED IN REBELLION AGAINST GOD...

- ✓ God destroyed them with a flood judgment... sparing the only righteous person left on earth (and his family).
- ✓ At that time, God promised to never destroy the earth again in this manner.

"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 (NIV)

- ✓ **But that did not solve the problem of human sin.** Even though people *knew* what their actions deserved, this awareness did NOT change their hearts. As God said:

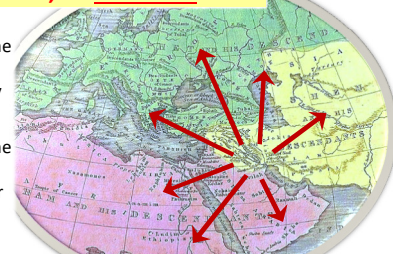
"...every inclination of the human **heart** is **evil from childhood**."

Genesis 8:21b (NIV)

SO THE NEXT TIME THEY UNITED IN REBELLION AGAINST GOD, HE KEPT HIS PROMISE AND DIDN'T DESTROY THEM.

INSTEAD, HE SCATTERED THEM.

- ✓ Genesis 10 – The divisions were based on family groups.
- ✓ Genesis 11 – The reason for the divisions (=their rebellion).



... the Lord confused the language of the whole world. ... the Lord **scattered** them over the face of the whole earth.

Genesis 11:9b (NIV)

GOD LET THEM HAVE THE LIE THEY WANTED... AND ALL THE CONSEQUENCES THAT GO WITH IT.

- ✓ They didn't want the truth... so he let them have the lie.

... people **who suppress the truth** by their unrighteousness...

Romans 1:18b (NET)

Furthermore, just as **they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God**, so **God gave them over to a depraved mind**, so that they do what ought not to be done.

Romans 1:28 (NIV)

- ✓ Deliberate suppression of the truth leads to ignorance of it.

They are darkened in their understanding, being alienated from the life of God because of **the ignorance that is in them due to the hardness of their hearts**. Because they are callous, they have given themselves over to indecency for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

Ephesians 4:18-19 (NET)

CONSEQUENCES

- ✓ **God let the entire human race go its own way, in its rejection of God.**

We know ... that **the whole world is under the control of the evil one**.

1 John 5:19 (NIV)

Today, people don't like these verses. They want to believe that people are "basically good" – even though God says their claim is a lie.

As the Scriptures say,
"No one is righteous— not even one.
 No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God.
All have turned away; all have become useless.
No one does good, not a single one."

Romans 3:10-12 (NIV)

Indeed, there is **no one on earth who is righteous**, no one who does what is right and never sins.

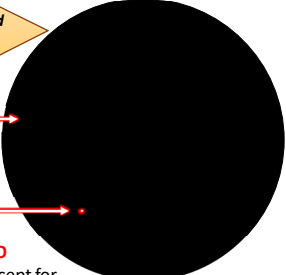
Ecclesiastes 7:20 (NIV)

✓ At this point in history, after the scattering of the nations (Genesis 11), nearly all 100% of humanity are unsaved. (Even Abraham came from a family of idolators – Joshua 24:2-3.)

This circle may illustrate the world condition at this point in time:

BLACK: Representing all the UNSAVED people of the world.

WHITE dot: Representing the people who are SAVED (if any existed).



✓ **GOD HAS NO OBLIGATION TO CHANGE THIS SITUATION**, except for the promise he made to Adam and Eve, that the Serpent would one day be "crushed" (Genesis 3:15b). But at the time of Babel, it looks like the Serpent has won.

✓ **The nations didn't want God; so God quit dealing with them.** He would let them *remain* in their rebellion and sin.

Except for the few nations that interacted with Israel, God would have very little to do with them – other than his providential interaction through nature and circumstances (which would, to some degree, restrain their sin).

✓ **This would not change until God introduced the New Covenant.**

Now that the New Covenant has come, God is offering them another opportunity to repent, before the final judgment.

"... but **now he commands all people everywhere to repent.** For he has set a day when **he will judge the world** with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."

Acts 17:30b-31 (NIV) **THIS REFERS TO JESUS**

WARNING!
REBELLION AGAINST GOD IS A SERIOUS MATTER!

We can make excuses. We can call it something else. But it's still rebellion.

I DON'T CALL IT "REBELLION." I CALL IT "LOOKING AT OTHER OPTIONS!"

SIN HAS CONSEQUENCES!

★ **If you are determined to:** ✓ reject God, ✓ go down the path of sin, ✓ suppress truth until you actually become *ignorant* of it...

↳ **God may judge you** by letting you: ✓ have what you want, ✓ go your own way, ✓ remain in your ignorance.

✓ **He's done it with nations... he can do it with you.**

In the past, he let all nations go their own way. Acts 14:16 (NIV)	In the past God overlooked such ignorance, ... Acts 17:30a (NIV)
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ALL PEOPLE will face judgment at the end of the age.
You will still be held accountable for your actions.

1. **No matter how much you suppress the truth about God, you still know something about God.** People *still* have an innate understanding that there is "a God" (even though they suppress anything they can about this God).

For since the creation of the world **his invisible attributes**—his eternal power and divine nature—**have been clearly seen**, because they are understood through what has been made. So **people are without excuse.**

Ro 1:20 (NET)

"Yet [God] has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."

Acts 14:17 (NIV)

2. **You still know that you deserve death.** You *know* that certain types of conduct are right or wrong. You *know* that certain types of conduct deserve punishment.

They show that **the requirements of the law are written on their hearts**, their **consciences** also bearing witness, and their **thoughts** sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.

Romans 2:16 (NIV)

Although **they know God's righteous decree** that **those who do such things deserve death**, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Ro 1:32 (NIV)

Whether you are condemning others, or excusing yourself – either way, your *actions* demonstrate your awareness that "something" is right, and another "something" is wrong... even if your views about those "somethings" are mixed-up.

IS GOD "UNFAIR"?

✓ **Those who think lightly about sin may think so.** However:

1. People will receive *only* the judgment they deserve.
2. Later generations will receive *only* what *they* deserve, based on their own knowledge (and violation) of the truth.
3. **We should also be aware that God has no obligation to save anyone, anywhere, at any time.**

There are only TWO possible ways that God can be "unfair":

1. When God delays people's judgment (instead of immediate retribution), and lets them continue in their sin – perhaps we could call this "unfair"? At least we don't *deserve* the delay.
2. When God let Jesus experience the wrath WE deserve, *even though he never sinned*, so that those who repent may be saved. That's definitely "unfair" to Jesus!

GOD PLANS TO CHANGE THIS HOPELESS SITUATION!

- ✓ He plans to **take back the nations**. Some people from each nation will be saved. In the end, all nations will serve the true God.

... with your [= Jesus'] blood **you purchased for God persons** from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Revelation 5:9b (NIV)

"All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

Revelation 15:4b (NIV)

- ✓ Everything the devil has accomplished will be destroyed.

For the whole earth will be **consumed by my fiery anger.**

Zepaniah 3:8b (NET)

The reason the Son of God appeared was to **destroy the devil's work.**

1 John 3:8b (NIV)

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GOD HAS PLANS TO TAKE BACK THE WORLD!

BUT IT WILL TAKE A LOT OF TIME TO ACCOMPLISH THOSE PLANS.

- ✓ **God will have to start over.** He will have to "create" his own nation; since all those that were in existence had rejected God and turned to evil.
- ✓ This newly-formed nation will have to be *loyal to him*, and choose to NOT go the way of the other nations.
- ✓ **It will take a lot of time** – nearly a *millennium* (from the time of the scattering of nations) before it even looks like God is starting to do something! And even then, it will often look like a failure!
- ✓ This entire process will be encompassed in what we call the "**Abrahamic Covenant**"; but it will require several other covenants, before it is complete.
- ✓ **The first of these additional covenants is what we call the "Mosaic Covenant."**

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- ✓ **The FIRST step:** God would call one person, Abram (= Abraham), to trust him. Then he would "grow" a God-fearing nation* from that one person.

* (The "God-fearing" part hasn't yet happened 100%... but it will.)

The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you."

"... I will bless you..." [etc.]

Genesis 12:1, 2b (NIV)

- ✓ Many things would have to occur, before this entire covenant could be fulfilled. Many things are *still* occurring, as God moves world events toward this goal.
- ✓ **The SECOND step:** For reaching this goal, God will next introduce the **Mosaic Covenant**.

15

UNSAVED WORLD

[ABRAM]

THE MOSAIC COVENANT: TEACHING PEOPLE HOW TO LIVE.

- ✓ For God to take back the world, he needs ① a *nation* of people, ② a *land* for them to live in; and ③ the people need to learn about *how God-honoring people are to live*.
- ✓ This covenant was temporary... but special.
 - Its purpose was to *teach* the people how to live as the people of God. It did not *save* people; for that wasn't its purpose.
- ✓ God was actively involved in the making of this covenant
 - God *wrote* the commandments that were on the stone tablets.
 - God was *visibly present* in some of the activities related to the making of the covenant. [This visible presence was most likely a temporary physical manifestation of Jesus Christ, prior to his birth in Bethlehem.]
 - The *glory of God* would be visibly present over the Ark of the Covenant.

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➤ Compared to some of the other covenants:

- ✓ Like many other covenants (similarities):
 - It was structured like a typical Mideastern treaty of that time.
 - It contained blessings for obedience and cursings (judgments) for disobedience.
 - It was confirmed with an oath – Exodus 24:3, 7.
 - It was sealed by blood – Exodus 24:6, 8.
 - There were witnesses and a meal – Exodus 24:9-10.
 - There were signs and symbols – Exodus 24:4 (12 stone pillars); Exodus 31:12-18 (the Sabbath).
- ✓ Unlike most other covenants in Scripture (differences):
 - It was conditional: It depended on the people's obedience.
 - It was intended to be temporary – to be eventually replaced by the New Covenant.

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➤ Obeying this covenant would result in special blessings.

- ✓ As a treaty between the King and the people, it required obedience.
 - Both parties would agree to the terms, and the treaty (covenant) would be ratified with blood (etc.).
- ✓ This obedience would result in a special relationship between the King (God) and the subjects (Israel).
 - God would treat them as special, above all other nations.

Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be **my treasured possession**. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me **a kingdom of priests and a holy nation**.

Exodus 19:5-6a (NIV)

- If they obeyed, Israel would become an example to the world of what righteousness was all about.

18

✓ **Obeying the laws of this covenant would show the other nations:**

1. The wisdom and understanding of the people.
2. The greatness of the God of Israel (who is near to his people).
3. The rightness of the laws themselves.

Look, I have taught you statutes and ordinances as the LORD my God has commanded me ... Carefully follow them, for **this will show your wisdom and understanding** in the eyes of the peoples. When they hear about all these statutes, they will say, 'This great nation is indeed a wise and understanding people.'

For what great nation is there that has a god **near to it as the LORD our God is to us whenever we call to him?**

And what great nation has **righteous statutes and ordinances** like this entire law I set before you today?

Deuteronomy 4:5a, 6-8 (CSB)

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➡ **However, the Mosaic Covenant had one weakness.**

✓ It can show people how to live... but it can't cause them to live that way.

- Since people are under the control of sin, they don't (and *can't*) fully obey. Only those willing to trust God will be able to do this... and they won't do it perfectly.
- Only Jesus Christ has fully obeyed the obligations of the Mosaic Covenant. He alone was *without sin*.

✓ The Law requires perfect obedience, or we will receive its curse. Since we *do* sin (by nature and by choice), we earn the curse.

All who rely on works of the law are under a curse. For it is written: "**Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.**"

Galatians 3:10 (BSB)

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➡ **Did the Mosaic Covenant fail?**

✓ It "failed" to do only what it wasn't designed to do.

- It was NOT designed to change people's hearts, but to show them how to live in a way that honors God.
- It was NOT designed to *save* people, but to show *saved* people how to live.

✓ We shouldn't be surprised when it doesn't do things it wasn't supposed to do! **This is a basic principle in all of life!**

EXAMPLE: Airplanes were designed to land in a certain way. Trying to land them in ways they were not designed to land will result in problems!

FOLLOWING THE DESIGN  **NOT FOLLOWING THE DESIGN** 

21

TODAY, THERE ARE MANY WRONG VIEWS ABOUT THE MOSAIC COVENANT.

✓ **Some people speak against it; others stress (and misuse) it.**

- In the New Testament, we can find some passages that tell us its value, and other passages that oppose its misuse.

✓ **People tend to have a one-sided focus.**

- They may look at passages that emphasize one issue, and then ignore (or distance themselves from) passages that focus on other issues.

✓ **Context is often ignored – which often leads to wrong conclusions.**

- In many passages, the word "law" may refer to a *specific* aspect of the Mosaic Covenant, and *not* other aspects of it.
- For instance: In one passage, "law" may be referring to the sacrifices; in another passage, it may refer to the moral law.

22

OUR MISSION IS TO:

Think about these issues! Even if we aren't yet sure about the answers.

ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE MOSAIC COVENANT:

- Does the Mosaic Covenant have any application to us today? If so, to what extent? (You may have heard different people express different views. We hope to sort them out.)
- Under the New Covenant, God's laws are written in our hearts. Are they the *same* laws that we find in the Old Covenant (all or part of them)? Or are they *different* ones?

ISSUES PERTAINING TO SIN:

- Sin is a serious matter. What does Scripture tell us – things that will help us to not fall into the snares of the devil?

We need to sort these things out, because they have a significant impact on how we are to live (or *not* live), as followers of Jesus... under the *New* Covenant.

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Credits

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