

IN &
OUT

Covenant

COVENANT IN & OUT

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LESSONS

PAGE	1	LESSON ONE: Overview
PAGE	5	LESSON TWO: The Exchanging of Robes
PAGE	11	LESSON THREE: The Exchanging of Weapons and Belt
PAGE	17	LESSON FOUR: A Solemn, Binding Agreement
PAGE	21	LESSON FIVE: Walking through the Pieces
PAGE	25	LESSON SIX: The Oneness of Covenant
PAGE	31	LESSON SEVEN: Extended to Descendants
PAGE	35	LESSON EIGHT: The Abrahamic Covenant and the Law
PAGE	43	LESSON NINE: The New Covenant
PAGE	49	LESSON TEN: The Mediator
PAGE	55	LESSON ELEVEN: Relationship of Three Covenants

APPENDIX

PAGE	65	Addendum on Covenant
PAGE	71	Addendum on Baptism
PAGE	75	The Tabernacle

EPILOGUE

PAGE		About Precept Ministries International
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OVERVIEW

Covenant is like the missing piece of the jigsaw puzzle that completes the picture of our so-great-a-salvation.

Andrew Murray, the man of God who spoke so profoundly to those living in the late 1800s, wrote:

Blessed is the man who truly knows God as his Covenant God; who knows what the Covenant promises him; what unwavering confidence of expectation it secures, that all its [covenant's] terms will be fulfilled to him; what a claim and hold it gives him on the Covenant-keeping God Himself. To many a man, who has never thought much of the Covenant, a true and living faith in it would mean the transformation of his whole life. *The full knowledge of what God wants to do for him; the assurance that it will be done by an Almighty Power; the being drawn to God Himself in personal surrender, and dependence, and waiting to have it done; all this would make the Covenant the very gate of heaven. May the Holy Spirit give us some vision of its glory.*¹

The goal of our lesson this week is to familiarize ourselves with the various references to covenant in Scripture, particularly those in Genesis, the book of beginnings.

Next week we will gain an ever-increasing clarity of our subject as we see in picture illustrations what it means to us to be in covenant with the Almighty God. Then from those picture illustrations, we will turn to a study of three major covenants and their relationship to our salvation: the Abrahamic Covenant, the Old Covenant, and the New Covenant. So persevere, Beloved, it just gets better and better.

IMPORTANT NOTE!

Because of the nature of this topical study and because In & Out is limited in study, you will find it helpful to listen to the lecture tapes on Covenant if you are going to fully benefit from this study. Contact Precept Ministries International for more information. Also, please do not use commentaries until you are directed to do so.

¹Andrew Murray, *The Two Covenants* (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1974), p. 2. Used by permission.

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- b. What was done when they made this covenant?
- c. The transliteration for “made” in Genesis 15:18 is *kârath*, and it means to cut. Do you see any parallels in Genesis 15?
4. Now read Genesis 17:9-14. The sign of the Noahic Covenant was a rainbow. What’s the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant? How long is this covenant to last?
5. Here is a list of some other verses in Genesis that refer to covenant. You can look them up if you have time. Our purpose, Beloved, is simply to become familiar with the covenants made by various people in Genesis. If you do look up these passages, note the various things that were done when a covenant was made.

Genesis 21:22-34; 26:23-25; 28:10-22; 31:44-55.

6. Read Exodus 24:1-11 and Exodus 34:27-28. This is the account of the Mosaic Covenant or the Law. This is the covenant that existed until Jesus came and instituted the Covenant of Grace. Malachi 3:1-2 is a prophecy referring to Jesus Christ as the messenger of the New Covenant of Grace. Read this passage in Malachi also, and we will study it in greater detail later.

LIVING
IT OUT

We have seen a number of Old Testament references to covenant; but then the question comes, What does covenant have to do with my life? Those covenants were made thousands of years ago!

Yes, they were . . . and yet some of them have a monumental impact upon our lives. We'll see how in the final weeks of our study. How excited you will be when you learn those truths. But for now, let's look at the covenant that transforms the character of men and changes their destiny forever.

1. Read Luke 22:17-20. The setting is the upper room and it is the night of Jesus' betrayal by Judas Iscariot. What kind of a covenant is being poured out? (Also record any other pertinent observations.)

2. Finally, Beloved, read Matthew 26:20-29 and note what this New Covenant grants you or anyone else who enters into it.

3. Memorize Psalm 25:10.

Well, Beloved, this first lesson has been longer than usual, but it was necessary in order to give you a foundation upon which to build.

How blessed you will be as you continue this study!

APPENDIX

ADDENDUM ON COVENANT

Because you may not have access to the following references, we would like to acquaint you with various works of theology that touch on the subject of covenant.

Some quotations will, of necessity, be parts of whole articles on covenant. From these you will begin to gain a respect for the scope of the subject.

As you read the various writings on covenant, you will note differences of opinion. These differences serve to teach us a valuable lesson: scholars do not always agree on every point. However, when scholarship is combined with maturity in the Lord, it gives room for disagreement and yet the ability to still listen to one another without parting company.

How well we need to remember Paul's words in Ephesians 4:1-3, 13:

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.

With that word in Ephesians, we leave you, Beloved, not to agree with us exactly on every point or interpretation of this course on covenant. May our goal be to glean the precious truths of covenant which God desires to reveal to us personally at this time and to leave the rest until He so desires to confirm it, disavow it, or further explain it to us in our sojourn here on earth. Now we know in part. But someday we shall stand in the presence of Truth Himself—the Covenant Sacrifice, the Mediator of the Everlasting Covenant; Hallelujah to the Lamb!

ARTICLES ON COVENANT

I. A. A. Hodge: *Outlines of Theology*

“What are the several elements essential to a covenant?”

“1st. Contracting parties. 2d. Conditions. These conditions in a covenant between equals are mutually imposed and mutually binding, but in a sovereign constitution, imposed by the

Creator upon the creature, these ‘conditions’ are better expressed as (1) promises on the part of the Creator suspended upon (2) conditions to be fulfilled by the creature. And (3) an alternative penalty to be inflicted in case the condition fails.”¹

II. L. Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*

“A. The Name.

“1. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. The Hebrew word for covenant is always *berith*, a word of uncertain derivation. The most general opinion is that it is derived from the Hebrew verb *barah*, to cut, and therefore contains a reminder of the ceremony mentioned in Gen. 15:17. Some, however, prefer to think that it is derived from the Assyrian word *beritu*, meaning ‘to bind.’ This would at once point to the covenant as a bond. The question of the derivation is of no great importance for the construction of the doctrine. The word *berith* may denote a mutual voluntary agreement (dipleuric), but also a disposition or arrangement imposed by one party on another (monopleuric). Its exact meaning does not depend on the etymology of the word, nor on the historical development of the concept, but simply on the parties concerned. In the measure in which one of the parties is subordinate and has less to say, the covenant acquires the character of a disposition or arrangement imposed by one party on the other. *Berith* then becomes synonymous with *choq* (appointed statute of ordinance), Ex. 34:10; Isa. 59:21; Jer. 31:36; 33:20; 34:13. Hence we also find that *karath berith* (to cut a covenant) is construed not only with the prepositions ‘*am* and ‘*ben* (with), but also with ‘*lamedh* (to), Jos. 9:6; Isa. 55:3; 61:8; Jer. 32:40. Naturally, when God establishes a covenant with man, this monopleuric character is very much in evidence, for God and man are not equal parties. God is the Sovereign who imposes His ordinances upon His creatures.

“2. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. In the Septuagint the word *berith* is rendered *diatheke* in every passage where it occurs with the exception of Deut. 9:15 (*marturion*) and I Kings 11:11 (*entole*). The word *diatheke* is confined to this usage, except in four passages. This use of the word seems rather peculiar in view of the fact that it is not the usual Greek word for covenant, but really denotes a *disposition*, and consequently also a *testament*. The ordinary word for covenant is *suntheke*. Did the translators intend to substitute another idea for the covenant idea? Evidently not, for in Isa. 28:15 they use the two words synonymously, and there *diatheke* evidently means a pact or an agreement. Hence there is no doubt about it that they ascribe this meaning to *diatheke*. But the question remains, Why did they so generally avoid the use of *suntheke* and substitute for it a word which denotes a disposition rather than an agreement? In all probability the reason lies in the fact that in the Greek world the covenant idea expressed by *suntheke* was based to such an extent on the legal equality of the parties, that it could not, without considerable modification, be incorporated in the Scriptural system of thought. The idea that

¹A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972), p. 309.

the priority belongs to God in the establishment of the covenant, and that He sovereignly imposes His covenant on man was absent from the usual Greek word. Hence the substitution of the word in which this was very prominent. The word *diatheke* thus, like many other words, received a new meaning, when it became the vehicle of divine thought. This change is important in connection with the New Testament use of the word.

“B. The Concept.

“The covenant idea developed in history before God made any formal use of the concept in the revelation of redemption. Covenants among men had been made long before God established His covenant with Noah and with Abraham, and this prepared men to understand the significance of a covenant in a world divided by sin, and helped them to understand the divine revelation, when it presented man’s relation to God as a covenant relation. This does not mean, however, that the covenant idea originated with man and was then borrowed by God as an appropriate form for the description of the mutual relationship between Himself and man. Quite the opposite is true; the archetype of all covenant life is found in the trinitarian being of God, and what is seen among men is but a faint copy (ectype) of this. God so ordered the life of man that the covenant idea should develop there as one of the pillars of social life, and after it had so developed, He formally introduced it as an expression of the existing relation between Himself and man. The covenant relationship between God and man existed from the very beginning, and therefore long before the formal establishment of the covenant with Abraham.

“While the word *berith* is often used of covenants among men, yet it always includes a religious idea. A covenant is a pact or agreement between two or more parties. It may be, and among men most generally is, an agreement to which parties, which can meet on a footing of equality, voluntarily come after a careful stipulation of their mutual duties and privileges; but it may also be of the nature of a disposition or arrangement imposed by a superior party on one that is inferior and accepted by the latter. It is generally confirmed by a solemn ceremony as in the presence of God, and thereby obtains an inviolable character. Each one of the parties binds himself to the fulfilment of certain promises on the basis of stipulated conditions. Now we should not say that we cannot properly speak of a covenant between God and man, because the parties are too unequal, and therefore proceed on the assumption that the covenant of grace is nothing but the promise of salvation in the form of a covenant. By doing that we would fail to do justice to the covenant idea as it is revealed in Scripture. It is perfectly true that both the covenant of works and (as the sequel will show) the covenant of grace are monopleuric in origin, that they are of the nature of arrangements ordained and instituted by God, and that God has the priority in both; but they are nevertheless covenants. God graciously condescended to come down to the level of man, and to honor him by dealing with him more or less on the footing of equality. He stipulates His demands and vouchsafes His promises, and man assumes the duties thus imposed upon him voluntarily and thus inherits the blessings. In the covenant of works man could meet the requirements of the covenant in virtue of his natural endowments, but in the covenant of grace he

is enabled to meet them only by the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. God works in man both to will and to do, graciously bestowing upon him all that He requires of him. It is called the covenant of grace, because it is an unparalleled revelation of the grace of God, and because man receives all its blessings as gifts of divine grace.”²

III. Lewis S. Chafer: *Systematic Theology*

“The term *covenant people* is broad in its application. It includes Israel, who are under Jehovah’s unalterable covenants and yet are to be objects of another, new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34), and the Church, composed of all believers of the present age, who are also now the objects of that new covenant made in Christ’s blood (Matt. 26:28; 1 Cor. 11:25). A covenant implies relationship because it secures a right relation to God in matters belonging within the bounds of the covenant. A covenant that is unconditional . . . is not affected by any human elements, nor is it changeable even by God Himself. However, the *fact* of a covenant and the experience of its blessings are two different things. It is possible to be under the provisions of an unconditional covenant and to fail for the time being to enjoy its blessings because of sin. When sin has cast a limitation upon the enjoyment of a covenant and the covenant, being unchangeable, still abides, the issue becomes, not the remaking of the covenant, but the one issue of the sin which mars the relationship. It therefore follows that, for covenant people, there is a need of a divine dealing with the specific sin and a separate and unrelated repentance respecting it.”³

IV. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce Waltke, eds.: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

“(b^erît) **covenant** (ASV and RSV); between nations: a treaty, alliance of friendship; between individuals: a pledge or agreement; with obligation between a monarch and subjects: a constitution; between God and man: a covenant accompanied by signs, sacrifices, and a solemn oath that sealed the relationship with promises of blessing for keeping the covenant and curses for breaking it.

“The etymology of the word is uncertain. It may be related to the Akkadian word *burru* which means ‘to establish a legal situation by testimony with an oath’ (CAD *baru*, p. 125); but some (O. Loretz, VT 16:239-41) tie it to the Akkadian word *birtu* ‘a fetter’ which is a derivative of the word meaning ‘between.’ L. Köhler claims the word was related to the root *brh* which has to do with the food and eating involved in the covenant meal (JSS 1:4-7). The root is nowhere used as a verb in the OT nor is any other derivative of this root used, but the action involving covenant making employs the idiom ‘to cut a covenant’ (Gen 15:18, etc.), that is making a bloody

²L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1941), pp. 262-264. Used by Permission.

³Lewis S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas, Texas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), p. 375.

sacrifice as part of the covenant ritual. Köhler then would have the animal eaten in the covenant meal.

“The covenant as a treaty or agreement between nations or individuals should be understood on the basis of whether the parties are equal or one is superior to the other. In Gen 14:13 Abraham and the Amorites were equal parties to a treaty but this is not true of Israel (under Joshua) and the Gibeonites (Josh 9). Here the oath aspect of the covenant is shown to be most important. Even though the Gibeonite vassals were subject to a curse for having lied (9:22-23), Joshua and Israel were still obligated to provide protection for them. Much later when Saul failed in this sworn covenant obligation, his family suffered punishment (II Sam 21).

“It was common practice to set up a stela (stone) as a sign that a treaty had been established between two households or nations (cf. Jacob and Laban, Gen 31:44-47). On both sides appeal is made to the deity as a witness showing that the covenant is unalterable. Moreover, as in the case at Sinai, Jacob and Laban offered a sacrifice in the mountain and shared a common meal (Gen 31:54-55). Other signs which sealed such a treaty were used, such as a marriage between two royal houses (I Kings 9:16). But the greatest tool for covenant making came to be the written document on which the words of the covenant, its terms in the form of promises and stipulations, were spelled out, witnessed to, signed and sealed. Such covenant documents abound (cf. D. R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea*, Baltimore, 1969). Behm concludes: ‘There is no firmer guarantee of legal security peace or personal loyalty than the covenant’ (TDNT, II, p. 115; cf. Amos 1:9).

“Apart from blood ties the covenant was the way people of the ancient world formed wider relationships with each other (*Treaty and Covenant*, D. J. McCarthy, Rome, 1963, p. 175). The accounts of the relationship between David and Jonathan are the only unequivocal mention of a compact between two individuals in the OT (I Sam 18:3; 20:8; 23:18). It is spoken of as ‘a covenant of the Lord’ because the Lord witnessed the transaction and protected the legal order.

“In Israel’s monarchy the covenant relationship between the people and the king provided a kind of limited constitutional monarchy which was unique in the world in that early age (II Sam 3:21; 5:3; I Chr 11:3).

“All of this covenant procedure provides the cultural setting in which God’s relationship with his people is formulated. Modern studies on the meaning and the form of ‘covenant’ in biblical theology have been vigorous since the appearance of George Mendenhall’s *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh, 1955; see also BA 17:27-46, 49-76 and *Old Testament Covenant: A Survey of Current Opinions*, D. J. McCarthy, Richmond, 1972). McCarthy includes an excellent bibliography of covenant studies, pp. 90-108. For an evangelical theological treatment of this subject based on the source materials see the volumes entitled *Treaty of the Great King* (Grand Rapids, 1963) and *By Oath Consigned* (Grand Rapids, 1967) by M. G. Kline. Here Kline shows the suzerainty treaty found in the ancient near east is the key to understanding the form of God’s covenant with ancient Israel. He maintains the Ten Commandments and the entire book of Deuteronomy and such sections as Joshua 24 are all based on a covenant pattern which has: 1. A preamble in which the suzerain is identified, 2. An

historical prologue describing previous relations between the parties, 3. Stipulations and demands of the suzerain, 4. Swearing of allegiance with curses and blessings, that is Covenant Ratification, 5. Witnesses and directions for carrying out the treaty (see *Treaty of the Great King*, pp. 14, 28). In addition to the stipulations there may be a clause providing for the preservation and regular re-reading of the covenant.

“The notion that a covenant between God and man did not exist in the formative stages of Israelite history as presented in Genesis and Exodus cannot be taken seriously any longer. Yahweh as a tribal deity in early Israel bound to his people by natural but not ethical ties, as a covenant relationship implies, is also a fading viewpoint.

“D.J. McCarthy warns that the covenant concept in the OT presents a very rich and complex tradition and that the covenant is not primarily legalistic or moralistic but cultic, that is, tied to religious practice. He sees other analogies besides the treaty form as important, especially the family analogy—the father and son relationship in the Davidic Covenant (II Sam 7) and the husband and wife relationship as in Hosea. Covenant theology which puts all biblical revelation in the covenant framework now has the support of OT specialists like W. Eichrodt who make the covenant concept the central and unifying theme of the OT (*Theology of the Old Testament*, London, 1967, cf. also J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament*). Eichrodt finds that the covenant concept proves Israel’s religion was historical, that is, not the imagination of later generations. It also gave Israel great assurance of a beneficent God at a time when the deities were considered arbitrary originators of evil. Some scholars hold that the *berît* was sometimes monergistic, that is a one-sided unconditional promise. This view is opposed by Eichrodt and Kline, although espoused by J. Begrich, ZAW 60:1-11 and Murray, *The Covenant of Grace*, London, 1954. Kline maintains that all divine-human covenants in the OT involve sanction-sealed commitment to obey. The law and promise aspects of God’s covenant relationship with his people do not violate each other. Deuteronomy 29:13-14 shows the Sinaitic Covenant was an extension of the Abrahamic Covenant, both of which are called here ‘a sworn covenant.’ The Sinai renewal merely stressed man’s responsibility where the Abrahamic Covenant emphasized God’s promise. Many agree with Hillers (*Covenant*, pp. 129-131) that the covenant (treaty) tradition is carried into the writings of the prophets in the so-called lawsuit (*rib*) pattern. The prophets indict the people as covenant breakers, sometimes relating this to the covenant pattern by calling heaven and earth to witness (cf. Isa 1:2-3, 10-20; Jer 2:4-12; Mic 6:1-8; Ps 50).

“The Priestly Covenant of Num 25:12-13, the Davidic Covenant of II Sam 7 and the New Covenant of Jer 31:31 are all administrative aspects of the same covenant, God’s Covenant of Grace. This covenant reaches its climax at the Incarnation where Christ representing his people fulfilled all the stipulations of the covenant and bore the curse they deserved for breaking it (cf. F. C. Fensham, ‘Covenant, Promise and Expectation in the Bible,’ *Theologische Zeitschrift* 23:305-22.”^{4, 5}

⁴A long bibliography follows. Should you wish to do more study, see *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 130.

⁵R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1 (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1980), pp. 128-130. Used by permission.

ADDENDUM ON BAPTISM

There are two closely related transliterations (i.e., the Greek words written out in English letters) used for baptism in the New Testament. They are *baptō* and *baptizō*.

W. E. Vine in *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary Of Old and New Testament Words* gives the following definitions:

“*baptō* . . . ‘to immerse, dip’ (derived from a root signifying ‘deep’), also signified ‘to dye,’ which is suggested in Rev. 19:13, of the Lord’s garment ‘dipped (i.e., dyed) in blood’ (RV, ‘sprinkled’ translates the verb *rhantizō*: see SPRINKLED. It is elsewhere translated ‘to dip,’ Luke 16:24; John 13:26. Cf. the longer form *baptizō* (primarily a frequentative form).”¹

“*baptizō* . . . ‘to baptize,’ primarily a frequentative form of *baptō*, ‘to dip,’ was used among the Greeks to signify the dyeing of a garment, or the drawing of water by dipping a vessel into another, etc. Plutarchus uses it of the drawing of wine by dipping the cup into the bowl (*Alexis*, 67) and Plato, metaphorically, of being overwhelmed with questions (*Euthydemus*, 277 D).

“It is used in the NT in Luke 11:38 of washing oneself (as in 2 Kings 5:14, ‘dipped himself,’ Sept.); see also Isa. 21:4, lit., ‘lawlessness overwhelms me.’ In the early chapters of the four Gospels and in Acts 1:5; 11:16; 19:4, it is used of the rite performed by John the Baptist who called upon the people to repent that they might receive remission of sins. Those who obeyed came ‘confessing their sins,’ thus acknowledging their unfitness to be in the Messiah’s coming kingdom. Distinct from this is the ‘baptism’ enjoined by Christ, Matt. 28:19, a ‘baptism’ to be undergone by believers, thus witnessing to their identification with Him in death, burial and resurrection, e.g., Acts 19:5; Rom. 6:3, 4; 1 Cor. 1:13-17; 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12. The phrase in Matt. 28:19, ‘baptizing them into the Name’ (RV; cp. Acts 8:16, RV), would indicate that the ‘baptized’ person was closely bound to, or became the property of, the one into whose name he was ‘baptized.’

“In Acts 22:16 it is used in the middle voice, in the command given to Saul of Tarsus, ‘arise and be baptized,’ the significance of the middle voice form being ‘get thyself baptized.’ The experience of those who were in the ark at the time of the Flood was a figure or type of the facts of spiritual death, burial and resurrection, Christian ‘baptism’ being an *antitupon*, ‘a corresponding type,’ a ‘like figure,’ 1 Pet. 3:21. Likewise the nation of Israel was figuratively baptized when made to pass through the Red Sea under the cloud, 1 Cor. 10:2. The verb is used metaphorically also in two distinct senses: firstly, of ‘baptism’ by the Holy Spirit, which took place on the Day of Pentecost; secondly, of the calamity which would come upon the nation of the Jews, a ‘baptism’ of the fire of divine judgment for rejection of the will and word of God, Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16.”²

¹W. E. Vine, “An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words” in *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 1985), p. 170.

²Vine, p. 50.

In Vine's explanation of *baptizō* you will notice he makes the statement "witnessing to their identification with Him in death, burial and resurrection." Apparently W. E. Vine interprets Romans 6 as water baptism. However, let me share another thought for your consideration.

In the New Testament the word *baptizō* is transliterated rather than translated. When the Bible was translated, instead of giving the meaning of the word *baptizō*, the translator simply replaced the Greek letters with the corresponding English letters. When a word is transliterated, it can imply a multiplicity of meanings. If it had only meant "to immerse," it would have been translated as such. However, since this is not the case, *baptizō* must be interpreted in the light of its context.

James Boice, in his commentaries on the Gospel of John, points out the use of *baptizō* in classical Greek literature.

"Here we gain a great deal of help from classical Greek literature, for there is evidence that the Greek classical writers used the word *baptizo* from about 400 B.C. to the second century after Christ. In their writings *baptizo* always points to a change of identify [sic] by any means. Thus, to give a few quite general examples, it can refer to a change having taken place by immersing an object in a liquid, as in dying cloth; by drinking too much wine and getting drunk; by overexertion; and by other causes.

"Of all the texts that might be cited from antiquity the one that makes greatest clarity of the distinct use of the two words is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. In it he used both the word *bapto*, which we have already seen means 'to dip,' and the word 'baptize' (*baptizo*). It is a recipe for making a pickle. Nicander says that the vegetable should first be dipped (*bapto*) into boiling water and then baptized (*baptizo*) in the vinegar solution. Quite clearly, both operations had to do with immersing the vegetable in the solution. But the first was temporary while the other, the operation of baptizing the vegetable, produced a permanent change. We could say that the baptizing had identified the vegetable with the brine.

"This meaning of the word is also obvious in several texts from the Greek translation of the Old Testament and from the New Testament. Thus, in Isaiah 21:4, we read literally: 'Transgression baptizes me; my soul is overcome with fear.' This means that the writer was changed from a state of quiet trust in God to fearfulness as a result of his transgressions. Similarly, Galatians 3:27 says, 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ'; that is, the Christians in Galatia had been identified with Him.

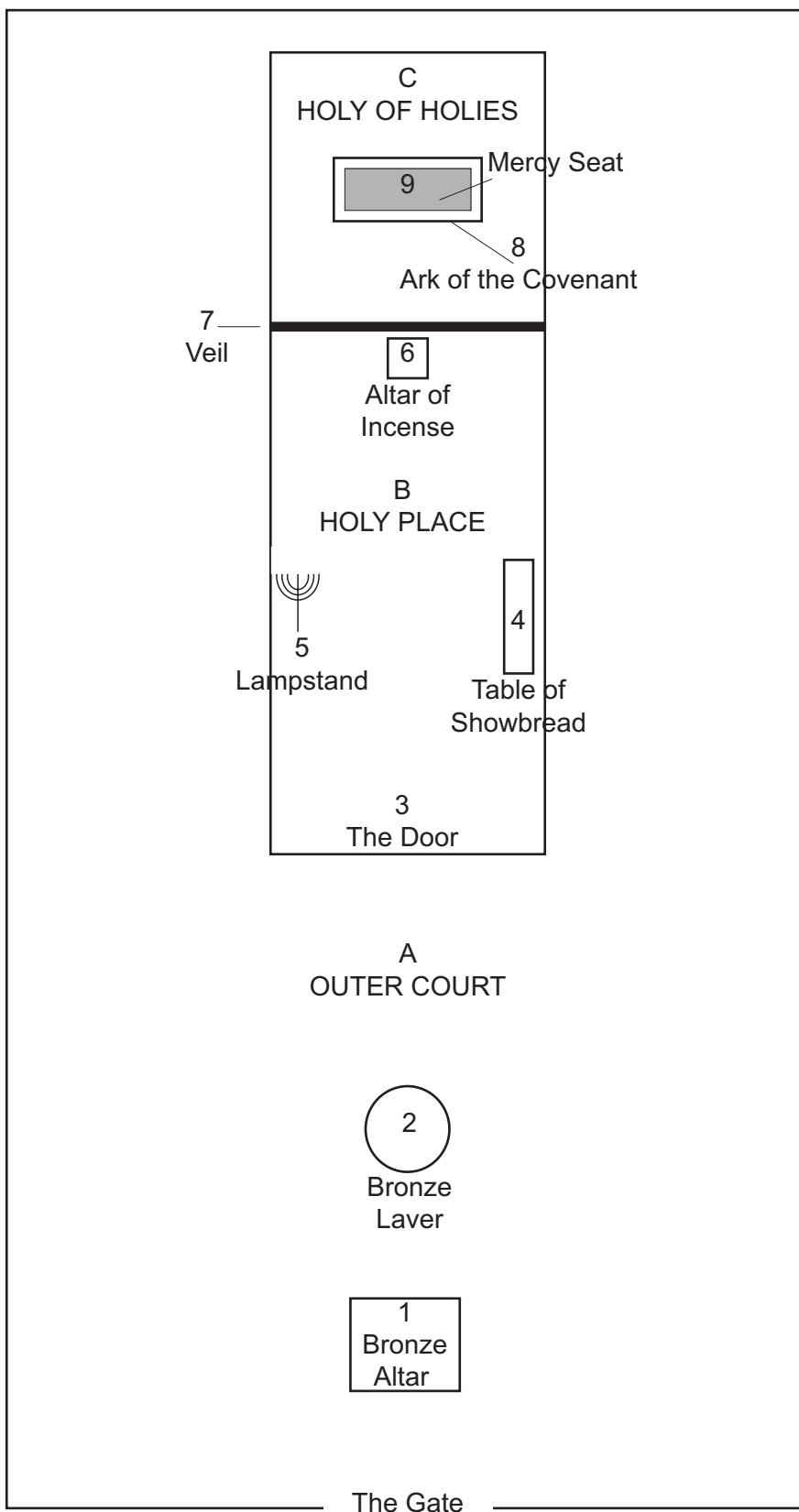
"This interpretation of the words *bapto* and *baptizo* is necessary if we are to penetrate to the deepest understanding of the subject. What is more, it is absolutely essential if we are to make sense of the word in some instances."³

³James M. Boice, *The Gospel of John*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: The Zondervan Corporation, 1975), pp. 164-165. Used by permission.

In the light of this insight, would we not be wise to interpret baptism in the light of its biblical context rather than assuming water is always involved? It is obvious from various texts, such as 1 Corinthians 10:2 “...all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (water for Egyptians, dry land for Jews), that identification is intended in this passage rather than water. We see the same thing in Jesus’ reference to a “baptism of fire.”

What does all this mean? Does it exclude water baptism? Definitely not. Water baptism is clearly mentioned in the Word of God. The point is, Interpret the word according to its meaning and metaphorical uses in the light of its immediate context.

THE TABERNACLE



ABOUT PRECEPT MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Precept Ministries International is a ministry raised up by God for the sole purpose of establishing people in God's Word as that which produces reverence for Him. It serves as an arm of the church without respect to denomination. God has led Precept Ministries International to reach across denominational lines without in any way compromising the truths of God's inerrant Word. Believing that the Word has been verbally inspired and given to man as all that is necessary for a man of God to be mature and thoroughly equipped for every good work of life, this ministry does not seek to impose upon others its personal doctrines, but rather to direct them to the Master Himself, who is able by His Spirit to lead and to guide them into all truth through systematic study of His Word.

The teaching emphasis of Precept Ministries International is manifested in several different ways. In order to minister to people in all walks of life, Precept Ministries International has made a variety of teaching helps available, from conferences and audio or video teaching tapes to an intensive Training Institute designed to ground those attending in inductive Bible study. Conferences and weekly Precept Bible studies are held at Precept Ministries International's headquarters and conference center, strategically located on a beautiful 32-acre, multi-building complex in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Jack Arthur and his wife, Kay, founded Precept Ministries in 1970. Kay Arthur is the author of the Precept Upon Precept and In & Out Bible Study Series. From her years of diligent study and teaching experience, Kay has developed these unique, inductive courses.

Should you desire further information about its various teaching ministries or regarding its intensive training programs, please contact **Precept Ministries International**, **800-763-8280**, **www.precept.org**. A doctrinal statement is available upon request.