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**In class the question was asked: Was the Noahic covenant was ratified by blood? I asked to do a little review before I answered that question.**

**Some background:**

The English word translated *“covenant”* is used in over 260 verses in the Hebrew Bible and in 28 verses in the New Testament. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word that is translated *“covenant”* is the Hebrew word: בְּרִית‎ bëriyth and again it is used a total of 284 times in the Hebrew Bible with some of those occurrences being translated other words (including league, confederacy, pledge, etc). The Greek word translated covenant isδιαθήκη diatheke*,* (it is also occassionaly transalted with other words like testament).

Simply statement a covenant is an agreement between two different parties. The first problem is that scholars disagree on the number of covenants we find in the Bible. Most scholars see five or six covenants in the Bible:

**Adam or the Adamic Covenant–**

Before I say anything about the Adamic covenant, not everyone agrees that it was a covenant. First, the word covenant is not used. But, when you read it, one must admit that it sounds like a covenant. It has one prohibition, and it outlines what will happen when that prohibition is violated.

Some might argue that this is not a covenant, I would only add that God’s promises to Adam and Eve are clearly communicated in Gen 1:28-29 in the form of a covenant: “**28** And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." **29** ¶ And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.” (Ge 1:28-29 ESV) The penalty of disobedience is outlined in Gen 2:16-17: “**16** ¶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, **17** but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."” (Ge 2:16-17 ESV). Disobedience to the covenant resulted in man dying spiritually, man dying physically, physical death being ushered into the creation, the ground being cursed, man be expulsed from the garden paradise, etc. For those who believe it is a covenant, they would classify it as a conditional covenant, the blessings were conditioned upon obedience to the covenant. As best we can tell, if this was a covenant, there was no shedding of blood when this covenant was ratified. There would be shedding of blood later, as God took the first step to *“cover”* man’s sins.

**Noah or the Noahic Covenant–**

Most agree that the covenant God makes with Noah extends to everything living. The covenant is outlined in Gen 9:8-17: “**8** ¶ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, **9** "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. **11** I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." **12** ¶ And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: **13** I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. **14** When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, **15** I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. **16** When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." **17** God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."” (Ge 9:8-17 ESV). As you consider this it seems to be connected with offerings, a multitude of them that Noah offered coming off of the ark. This is clearly an unconditional covenant, even though God had given commands to the eight (Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Gen 9:1-7): “**1** ¶ And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. **2** The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. **3** Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. **4** But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. **5** And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. **6** "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. **7** And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it."” (Ge 9:1-7 ESV). Their obedience was not a condition of the covenant. As you consider this, clearly this covenant was made with everything living and it is unconditional. It would appear that this covenant was ratified with blood, but we cannot be positive.

**Abraham or the Abrahamic–**

All scholars that I am aware recognize the Abrahamic covenant. God enters into a covenant with Abraham, this covenant has multiple components (land covenant with Israel, promises to bless the nation of Israel, Abraham will be the father to many nations, promise to bless the nations through the seed of Abraham, as well as other components). Early on in Gen 12:7 as Abram is passing through the land, Yahweh appears to him and promises to give the land to his offspring. Shortly after that interaction we are told that Abraham, built and altar and called upon the name of Yahweh (Gen 12:8): “**7** Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. **8** From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.” (Ge 12:7-8 ESV)

We observe in Genesis 12 and 13 as the Lord cares for and protects Abram and Sarai (Gen 12:17) and blesses Abraham (Gen 13:1-2). Then Abram traveled back to the place where he had previously built an altar to Yahweh and once again called upon the name of Yahweh (Gen 12:4). A great deal takes place in Genesis 13 and 14, but it is clear that Abraham is being protected by God and he is walking with God. We next read, and it reads like a climax: (Gen 15:1-6): “**1** After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." **2** ¶ But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" **3** And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." **4** And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." **5** And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." **6** And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.” (Ge 15:1-6 ESV). God made an impossible promise and Abraham believed that God would do it, and God counted that as righteousness. God declared him righteous based on his faith in Yahweh. Then God reminds Abraham that He is the one who brought Abram out of Ur and gave him this land. Abraham then asks in (Gen 15:8): “But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?"” (Ge 15:8 ESV) Here we see that God clearly enters into covenant with Abram, and it is clearly a blood covenant (Gen 15:9-21): “**9** He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." **10** And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. **11** And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. **12** ¶ As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. **13** Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. **14** But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. **15** As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. **16** And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." **17** ¶ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. **18** On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, **19** the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, **20** the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, **21** the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites."” (Ge 15:9-21 ESV)

We will stop here, but I would say, at least portions of the Abrahamic covenant were ratified by blood.

**Moses or the Mosaic Covenant–**

Next, we look at the Mosaic covenant. It is interesting, in its connection to the Abrahamic covenant, yet it is clearly distinctive. In Ex 2:23-25 we read: “**23** ¶ During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. **24** And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. **25** God saw the people of Israel —  and God knew.” (Ex 2:23-25 ESV) We see that the king of Egypt began to abuse the Hebrews and God “remembered” the covenant that he made with Abraham. So, God stepped in and chose Moses to deliver them and bring them in the land as promised (Ex 3:1-10): “**1** ¶ Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. **2** And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. **3** And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." **4** When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." **5** Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." **6** And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. **7** ¶ Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, **8** and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. **9** And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. **10** Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."” (Ex 3:1-10 ESV). God works through Moses to deliver the nation as promised thus keeping his covenant that he had made many years earlier (Ex 6:7-8): “**7** I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. **8** I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.’"” (Ex 6:7-8 ESV). Notice the language, Yahweh is going to do this that the people will know that Yahweh is God! Now jump forward to Exodus 19, I know we have jumped a lot, but I want to get to the point. Ex 19:3-15: “**3** while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: **4** You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. **5** Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; **6** and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel." **7** So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. **8** All the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD. **9** ¶ And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever." When Moses told the words of the people to the LORD, **10** the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments **11** and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. **12** And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, ‘Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. **13** No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.’ When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain." **14** So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments. **15** And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman."” (Ex 19:3-15 ESV).

As promised, God showed up to ratify the covenant, the description is quite horrifying (Ex 19:16-25). Then God provided them with the terms of the covenant (Gen 20 and following): It is clear to even a casual observer that this covenant is conditional. Animal sacrifices are a clear and obvious part of this covenant. In fact, we will see later clear declarations where Israel transgressed the covenant (Jos 7:11, 7:15, 23:16, etc.).

The Mosaic covenant was ratified with blood.

**David or the Davidic Covenant–**

Next in the succession of covenants is the Davidic covenant. The promise is clearly articulated to David. This covenant is stated in I Chr 17:11-14 and II Sam 7:10-13. “**11** When your days are fulfilled to walk with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. **12** He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. **13** I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you, **14** but I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever.’"” (1Ch 17:11-14 ESV)

The covenant appears to be unconditional. It is not conditioned upon any behavior by David. Part of this covenant is the promise that a king will descend from David, and his kingdom will be established forever. As the Davidic kingdom comes to an end in the Babylonian captivity and all that follows, it appears this promise is unfulfilled and indeed broken. Until Jesus, and then we realize that we did not fully understand the nature of these promises. He meant exactly what he said: A king would descend from David who would be king forever and that eternal king with a promised eternal King is the Lord Jesus (Mat 21:9). It does not appear that this covenant was ratified by blood.

**Jesus or the New Covenant–**

When we think about Jesus our minds are immediately drawn to the New Covenant. A covenant that he ratified in his own blood: “for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Mt 26:28 ESV). Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant (Heb 12:24). In this covenant God writes his laws in our hearts and through the indwelling Spirit that He gives us when we are saved, we not only desire to follow our new King, but we are given through the power through the indwelling Spirit, to do so (Heb 10:16). This covenant does what the Mosaic covenant could not do (because of our failure), by bringing us near to God. This covenant was prophesied in the Old Testament (Jer 31:31-34) although clearly in veiled form. Jesus is the thread that ties these covenants, in particaulr the unconditional convenants together.

So, the New Covenant is clearly ratified with blood.

In closing five points:

1. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. The life is required in payment for our sins.
2. The blood of bulls and goats could never take away our sins.
3. The payment required was the life of a sinless man. But all have sinned (Rom 3), with the exception of the God-man, the second-person of the godhead, Jesus Christ. He came to pay a debt he did not owe to give us a life we could never earn.
4. It seems that God did enter into covenants that were ratified without the shedding of blood (the two that rise to the top in my mind are the Adamic and Davidic Covenants.
5. The Noahic covenant was possibly ratified by blood, but it was not a requirement. God bless,

God bless,

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