

# *Covenants: Our Bond with the Divine*

Prof. Victor L. Ludlow

Education Week 2008

BYU

*What is a covenant?*

“a solemn agreement between two or more parties”

“a promise of God to His children”

“a solemn agreement between God and His children  
containing His promises to us”

*What does it mean “to covenant”?*

*karat be'rith* = “to cut a bond”

(ie. ‘to sever a union’)

*What are the basic elements of a covenant?*

introduction

historical context

stipulations (general/specific)

**ritual act (symbolic ordinance)**

rewards & punishments

witnesses (helpers)

perpetuation

*What are the two common types of covenants?*

vertical (between God and His children)

horizontal (between humans, either as individuals or groups)

*Ancient covenants*

God’s covenants with Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses

Christ’s ‘new covenant’

*Five critical covenants that help us return to the Father:*

Baptism: the gateway covenant

Sacrament: the renewal covenant

Priesthood: the service covenant

Endowment: the gift covenant

Sealing: the bonding covenant

*The nature of Telestial, Terrestrial, and Celestial covenants*  
oaths, vows, promises, contracts, and other binding commitments

*What are some signs and symbols of covenants?*

names, words, hands, mouths, oil, salt, bread, wine, water, clothing, cutting motion, etc.

*What makes a covenant ‘new and everlasting’?*

temporal covenants

eternal covenants

*What are the purposes of covenants?*

Teachings and Guidelines

Incentives and Rewards

Gateways and Ordinances

Patterns and Measurements

*Keeping covenants help us*

**Know** God's will

(Divine covenants **Teach** as they provide us with knowledge on how to achieve our unique destiny.)

**Do** God's commandments

(Divine covenants **Empower** as they give us authority to share special gifts with others.)

**Become** more Godlike

(Divine covenants **Sanctify** as they make us holy and worthy of eternal life.)

*Key Words of Advice*

**Vision** (insight and understanding into the nature and value of covenants)

**Commitment** (now and forever in all new and everlasting covenants)

**Integrity** (before, during, and after entering any noble covenants)

**Covenant 'Belief Statements'**

(Taken from Principles and Practices of the Restored Gospel, Deseret Book Co, 1992)

*It's Your Choice -- The Nature of Free Agency*

10. The divine gift of agency is an eternal principle that permeates our relationship with the Almighty, and it requires identity, knowledge, freedom of choices, action, law, efficacy, and preservation to be in full operation.

*Life's Perfect Way Through Christ's Atonement*

13. Jesus of Nazareth lived a sinless life, taught eternal values, and became the perfect way -- showing all people the path toward happiness, holiness and exaltation; his atonement satisfied both the demands of justice and the expectations of mercy, bringing salvation to God's children.

*The Cleansing Covenant of Baptism*

18. Baptism is a symbolic ordinance of cleansing and new life, and it is also the covenant gateway into Christ's church and God's celestial kingdom.

*Temples of Holiness*

23. Latter-day Saints, like the ancient Israelites, are a covenant people who worship in temples where they learn about their relationship with God, make sacred commitments, receive key directions about returning to God's presence, and do ordinance work for their deceased relatives.

*Significant covenant sermons*

Deuteronomy 1-31; Isaiah 48; Matthew 5-7 (3 Ne 12-14);

Mosiah 2-6; 3 Ne 15-16; 3 Ne 20:10 - 23:5; D&C 84

Additional Key Scriptures: Deut 29:12-15; D&C 19:23; Mosiah 5; Moroni 10 (esp. vv 30-33); D&C 42:61; 84:19-22; 46:8-26; 2 Ne 2:14-28; Matt 25:21; D&C 98:1-18; Jer 50:4-5; D&C 66:2

*The covenant challenge*

Eventually everyone bonds or identifies with good or evil, God or Satan, either formally (with specific covenants) or informally (with desires and actions)!

What is your choice?