

# Give Me A Sign

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## Sign of the Covenant

The key to understanding the Bible is the notion of “covenant”. A covenant is radically different from a mere contract in a number of critical ways. First, a contract is temporary and based on the terms of the contract...while covenants are most often permanent. Second, a contract is an exchange of goods or services...while a covenant is an exchange of persons. The fact that God enters into covenant (and not contracts) with humanity reveals the kind of relationship He desires to have with us. He does not want slaves, but sons and daughters. This real relationship carries real rights and responsibilities. A key part of covenant is the “sign of the covenant”. God established a covenant with one holy couple (Adam and Eve) and the sign was the sabbath. God renewed and increased the covenant with one holy family (Noah’s family) and the sign of renewal and faithfulness was the rainbow. Jesus announces that He is come for the time of fulfillment. This is fulfillment of covenant. Through Jesus, we are brought into family relationship with God, and the effective sign of that is adoption into God’s family through Baptism.

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## Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever considered the profound difference between contract and covenant? It truly is the difference between slavery and adoption (or as one theologian put it, between prostitution and marriage).
2. Why is it significant that God enters into covenant and not contracts? What would be different if our relationship with Him was “contractual” and not “covenantal”?
3. How does your perspective of the Creation of the world in Genesis Chapter One change when you see it through the eyes of “covenant”? How is your appreciation of sabbath affected?
4. If real relationships carry real rights and real responsibilities, how does the fact that you are baptized change the way you relate to God and to your fellow Christians (your new family)? How might it change the way you approach God the Father? How might it affect the way you see the people in church on Sunday?
5. The new relationship we are given with God through the Holy Spirit working through the sign of Baptism also gives us a new identity. How hard is it to remember that you have become a “new creation”; an adopted son or daughter of God Himself? What are some of the people, places, or things that make it easy to forget your true identity?

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## God in Real Life

- I. Participation in the signs of the covenant renews them in a real sense. Exodus 31 speaks of how participation in the sabbath is a sign of living in the covenant. For Christians, the “new sabbath” day is the day of the Resurrection (Sunday). Your participation in Sunday worship (specifically through the Eucharist) is the way Christians renew and re-commit to living the covenant relationship with God the Father. As you approach the Eucharist this weekend, it can be helpful to have the intention of living in the covenant.

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## Be Transformed

The key to understanding the Bible is the concept of covenant. In addition, each covenant has a visible sign:

- A. The Adamic covenant’s was the sabbath. Exodus 31 indicates the seriousness of participation in sabbath worship and rest (“token” is “sign”). (Exodus 31:13-18)
- B. The Noahic covenant had the sign of the rainbow in the sky. (Genesis 9:12)
- C. Saint Paul wrote about what happened to you at your Baptism. You were made into God’s child, but even more: “Or are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection” (Romans 6:3-5)
- D. In addition to forgiving sins and incorporating us into the Church, Baptism also effects the more change. The Catechism of the Catholic Church notes that: “Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte “a new creature,” an adopted son of God, who has become a “partaker of the divine nature,” member of Christ and co-heir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of justification: A) enabling them to believe in God, to hope in him, and to love him through the theological virtues; B) giving them the power to live and act under the prompting of the Holy Spirit through the gifts of the Holy Spirit; C) allowing them to grow in goodness through the moral virtues. Thus the whole organism of the Christian's supernatural life has its roots in Baptism. (CCC 1265-1266)

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## To the Heart

“...He has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.” (2 Peter 1:4)

“My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is.” (1 John 3:2)