Covenant Theology

The Mosaic Covenant

Review:

Covenant vs Contract -

Contract - Your performance is based on the performance of the other person in the contract. If they do not perform their end, you are not bound to perform yours.

Covenant - Your performance is based on your character, your ability to keep your promise, regardless of the other person's performance.

Covenant	**By Choice**	**By Grace**
#4 Mosaic - promise of land and nationhood	Ex. 20:1-17	Ex. 20:2; Deut. 7:6-11
a. Negative promises of the covenant	Deut. 28:15	

Context of the Covenant

I. The Patriarchs
- A. Abraham
- B. Isaac
- C. Jacob
- D. Joseph

II. Egypt and empires
- A. Egypt—middle of the second millennium (BC) - battles with the Hittites
- B. International Law (a new concept based on intricate treaties)
- C. A blending of the 'gods' (similarities between foreign deities) - 'national' gods as opposed to household gods
- D. Linguistic changes
  1. Learning each others languages
  2. Canaanites develop 30 character alphabet (as opposed to hieroglyphics); made general literacy a possibility

III. A Pharaoh rose who did not remember Joseph
- A. Oppression of the people of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph
- B. The 400 year prophecy fulfilled
- C. The birth of Moses
- D. The call of Moses (at the burning bush)
- E. The 10 plagues of the Exodus

The Mosaic Covenant

I. The Covenant with Moses
- A. Bilateral—with the people — Exodus
- B. Gracious—the Jews were a 'stiff-necked' people—Deuteronomy
- C. The 10 Commandments (a suzerain/vassal covenant)

1. By grace— "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage [therefore]
2. Description of the relationship; You will be my people, and I will be your God

D. A covenant of:
1. Land
2. Nationhood (God would be their King)
3. Priestly People (intermediaries between the world and God)
4. A showcase people (a holy nation)
5. NOT a covenant of salvation, but a covenant of calling! And still by grace!

II. Implications
A. Grace in the O.T., grace in the N.T., grace always!
B. Salvation comes *through* the Jews, not just for the Jews!

From *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* by LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush

This covenant relationship differs from the Abrahamic covenant only in that the party to the covenant binds himself to obligations by oath. This change, however produces covenants that differ radically in both form and function. In the Abrahamic covenant God places himself under oath, bound by irrevocable promises to Abraham and his posterity. In the Sinai covenant Israel takes the oath, and th obligation is obedience to the covenant stipulations.

The covenant follows very closely the literary form and structure of the international treaty of the ancient Near East between an overlord (or suzerain) and his subject people (vassals). Although the form was widely known and used during the second millennium, the largest number of examples of the suzerain-vassal treaty—and the most complete—are to be found in the fourteenth– and thirteenth-century Hittite texts from Boghazkoy. Most of the elements of this form may be found in the texts that deal with the Mosaic covenant, especially 20:1-17:

(1) Preamble (identifying the author and giving his titles): "I am Yahweh, your God" (v. 21) God needs no further titles, after the recent dramatic revelation of his name.
(2) Historical prologue (setting forth the previous relations between the parties and emphasizing the suzerain's benevolent deeds on behalf of the vassal; these acts are the grounds for the vassal's gratitude and future loyalty and obedience): "who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (v. 2b). The historical survey here is succinct and minimal, but Israel's memory of God's dramatic deliverance is recent and fresh. In Josh. 24, the covenant renewal ceremony at Shechem, the historical prologue is long and detailed (vv. 2—13).
(3) Stipulations of the treaty, consisting of:
(a) the basic demand for allegiance and faithfulness: "You shall have no other gods before me" (20:3).
(b) specific stipulations (in treaty use, normalizing relationships within the empire): vv. 4-17
(4) Provisions for:
(a) deposition of the text (treaties were kept in the temple): the tablets containing vv. 1-17 were placed in the ark of the covenant; 25:16; Deut. 10:1-5.
(b) periodic public reading: Deut. 31:10-13.
(5) Curses and blessing (invoked upon the vassal for breaking or keeping the covenant): Deut. 28:1-14 (blessings), 15-28 (curses).

Also, provision was made for a formal oath by which the vassal pledged obedience, and a religious ceremony, often with blood sacrifices, in which the treaty was ratified (df. Esod. 24). The treaty was written in very personal terms, using an "I-Thou" dialogue pattern.