



Covenant

Legally, a covenant is a bond between two parties. In Scripture this motif finds expression in a number of forms. For the Israelites, the covenant between God and Israel was foundational to their faith – their very identity was defined as a people of the Covenant. Covenant was not thought of in legalistic terms, but as a relationship characterized by a bond of love, magnanimously shaped by God who shows *hesed*, steadfast love to God’s people. The Jewish adherence to Torah, observance of the Sabbath, prayers and keeping the commandments are all expressions and celebrations of this covenantal relationship.

In Islam, as in Judaism and Christianity, God has established a covenant with humankind which requires of them certain sacred obligations of which there will be rewards in the afterlife. Throughout history God has also made covenants with particular individuals (the prophets) including Abraham, Moses, Jesus and, culminating in the final covenant with humanity through His last prophet, Muhammad.

For the Christian believer, the Covenantal God finds new expression in the person of Jesus Christ. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus represents the *New Covenant*, inaugurated at the Last Supper in Jesus words: “This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Matthew 26-28). For the Christian believer, Jesus is the fulfilment of the covenant: “God has revealed himself fully by sending his own Son, in whom he has established his covenant for ever”¹. Celebration of the Eucharist is a memorial that recognizes the everlasting nature of this new covenant expressed through the assembled people gathered as the Body of Christ.

¹ Catholic Church. (1994). *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. n. 73.