

Introduction to the Covenants

Bible Study #1

Today we begin a study of “The Covenants.”

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“All true theology is based on some form of a divine covenant. The Christian religion must be understood covenantally, for that is how God has chosen to relate to man, whether in the garden or after the entrance of sin into the world. The goal of all divine–human covenants is summed up in the words found throughout the Bible: “I will be your God and you will be my people, and I will dwell among you.”

Exodus 6:7; 29:45; Ezekiel 11:20; 2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 21:3

Notice – not one of these had the word “Covenant” in them.

The word “covenant” appears throughout the OT more than 250 times and more than 30 times in the New Testament, but the idea is even more prevalent.

“I will be their God – and they shall be my people” is the basis of Covenant.

God making Himself known to us –
Setting the requirements of His covenant
And condescending to us – to do us eternal good.

The covenants flow from the good purposes of His will and His love, grace and mercy.

What is a Covenant?

1. A covenant is basically an agreement between two or more people.
In human relations – the marriage covenant is a good example.
2. **A Biblical Covenant is not exactly like any human covenant**
However, a Biblical Covenant at times takes the form of a covenant by of a human king– who has conquered a nation – and instead of destroying them – as he could – he sets terms and conditions of a covenant with them – setting the basis for both parties to commit to one another and be loyal to one another (often called a suzerain covenant).
3. **Biblical Covenants between God and Man**
 - God is the initiator.
 - God chooses the covenant and the terms.
Man’s response is gratitude (Abraham, David) or in the case of Israel -- fear and repeated disobedience to the terms.

There is always a promise made – according to the terms of the covenant.

Sometimes conditional/sometimes unconditional

There are often threats and punishments for man breaking the covenant.

In some covenants the the promises from God are unconditional, in which case God Himself makes sure the terms of the covenant are kept.

THE COVENANTS

1. The Covenant of Redemption – between Father and Son before time
Sometimes this is called the Eternal Covenant.
The Covenant of Grace flows from this Covenant.
2. The Covenant of Works – the Adamic Covenant
3. The Noahic Covenant – the promise of a continuing world
4. The Abrahamic Covenant – composed of spiritual and physical promises
5. The Mosaic Covenant – sealed with the 10 commandments but also composed of ceremonial laws and regulations along with the promises of a better covenant to come.
6. The Davidic Covenant – That there would be an everlasting King, (Messiah) the Son of David and an everlasting Kingdom
7. The New Covenant – The Covenant of Redemption fully revealed and all the privileges we enjoy since the finished work of Christ.

We will go through them and show how each covenant progressively shows the coming of the promise.

Covenant Theology can also be known as Federalism.

Adam is the Federal Head of all who are “in Adam” and all in Adam die.
Christ is the second Adam and the Federal Head of all who are in Christ.
And they have eternal life.
This is true in the OT and the NT – in the Old by Promise – in the New by reality.