

Covenants Study
Sunday School
Jan. 9, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Introduction

1. When considering the Church today...what would you say are some of our problems? That is things that keep us from being effective for God? (Answers from the class)
 - a. **Compromise too much to the culture...vocal with the culture...not vocal enough...and active enough against the things God is against in the culture like abortion, gender identity, marriage and divorce.**
 - b. **Unwilling to do church discipline...don't want people to leave...rather than focusing on reconciliation.**
 - c. **Not preaching the word or even trying to preach it correctly.**
 - d. **Too much performance not enough Word and true worship!**
 - e. **A breakdown in how we apply the word individually and corporately.**
 - f. **We are too easily offended ...and we are too quick to tolerate even that which is unbiblical.**
2. Some have asked the question, given that so many in the Church seem to lack assurance of faith...what is the one thing the Bible offers us that foundationally gives to His people the confidence that they desire?
 - a. **That everything that God does is based in Him keeping His Word...His promise...His covenant... and He cannot break a promise since it is His very nature at stake.**
 - (1) ***The promise: Genesis 17: 6-8-"I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."***
 - (2) ***Short form- "I will be there God and you will be my people"***
 - (3) ***We see this from the beginning of the Bible to its end- Rev. 21:3-"Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God."***
 - b. **Who doesn't like a promise ...kept! Promises kept are the foundation for trust...and trust is what seems to be lacking in today's Church...trust in God...trust in one another...trust in the plan and the process...because the Church has forgotten that it is all based in a promise kept... a contract kept ...a covenant kept...established and kept.**
 - c. **So we want something tangible that will keep us close to God...**
 - (1) **His covenant...His commitment to us to forever be our God and we His people...**
 - **Chief difference between the Creator and the creature is that the Creator is a promise keeper...a covenant keeper.**

- Since our chief characteristic is being a covenant breaker...a promise breaker...we are lairs on so many levels.
- (2) Another tangible thing God has given us is Christmas...Christmas is proof positive in time and space that He is a God of His word...that He keeps His promise.
- God promised the Redeemer in Gen. 3:15...a sign He would give to substantiate the promise of redemption.
 - God continued throughout the OT expanding on that promise. Telling us what to expect...where the coming promise would be...what He was coming to do and how that would benefit God's people.
 - Jesus came as just the right time...in the fullness of time...when the Godhead had planned it to happen in the way they planned it to happen...and it along with His death and resurrection accomplished the purpose for why it happened. To put it simply and biblically...He came *to save His people from their sins.*
- (3) And yet another tangible thing is the Resurrection of Christ...in fact this may be the most tangible since our very "LIFE" depends on this one event.
- (4) These are just 3 things to hang your hat on...and tangible things to come back to when we forget and slip into temptation...when we wonder...we ask ourselves or someone else ask us ... "How do you know God keeps His word?"
- He gave us THE Word...His promise to keep.
 - He gave us His Son...born into this physical realm proving He can keep His word.
 - Christ went to the Cross and rose again proving He does keep His word.
- d. This is where we can also come to understand the simple phrase...God did not leave us...we left Him...when it seems that God is distant in our lives.
- (1) Like when our personal world seems to be falling apart...or we are wondering about our purpose in life when all that we do seems to have no significance or real purpose.
- (2) God's covenantal promises provide foundation and structure for life.
- The foundation help define the "why's of God" and of believing men.
 - This structure gives us a framework to live within.
 - This enlightens us as to what is expected of us in our relationships with God and with others.
 - Making sense of the world and the times in which we live.
 - This structure gives us blessings for living within God's purpose as well as consequence when we chose to live outside of that structure.

Covenants Study
Sunday School
Jan. 23, 2022

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. When we talk about covenants are we saying that this is just a Bible thing? Where else do we see covenants occurring throughout time and in our day and age?
 - a. **Life is based in promises...contracts...covenants.**
 - b. **We settle disputes and we clarify relationships with them in all cultures.**
2. When we think of Covenant theology what are the 3 distinctives of Covenant theology?
 - a. **The United Promise of God-(Gen. 17:7; Gal. 3:13-14- *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree'— so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith."***
 - b. **The Untied Plan of God-(Jer. 31:31ff; Gal. 3:6-9-*"...just as Abraham 'believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness'? Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.' So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith."***
 - c. **The United People of God-(Rom. 9; 11; 15:8-9; Gal. 3: 27-29- *"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."***
3. Do you remember the cannibal story? How did what occurred there emulate God's covenant with men?
 - a. ***The story begins this way- "This was our first time to be surrounded by a group of angry cannibals, but God delivered us."***
It seems 5 missionaries were surrounded by natives with cutlasses and spears, threatening to kill them. A native boy had disappeared from the missionary school and the missionaries were being blamed. Since the natives were cannibals themselves that assumed that the missionaries were as well and had eaten the boy. That evening the King of the tribe King Tho and his elders came into the camp where the missionaries were being held, begging the missionaries to overlook what they had done I anger. The child had returned on his own, safe and sound.

After the apology, the throat of a white bird was cut. The blood was then sprinkled first on the missionaries and then on the natives. The chief declared that a blood covenant had been made between the two parties. Never would they shed the blood of the missionaries and

never would the missionaries shed the blood of the natives. It was also understood by both parties that all future generations on both sides of the covenant were committed by this ceremony."

- b. **The point:** This emulates closely the covenant making procedures recorded in the Bible....and this speaks to the seriousness of a covenant.

(1) Interesting don't you think...just like in the Bible the covenant was made between the tribe and the missionaries but it was the King of the tribe that declared the covenant both in act and in deed...the missionaries merely agreed under the penalty of death...just like in the Bible.

(2) I had a Biblical theology professor in seminary that always asked...which came first God's covenant making structure into the cultures of the world or the worlds structure that we see in so many places...whether it is with blood or a notary public legally binding two parties to an agreement?

- c. So what?

(1) It is interesting to see how culture emulates God's design of covenants.

- **Contracts, betrothals, marriages, business agreements...we are always trying to settle disputes and important events in a contractual form since we are relational beings...and we want to believe the "promise".**
- **Even handshakes and verbal promises all come with blessings and consequences. When the promise is kept or it is broken...intended and not intended.**

(2) But all of this is relevant for us today to consider such things.

- **Death, for instance, comes because the covenant between God and man was violated. Natural man finds it convenient to say that death just happens like birth and taxes, but...**
- **Our conscience and God's covenant confirms that because we have broken the binding oath of the covenant, death takes us.**
- **Jesus, Himself, confirms the continuing significance of the covenant of life when He took the cup and said, Matt. 26:27-28-
"And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."**

4. "Covenant"= "Berith" in the Hebrew...which speaks of a special "bond" or "relationship"...a commitment that is implied as much as physically acted out.

- a. **In other words, it is a binding commitment whether it is implied or specifically spelled out. Much like a contract...**

(1) When you put your signature on a paper you are bound by your word...and there might be severe consequences if you break the contract. And the rotary public certifies the document a legal and binding contract on the parties.

- (2) The same is true of a man's word. If you say you will do something you are implying a commitment to carry out what you said...not to try but to do. Your word is just as binding as your signed name on the paper in this understanding. A covenant binds people to one another.
- b. God did not sign His name...instead He gave a sign of binding Himself to His people...
- (1) He provided skins for Adam and Eve as a sign of their redemption and His on-going perseverance of them- Gen. 3:21-*"And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them."*
- (2) He passed through the cut up animals- Gen 15.
- (3) God appointed the rainbow as the sign of His promise to Noah- Gen. 9:12-17- *"And God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.' God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.'"*
- The rainbow tells us the storm is over...the sun is up...things feel better.
 - The others remind us as well of God's secured promises of His covenant of grace.
 - God says He will "remember" because of the rainbow will remind Him ...an action based on a previous commitment. God doesn't forget. At the right time He does what He does.
 - The promise God makes, sealed by the rainbow, not to destroy the human race in this fashion again, is relevant not because the human race has somehow been shocked into compliance, but precisely because God knows that the same degradation will occur again and again.
- (4) The seal of circumcision- Gen. 17:9-14-*"And God said to Abraham, 'As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the*

flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

(5) the Sabbath-Ex. 31:12-14-“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you. You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death.’”

(6) the Passover,

(7) The Lord’s Supper and baptism (signs given by Jesus of the unity He maintains with His people)...these things were signs of God’s pledge .

(8) Just like a bride a groom gives a ring as a sign of the pledge of their constant faith and abiding love...so also the signs of the covenant symbolize the permanence of the bond between God and His people.

c. God gave a sign but He also set the terms. O Palmer Robertson explains it this way:

(1) He didn’t give Adam options or input.

- He didn’t allow Adam to say I like the freedoms you give to me here in the garden...I am even willing to do some gardening here and there.**
- But I won’t agree to your proposal so long as you deny me the privilege of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**

(2) Adam didn’t bargain with God because he knew that a divine covenant is sovereignly administered ...just like in the missionary story. The LORD alone sets the terms of His bond with men. God alone determines the bounds of the activities of His creation...which gets us to the best working definition I know from a covenant.

5. It has been said that “a covenant is a bond in blood sovereignly administered...or a bond of life and death sovereignly administered.” O. Palmer Robertson (the best professor, I never had!) Now let’s see if we can begin to see what he means by this.

6. Look up the Scriptures:

a. Gen. 15;

b. Exodus 24:7-8-“Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, ‘All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.’ And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, ‘Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.’”

c. Ezekiel 20:33-38- “As I live, declares the LORD God, surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out I will be king over you. I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into

judgment with you face to face. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, declares the LORD God. I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. I will purge out the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against me. I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD"

- d. Call on 3 different people to read and reflect on the questions below.
 - (1) What activity or ceremony is occurring in each?
 - (2) Who are the characters or parties mentioned?
 - (3) What promise or agreement is related to the incident?
 - (4) How would you describe God's part in the passage?
 - The sovereign LORD of Heaven and earth dictates the terms of the covenant that He is binding Himself and His people to.
 - In His own wisdom He sets the boundaries of blessings and responsibilities in His covenant. He doesn't leave the terms of His covenant to the whims and fancies of our imagination.
7. Everyone turn back to **Gen. 15:18-*"On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram..."***
- a. The actual word that is translated "made" here is the word "cut"...and it is there to go along with the cutting that is referred to in verse 10.
 - b. When God symbolically passes through the pieces that have been cut the result is that He is making or cutting a covenant.
 - (1) The division of animals always symbolizes *"a pledge to the death"* if the covenant is broken.
 - (2) The dismembered animals represent the curse that will fall upon the one that breaks the covenant.
 - (3) A covenant, then, is a bond in blood sovereignly administered committing the participants to loyalty/fidelity on the pain of death.
 - (4) Once the covenant is entered, nothing less than the shedding of blood may relieve the obligations incurred in the event of covenant breaking.
 - (5) This term *"cut a covenant"* *"to make a covenant"* is used throughout the OT.
 - c. How do the passages we looked at support our definition?
 - d. Now turn to **Luke 22:19-20- *"And He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'"*** How might Jesus' remarks and actions be seen as a fulfillment on the OT covenant ceremony?
8. We can summarize concerning the working definition these things:
- a. Life and death are at stake in divine covenants.
 - b. God has bound Himself to mankind and He has bound mankind to Himself.
 - c. Life in your essence, blessing in your family and prosperity in your work all hinge on the provisions of God's covenant....

- d. So confidence and assurance are wrapped up from our believing and walking in God's covenant.**
9. Can you think of concrete ways in which men today try to determine for themselves the terms of their relationship with God and the world rather than acknowledging the authority of God in covenant? What are some consequence for not following God's covenant as seen in our world today?
 10. We need to remember that the heartbeat of every divine covenant in the Bible is these words or something close, ***"I will be your God and you will be my people."*** (**Gen. 17:7-8 and Rev. 21:3**) This is God's promise and His provision for His people...forever.

Covenants Study
Sunday School
Feb. 6, 2022

A. Prayer

B. B. Review

1. Do y'all remember the definition that I gave for a covenant from O Palmer Robertson last week?
 - a. ***"A covenant is a bond in blood sovereignly administered...or a bond of life and death sovereignly administered."***
 - b. **Why is this particular definition significant for us...in other words, what things does it call on us to remember?**
2. How does God's covenant reveal His grace towards us even when we had no input in it?
 - a. **Could we have input?**
 - b. **Could we have offered anything positive to this broken relationship?**
 - c. **Can the dead add anything?**
 - d. **God's grace is seen in His wanting this relationship and achieving this relationship through His love, grace in covenant!**
3. What is the "catch phrase" that God gives us so we can keep covenant before our very eyes? ***"I will be your God and you will be my people."* (Gen. 17:7-8 and Rev. 21:3)**

C. Let's look at what Westminster Confession has to say about covenant. (Back of Hymnal page #852-863) WCF- Chapter 7-

1. I. The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of him, as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.
2. II. The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.
3. III. Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace: wherein he freely offered unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.
4. IV. This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in the Scripture by the name of a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ, the testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.
5. This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come, which were for that time sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation, and is called the Old Testament.

6. VI. Under the gospel, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed, are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity and less outward glory, yet in them it is held forth in more fullness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not, therefore, two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations.
 - a. According to the Confession of Faith...how many covenants are there and what are they called?
 - (1) 2 covenants
 - (2) Covenant of Works...or life.
 - (3) Covenant of Grace or Redemption.
 - b. According to the Confession what is their purpose? Fellowship with God:
 - (1) Genesis 17:7 – *“I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.”*
 - (2) This promise of fellowship is reiterated throughout Scripture: Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 29:13; II Samuel 7:14; Jeremiah 31, 33; Hebrews 8:10.
 - (3) It is consummated in Revelation 21:3 – *“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.”*
 - c. What points are offered in section 1 of this chapter that are important for us today because of our arrogance in this life?
 - (1) There is a great distance between God and man...one that can never be gulfed by anything we could do. No place for equality. Our differences are clear in Scripture...Is 40:13-14, 21-23- *“Who has measured the Spirit of the Lord, or what man shows Him his counsel? Whom did He consult, and who made Him understand? Who taught Him the path of justice, and taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding?... Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.”*
 - (2) All men owe their absolute obedience and allegiance to God. Acts 17:27-30- *“...they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him. Yet He is actually not far from each one of us, for ‘In Him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are indeed his offspring.’ Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead.”*

(3) God is our creator which signifies ownership which signifies authority to do whatsoever He wills to do.

(4) God owes us nothing. He doesn't have to bless us. We have no rights unless He gives them to us. We must obey and even then we have no rights to blessings unless God condescends to give them.

(5) God did condescend. P. 113:4-8-*"The LORD is high above all nations, and His glory above the heavens! Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people."*...and then more fully in Jesus.

(6) The word "fruition" means pleasurable possession...like a parent giving themselves for their child in love.

D. Westminster Shorter Catechism- What are these saying?

1. WSC#12- Q.-*"What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the estate wherein he was created?" "When God had created man, He entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death."*
2. WSC# 16: Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression? *The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.*
3. WSC# 20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery? *God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.*
 - a. **By virtue of how this Q and A are written the catechism certainly places the covenant of works and the covenant of grace within the arena of God's special creation providences...thus making them both real and needing to be dealt with.**
 - b. **The catechism reveals that the covenant of works/life was entered into by God at the moment of Adam's creation...Adam's very life was a sign of the covenant. Adam owed God complete loyalty by virtue of what God had done even before something was verbally pointed out.**
 - c. **God's plan from before the beginning was in the covenant of grace/redemption to save His elect people whom the Godhead had determined and predestined before the foundation of the world.**
 - d. **This in no way negates the need of the Covenant of Works/life... since perfection is still required to be able to go to heaven.**

E. Westminster Larger Catechism: What more are these telling us about the covenant of Grace or redemption?

1. WLC #20- What was the providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created? *The providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created, was the placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth; putting the creatures under his dominion, and ordaining marriage for his help; affording him communion with himself; instituting the Sabbath; entering into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience, of which the tree of life was a pledge; and forbidding to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.*
2. WLC# 30- Question 30: Does God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery? *God does not leave all men to perish in the estate of sin and misery, into which they fell by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called the covenant of works; but of his mere love and mercy delivers his elect out of it, and brings them into an estate of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called the covenant of grace.*
3. WLC #31- Question 33: Was the covenant of grace always administered after one and the same manner? *The covenant of grace was not always administered after the same manner, but the administrations of it under the Old Testament were different from those under the New.*
4. WLC# 34: How was the covenant of grace administered under the Old Testament? *The covenant of grace was administered under the Old Testament, by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the Passover, and other types and ordinances, which did all fore signify Christ then to come, and were for that time sufficient to build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they then had full remission of sin, and eternal salvation.*
5. WLC# 35: How is the covenant of grace administered under the New Testament? *Under the New Testament, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the same covenant of grace was and still is to be administered in the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; in which grace and salvation are held forth in more fullness, evidence, and efficacy, to all nations.*
 - a. **These obviously speak of Man's sinfulness and God's grace.**
 - (1) **God's grace is seen in the covenant of works/life to Adam...which Adam broke.**
 - (2) **God's grace is seen in the covenant of grace (Gen. 3:15) in that fallen elect man will be redeemed by a Redeemer...the Son of God.**
 - b. **They show us that man owes obedience to God alone**
 - c. **But God OWES nothing to us...He is sovereign over all so the conditions and consequences are and can be imposed by Him as His Word dictates**
 - d. **But he is also gracious...so out of His good pleasure, based on the plan from eternity past, His elect who were chosen before the foundations of the earth in love, will be redeemed because of His great promise in His Word not by anything else.**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
Feb. 13, 2022

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. According to the WCF, how many covenants are there? 2
2. What are they called?
 - a. Covenant of Works
 - b. Covenant of Grace/Life/redemption
3. Why do some even in the Reformed community want to make 3 or more covenants?
4. What did we learn from the Shorter and larger Catechism questions concerning God and His covenants?
 - a. **These obviously speak of Man's sinfulness and God's grace.**
 - (1) **God's grace is seen in the covenant of works/life to Adam...which Adam broke.**
 - (2) **God's grace is seen in the covenant of grace (Gen. 3:15) in that fallen elect man will be redeemed by a Redeemer...the Son of God.**
 - b. **They show us that man owes obedience to God alone.**
 - c. **But God OWES nothing to us...He is sovereign over all so the conditions and consequences are and can be imposed by Him as His Word dictates.**
 - d. **But He is also gracious...so out of His good pleasure, based on the plan from eternity past, His elect who were chosen before the foundations of the earth in love, will be redeemed because of His great promise in His Word not by anything else.**
5. With all we looked at in the WCF and the Shorter and Larger Catechisms does this definition of a covenant fair? ***"a covenant is a bond in blood sovereignly administered...or a bond of life and death sovereignly administered."*** Why or why not?

C. The Covenant of Works or Adamic Covenant

1. Just before we begin to actually look at the covenant, let me ask a question. Who were the original audience of the book of Genesis?
 - a. **The first audience of Genesis was the newly redeemed slaves, now camped on the far side of the Red Sea, in the wilderness of Sinai, and**
 - (1) **They were wondering about a God powerful enough to triumph over the forces of Egypt.**
 - (2) **God through Moses seeks to answer certain questions of His people like: Who is this God of the Israelites? How could He defeat such a powerful empire? What claim does this God have on Israel?**
 - (3) **So God is established as God having always existed and is sovereign over all things, peoples and places...a creation account is given....accounting of laws and covenants are given....God's election of His people is discussed at length.**
 - b. **While many of the stories pre-date the Exodus, the written and proclaimed revelation does not put these together until the wilderness.**

- c. **The book of Genesis is a covenant history, a covenantal-historical introduction to the Exodus events.**
 - (1) God is telling His people who He is.**
 - (2) He is re-introducing Himself to Israel in the creation story, and in so doing He tells them how He...in spite of the might of Egypt and its gods...was able to deliver Israel to Himself at Sinai.**
 - d. **Genesis does NOT provide an exhaustive history of the world before the Exodus...rather it hits the highlights that reveal its redemptive nature.**
2. Now for extra points: Why is it a good thing to NOT talk about whether Adam was created perfect or not?
- a. **It doesn't get at the real issue, which is that God created Adam and Eve with the ability to fall away from Him so that God's elect might be saved in the way that God had chosen.**
 - b. **As a part of redemptive history God had predetermined that Adam would sin and fall away and that all mankind as Adam progeny would be imputed with His sin and be in need of a Deliverer.**
 - c. **It is not an issue of lack of perfection on Adam's part but rather a lack of obedience to the revealed will of God.**
 - d. **When Adam and Eve were together Adam was finally complete and that completion was good...but as part of God's plan which is also "good" Adam was predestined to fall.**
 - e. **At the Fall Adam could and did lose the favor of God because of his disobedience.**
3. The actual word covenant is not used in the Genesis account. However the essential parts of the covenant are there:
- a. **A clear definition of the parties involved...**
 - b. **A legally binding set of provisions that stipulates the conditions of the relationship**
 - c. **The promise of blessing for obedience *and* the condition of obtaining blessing**
 - d. **The consequence for disobedience.**
4. Now think with me a minute here. We are talking about legal binding documents such as a covenant...which were at first verbal in their content and directive. But think with me a moment...did all of this need to be spoken for it to still be in place? Why or why not?
- a. **The reality here is that just like the rest of creation the moment Adam and Eve were created, they stood in a moral relationship with God their Creator.**
 - b. **They possessed a duty of obedience to Him without any inherent claim to reward or blessing for such obedience.**
 - c. **Why were we created? To glorify God!**
 - d. **Did we need a reward to fulfill our duty?**
 - (1) No...it was wired into to us to glorify God.**
 - (2) In Love, mercy and grace, however, God voluntarily entered into a physical covenant with His creatures by which He added a promise of blessing to His law.**

(3) This is not a covenant of equal partners, but the one that rested on God's initiative and His divine authority as we spoke of earlier.

- 5.** WCF 7-2- II. *The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.* Does this mean that Adam had to “earn” this blessing...or does this mean that God was obligated to Adam in any way?
- a. What was offered to Adam in the covenant of works was the result of God's favor toward him; God graciously offered life and blessedness to Adam...remember, the condescension of the Creator is the basis for all of God's contact with man; the condition of this offer was Adam's continuance in the Creator-creature relationship.**
 - b. But let's not misunderstand. Even Adam's relationship before he sinned was based on God's willingness to allow their association. Contact between Creator and created, regardless of how it occurs, is always a matter of grace. So, we don't want to think that grace was absent during the covenant of works.**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
Feb. 20, 2022

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What definition are we using for God's covenant and why?
 - a. ***"a covenant is a bond in blood sovereignly administered...or a bond of life and death sovereignly administered."* -O Palmer Robertson**
 - b. **Places all the emphasis and work of God!**
2. Does anyone remember the essential parts of a covenant?
 - a. **A clear definition of the parties involved...**
 - b. **A legally binding set of provisions that stipulates the conditions of the relationship**
 - c. **The promise of blessing for obedience *and* the condition of obtaining blessing**
 - d. **The consequence for disobedience.**
3. WCF 7-2- II. *The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.* What exactly is the Confession of Faith communicating in your own words?
 - c. **What was offered to Adam in the covenant of works was the result of God's favor toward him; God graciously offered life and blessedness to Adam...remember, the condescension of the Creator is the basis for all of God's contact with man; the condition of this offer was Adam's continuance in the Creator-created human relationship.**
 - d. **Then this blessing was promised in Adam to all His posterity upon the condition of perfect and personal obedience.**
 - e. **But let's not misunderstand.**
 - (1) **Even Adam's relationship before he sinned was based on God's willingness to allow their association.**
 - (2) **Contact between Creator and created, regardless of how it occurs, is always a matter of grace. So, we don't want to think that grace was absent in covenant of works.**

C. General comments here:

1. John Frame has said just so we are clear, *"All things; plants, animals, and persons are appointed to be covenant servants, to obey God's law, and to be instruments of His gracious purpose."* All parts of God's creation have their covenantal task. All things and people stand before God either as a covenant breaker or a covenant keeper.
2. Who are the parties involved in this covenant relationship? **God and Adam.** Describe as best you can the relationship of each to the other?
 - a. **God, the Creator, is depicted as initiating and designing the arrangement that would exist between Himself and Adam.**
 - (1) **Earlier I stated that even the covenant of works is grounded in the favor or grace of God.**

- (2) **This is apparent when we look at this passage. It is not Adam who comes to God, but God who comes to Adam, as it were, and defines the terms of their relationship (this is an important point).**
- (3) **In this arrangement, Adam learned how he was to relate to God; he learned the nature of their association and its boundaries.**
- (4) **So this covenant made clear who was the law-giver and who was subject to that law; it made clear whose word would govern conduct and how truth would be established.**
- b. **The fact that God initiated the covenant with Adam illustrates the principle implication of the covenant, which is: God speaks, man hears and obeys.**
 - (1) **This is the essence of the Divine-human association. Adam did not initiate contact with God; he did not dictate the terms of their relationship. This did not happen because Adam was the created...for the created cannot assume such liberties.**
 - (2) **The covenant of works was the ratification of what was already true by virtue of the fact that Adam was a creation of God. The covenant of works "formalized" the nature of God's relationship with man, we might say.**

D. Now let's look at Gen. 2:8-17.

- a. So with all of this in mind what do you understand to be the purpose for the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?
 - (1) **This passage says that immediately following the creation of Adam, God planted a garden *"toward the east in Eden"*; and God placed the man in that garden.**
 - **At that time, God gave certain instructions to Adam, instructions which governed Adam's relationship with his Maker.**
 - **When we look at these words of instruction, we discover all the elements of a covenant.**
 - (2) **The tree of Life: Gen. 2:8-9- *"And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."***
 - **Before the Fall no prohibition to eating of this tree.**
 - **It was not the fruit of the tree of life that determined Adam's well-being, but rather:**
 - **The tree was only a symbol. The tree of life was only a visible representation of God's covenant arrangement with Adam; it was an aid to Adam's understanding of God's promise and his responsibility.**
 - **The tree of life was a training tool for Adam. He was to learn that he had access to that tree as long as he obeyed God, which, in turn, taught him that the essential matter in his relationship with his Creator was submission.**

- Access to the tree of life taught Adam that harmony, happiness and productivity are achieved and maintained when the creature relates rightly to his Creator.
 - After the Fall, man was prohibited to eating of this tree for it is not in his power to save himself or even maintain by his own strength faith...it is all of God, through Christ by grace.
 - Also, by barring access to the tree of life, God showed compassion in His omniscience. Knowing that because of sin, life would be filled with sorrow and toil, He graciously limited the number of years men would live.
 - To live eternally in a sinful state with its results—pain, disease, heartache, toil, and grief—would mean endless agony for humanity, with no hope of the relief that comes with death.
 - Because God knew that Adam would fail the conditions of his immortality, He provided for One who would redeem fallen mankind.
 - Through one man, Adam, sin entered the world, but through another Man, Jesus Christ, redemption through the forgiveness of sin is available to all. Romans 5:17-19 *“For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.”*
 - Those who avail themselves of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross will see the tree of life again, for it stands in the middle of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. Its water is the constant flow of everlasting life from God’s throne to God’s people. Revelation 22:1-2- *“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”*
- (3) The tree of the knowledge of good and evil: Gen. 2:15-17- *“The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man saying ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it (or ...when you eat of it) you shall surely die.’”*
- The prohibition of this tree was to show God’s absolute authority...that there are boundaries and acceptable practices and behaviors even pre-fall.
 - The tree existed as a requirement to absolute obedience to the Word of God.

- **The tree existed, as well, to show our limitations and need for God's authority and to establish this pattern of authority over all of life.**
 - **When we read about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:9), we might think that there must have been something essentially evil, even foreboding, about this tree.**
 - **It was not forbidden because it (the tree) was evil, it was forbidden because to disobey was evil. God had put this tree in the garden to give Adam and Eve the opportunity to live out genuine faith and obedience.**
 - **God planted these two special trees in the middle of the garden. I find it significant that God should choose to plant these trees in 'the heart of the garden:**
 - **So Adam and Eve would know their location,**
 - **But also so that the significance of the trees and their effects are at the very heart of the relationship between God and man, that is, life and obedience.**
 - **Both of these trees show us God's divine authority established over all of life and He will continue to issue commands and call all to account for their obedience or disobedience throughout all of time. Thus establishing from the beginning that He has the right to command His creation and to expect His creation to want to do what He says to do.**
- b. So what is God promising here in the passages we have looked at Gen. 1:28-30 and 2:8-17?**
- (1) We discern the promise of the covenant of works by way of implication.**
 - (2) If the penalty for disobedience was death, then the reward for obedience, or covenant fidelity, must have been life.**
 - **Perhaps it is more proper to say that the reward for covenant faithfulness would have been the continuation of Adam's peaceful and beneficial relationship with his Creator.**
 - **That harmonious existence between God and man would remain intact as long as Adam abided by the divinely-imposed terms of the covenant.**
 - **The life promised to Adam in the covenant of works was, in principle, what he already was experiencing, namely, peaceful communion with God.**
- c. What does Adam have to do to receive these promises?**
- (1) Perfect and total obedience.**
 - (2) But remember this: Adam's obedience was a necessary condition but not the sufficient condition for life in God's favor.**
 - (3) This covenant relationship before and after the Fall was something Adam enjoyed because of God's grace.**
 - (4) He could and did lose it at the Fall but he could never earn it or merit it back...only God by His grace redeemed Adam and Eve back to His side.**
- d. What is the consequence of disobedience if Adam refuses to obey?**
- (1) Death ...separation from God!**

- (2) Every covenant stipulates certain consequences for violating the condition. Once again, therefore, we look at Gen. 2:17: “...for in the day that you eat from it (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) you shall surely die.”**
 - (3) The curse in the covenant of works was the very opposite of the promise. The penalty for not abiding by the terms of the covenant of works was, to put it simply, the ruination of man's relationship with his Creator.**
- e. Why such a severe penalty?
- (1) Such a severe penalty was required because God must always be God and man can never have any other relationship with Him but that of a dependent creation to a sovereign and independent Creator.**
 - (2) For Adam to fail to abide by the command of the Creator is so hideous, so unthinkable, so unnatural, that it can only result in cosmic chaos.**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
Feb. 27, 2022

A. Prayer

B. Review- The Covenant of Works- Gen. 1:28-30; Gen. 2:8-17

1. So what is God promising here in the passages we have looked at Gen. 1:28-30 and 2:8-17?

a. **Blessing in Gen. 1:28...**

(1) How are we meant to experience that blessing? By doing God's will as He would do it...specifically in our stewardship of all He puts us in charge of.

(2) Is what we do dependent upon receiving the blessing of God's covenant?

- **No...**

- **It is dependent upon us experiencing the blessing...the blessing has been given by virtue of God's steadfast love not by His covenant...**

b. He is promising continued life in 2:8-17 so that we can experience His blessing all of our life as we keep His covenant. His covenant is the framework in which we experience what He has already promised and given to His people.

(1) But remember this: Adam's obedience was a necessary condition but not the sufficient condition for life in God's favor.

(2) This covenant relationship before and after the Fall was something Adam enjoyed because of God's grace.

(3) Perhaps it is more proper to say that the reward for covenant faithfulness would have been the continuation of Adam's peaceful and beneficial relationship with his Creator.

(4) That harmonious existence between God and man would remain intact as long as Adam abided by the divinely-imposed terms of the covenant.

(5) The life promised to Adam in the covenant of works was, in principle, what he already was experiencing, namely, peaceful communion with God.

2. Why did we say that there was such a severe penalty?

a. Such a severe penalty was required because God must always be God and man can never have any other relationship with Him but that of a dependent creation to a sovereign and independent Creator.

b. For Adam to fail to abide by the command of the Creator is so hideous, so unthinkable, so unnatural, that it can only result in cosmic chaos.

C. The Covenant of Works...other considerations concerning the tree of life

1. It has been proposed by many within the Church that the existence of these two trees are there to show man's free will to obey or not to obey.

a. A common argument is that God put the two special trees in the midst of the Garden of Eden to demonstrate that God had given man free will, that man was not a robot but was a living being, who had the freedom of choice.

- b. Can you articulate what is wrong with this thinking?
 - (1) Didn't man already have "free will" before God presented him with the tree scenario? Look at Gen. 2:16-17 again...what does that tell us about Adams freedom?**
 - (2) Inherent within the commandment above, is the idea that free will was already established. Adam and Eve had that ability to choose to eat of any tree in the garden they wanted. Okay, so maybe choice is one thing, but more specifically, what about free will to disobey God?**
 - (3) It is irrational to believe that God would command man not to eat of a fruit tree, which was put there to demonstrate man had free will, this is paradoxical. The only way to test free will then, would be to go against God's will and do something He commanded you not do.**
 - (4) Clearly free will as defined by many theologians today doesn't make sense in light of this brief analysis. Fortunately the reason God placed the two special trees in the midst of the garden, is rather more simple and straight forward.**
- 2. So to sum up what would you now say is the purpose for the tree of life?
 - a. **It was not the fruit of the tree of life that determined Adam's well-being. It was and always will be Adam's submissive obedience to God's will...His Word.**
 - b. **The tree was only a symbol. The tree of life was only a visible representation of God's covenant arrangement with Adam; it was an aid to Adam's understanding of God's promise and his responsibility.**
 - c. **The tree of life was a training tool for Adam. He was to learn that he had access to that tree as long as he obeyed God, which, in turn, taught him that the essential matter in his relationship with his Creator was submission.**
 - d. **Access to the tree of life taught Adam that harmony, happiness and productivity are achieved and maintained when the creature relates rightly to his Creator.**
 - e. **It was to show that there is nothing higher than God's commandment, and the transgression thereof comes with the highest penalty.**
 - (1) God and His word are inseparable, to disregard His commandment is to disregard God Himself.**
 - (2) God put the tree in the Garden to remind man that God is God, that He has the highest authority, that He alone is the creator of life.**
 - (3) Indeed, as has been stated before, there were two trees set in the midst of the garden, one brought life, and the other death, it was a clear choice.**
 - (4) Within the covenant of works the trees provided a vivid example; to obey God is life, to disobey God is sin, and the penalty for sin is death.**
- D. The Covenant of works from Hosea 6:7-*"But like Adam they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me."*
 - 1. This passage views Adam as having existed within a covenant relationship with God and that he transgressed that relationship in the Garden of Eden.

2. See **Rom. 5:12-19**. Again who was Adam to us? Why are we held responsible for his sin before God?
 - a. **He was the father of all mankind...and as such we come from him and we receive not just His DNA but we will be responsible and accountable for His actions good or bad.**
 - b. **A.W. Pink answers these questions this way, *"Adam was the federal head of the human race, that he did act and transact in a representative capacity, and that the judicial consequences of his acting were imputed to all those for whom he stood, is clearly revealed in God's Word. In Romans 5 we read: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all sinned" (v. 12); "through the offence of one many be dead" (v. 15); "the judgment was by one to condemnation" (v. 16); "by one man's offence death reigned" (v. 17); "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (v. 18); "by one man's offence many were made [legally constituted] sinners" (v. 19).***
 - c. **The meaning of these declarations is far too plain that even a prejudiced mind can understand. The short of it is this: It pleased God to deal with the human race as represented in and by Adam.**

3. Given the nature of this covenant which was made before the fall, is mankind still bound by this covenant of perfect obedience? Why or why not?
 - a. **Yes...all mankind is still bound by this original covenant.**
 - b. **Sinful people may refuse to obey or even not admit the existence of such a covenant, but they cannot escape it...and hence if they are not God's will be judged by it.**
 - c. **All humans are in a covenant relationship with God by virtue of their existence...God's doing...all humans beings, like all of the rest of God's creation, have one mandate...to glorify the God who created them.**
 - d. **We should also note that the punishment for this covenant is still in effect, *"for the wages of sin is death"* (Rom. 6:23).**
 - e. **Paul also implies that perfect obedience to God's law, *if it were possible* would lead to life...see Rom. 10:5- *"For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them..."***
 - f. **Christ perfectly obeyed the covenant of works for us for He committed no sin and completely obeyed God on our behalf (Rom. 5:18). So are we:**
 - (1) **See Matthew 5:20- *"For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."***
 - (2) **See Matt. 5:48- *"You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."*...perfection...so even Jesus agrees that the covenant of works is still in effect.**
 - (3) **Jesus is making the point of what is required of us to enter into the kingdom of heaven.**
 - **The Pharisees are outwardly righteous...so that won't work, given the last thing any of us wants to be compared to is a Pharisee.**
 - **So He is talking about our inward righteousness which none of us have on our own...being dead in our sin.**

- **But it is still a requirement...a requirement met by Christ when Christ's righteousness is imputed to us to fill the void of His taking all our sinfulness.**
 - g. Because of Adam's sin we have all transgressed God's law we are all violators of the covenant of works...hence we are all covenant-breakers deserving of death until we receive the mercy of God and are justified by faith alone through Christ alone.**
4. It is our sinful transgressions that keep us out of heaven according to Scripture. We aren't perfect and all our works have been tainted because the first command was not kept...and because even in our redeemed state the fallen condition still exist though is not dominate any longer...though some days it feels like it is, if you are like me. So, with this in mind what things should we be motivated to do to bring God glory in this life?
- a. Learn the Gospel of Christ carefully so we can live it correctly.**
 - b. Then share the Gospel of Christ...**
 - (1) First to our children and to one another.**
 - (2) Then to others not knowing or caring who God's elect are and who aren't with the full knowledge that unless He stays His hand and shows mercy that leads unto salvation all will suffer the wrath of God.**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
March 13, 2022

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

3. What is Covenant Theology?

- a. **Covenant theology understands all of history after man's fall into sin as a progressive outworking of God's Covenant of Grace.**
- b. **Beginning with the first promise to Adam after the fall and continuing throughout history to the end of the ages.**
- c. **God orders all things in view of His single purpose of redeeming a people to Himself. The Key Distinctives of Covenant theology:**
 - (1) The United Promise of God-(Gen. 17:7; Gal. 3:13-14)**
 - (2) The Untied Plan of God-(Jer. 31:31ff; Gal. 3:6-9)**
 - (3) The United People of God- (Rom. 9; 11; 15:8-9; Gal. 3:7,29)**

4. What is the purpose for the Covenant of Works? The covenant God made with Adam and Eve?

- a. **If they wanted to remain in the state in which they were created they would perfectly obey His command to walk in His way.**
- b. **Samuel Bolton describes the difference between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace this way: *"In the Covenant of Works made with Adam, the promise was made to the work and not to the person; whereas in the Covenant of Grace, the promise is made to the person, not to the work."* What is he trying to emphasize here?**

5. WCF 7-2- II. *The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.* What exactly is the Confession of Faith communicating in your own words?

- f. **What was offered to Adam in the covenant of works was the result of God's favor toward him; God graciously offered life and blessedness to Adam...remember, the condescension of the Creator is the basis for all of God's contact with man; the condition of this offer was Adam's continuance in the Creator-creature relationship.**
- g. **Then this blessing was promised in Adam to all His posterity upon the condition of perfect and personal obedience.**
- h. **But let's not misunderstand.**
 - (3) Even Adam's relationship before he sinned was based on God's willingness to allow their association.**
 - (4) Contact between Creator and created, regardless of how it occurs, is always a matter of grace. So, we don't want to think that grace was absent in covenant of works.**

C. Now let's consider the Covenant of Grace.

1. As a bit of review since we have been talking about both the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace. We are defining a covenant, *"as a bond in blood sovereignly administered"*, so where do we find the first actual physical signs of the covenant of grace?
 - a. **Gen. 3:8- when God comes to them after they fell...the Immanuel Principle. God's grace to Adam and Eve was shown when they were only worthy of God's wrath. Then, in short order comes-**
 - b. **Gen. 3:15- *"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel."* The promise of a Redeemer with blood eluded to in the warfare between Christ and Satan. There would be a definite cost...and then God shows us a sign of that cost...**
 - c. **Gen. 3:20-21- *"The man called His wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them."***
 - (1) **The animals in which Adam named with which he had an intimate relationship were sacrificed on his and Eve's behalf...**
 - **blood was spilled...**
 - **death came into the Garden for their salvation...**
 - **a substitutionary atonement was made on their behalf...**
 - (2) **This shows the lengths that God would ultimately go to redeem/deliver His people from our sin.**
 - d. **The man, Adam was placed back under God's creation ordinance and blessing.**
 - (1) **The man is given back his ability to rule**
 - **as seen in the naming of his wife...just as he named the animals and that showed his God given authority and headship over them**
 - **so this aspect is given back to man by God ...sovereignly administered under the expectation of obedience by God...as a sign the relationship was renewed.**
 - (2) **With the curse of death still in force because of his breaking of the original covenant but now he looks forward to eternal Life in God's blessing though there will be trouble and toil and lack of satisfaction with what he does with his hands.**
 - e. **Oh, did Adam ask to be brought into communion with God out of some faith or righteousness he still had in him? ...Or was it fear?**
 - a. **He does seem to cautiously repentant before God but He wasn't contrite since he so quickly blames God and Eve for his falling into sin.**
 - b. **God's acceptance of Adam was not based on anything Adam did or maybe even have tried to do. God's acceptance was solely based on His love and election of Adam before the foundations of the world.**

- c. **Looking at this event...one is left wondering how anyone could ever say that God accepts them because of any good within them. God never based His love, acceptance and adoption on anything that man could offer since man...like Adam only deserved one thing...God's wrath.**

2. WCF 7-3-6

- a. III. Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace: wherein he freely offered unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.
 - b. IV. This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in the Scripture by the name of a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ, the testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.
 - c. V. This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come, which were for that time sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation, and is called the Old Testament.
 - d. VI. Under the gospel, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed, are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity and less outward glory, yet in them it is held forth in more fullness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not, therefore, two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations.
3. Just so we are clear God how were Adam and Eve saved?
- a. **God's work alone through the substitutionary atonement that he wrought through the shedding of the blood of the animals for skins for clothing that looked forward to Christ work on the Cross shedding His own blood that we may have a "new skin" a new life... Gal. 2:2- *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."***
 - b. **Scripture alone tells us that they...like us:**
 - (1) **Were justified by grace alone which was received through faith alone because of Christ alone for the glory of God alone.**

- (2) Gen. 3:15 revealed that One would come to save His people. He would come and save us...just like it says in Matthew 1:21- *"She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."* He alone can do this since we are totally incapable.**
- c. So we see that God's relationship with man did not terminate with man's sin.... since His relationship was not based on what man did or did not do.**
- (1) Judgment must fall...they are cast out of the garden and they will eventually die.**
- (2) But even in the midst of the fall and judgment God's covenant of grace/redemption is seen...**
- **First in Gen. 3:8 he came to man because He loved man.**
 - **Then in Gen. 3:15 when the Redeemer of God's elect is announced.**
 - **Then again when God kills the animals and provide Adam and Eve "new clothes" in the same way the old clothes are taken off and the new clothes are put on in our salvation by grace alone.**
- d. The essence of the Covenant of Grace is the same throughout the Old and New Testaments- God saves sinners by grace alone, through faith alone, into Christ alone.**
- (1) In the OT this covenant was administered to families...Noah, Abraham...and then to the nation of Israel through "signs" and "shadows" representing the Redeemer who was to come and those who believed in the Messiah were the ones that God by grace had justified into Christ even before they saw the Messiah.**
- (2) But now it is administered with the whole of God's church...made up of people, *"from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priest to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."* (Rev. 5:9-10)**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
March 20, 2022

A. Prayer

B. Review

4. WCF 7-3-6

- e. III. Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace: wherein he freely offered unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.
 - f. IV. This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in the Scripture by the name of a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ, the testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.
 - g. V. This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come, which were for that time sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation, and is called the Old Testament.
 - h. VI. Under the gospel, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed, are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity and less outward glory, yet in them it is held forth in more fullness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not, therefore, two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations.
5. What are some of the WCF “highlights” that helps us in understanding the Covenant of Grace?
6. Just so we are clear God how were Adam and Eve saved?
- e. **God's work alone through the substitutionary atonement that he wrought through the shedding of the blood of the animals for skins for clothing that looked forward to Christ work on the Cross shedding His own blood that we may have a “new skin” a new life...**
 - f. **Scripture alone tells us that they...like us:**
 - (3) Were justified by grace alone which was received through faith alone because of Christ alone for the glory of God alone.**

- (4) **Gen. 3:15** revealed that One would come to save His people. He would come and save us...and that was confirmed in **Matthew 1:21**- *"She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."* He alone can do this since we are totally incapable.
- g. **So we see that God's relationship with man did not terminate with man's sin....since His relationship was not based on what man did or did not do.**
- h. **The essence of the Covenant of Grace is the same throughout the Old and New Testaments- God saves sinners by grace alone, through faith alone, into Christ alone.**

C. Covenant of Grace continued:

1. Last time we began to look at a theory that many is the Church call God's Plan "B". (Plan "B", in that it wasn't God's plan for Adam and Eve to Fall, but because they had free-will they chose on their own not to follow God's will and fell. Now God had to kick into plan "B".) How do we know what we have been talking about up this point was and ...even more important... "IS" God's plan? **From Gen. 1 we have seen a plan unfolding...**
 - a. **God had a plan to create:**
 - (1) **God did not on a whim decide to create...**
 - (2) **By virtue of the sequence of creation we see it as the outworking of a plan that was obviously devised pre-creation.**
 - (3) **So with this in mind we can recognize that even in the Fall that that was part of the plan in that God wasn't surprised by the behavior...**
 - (4) **In fact Adam was created with the ability to fall and we wouldn't say that was a flaw with God.**
 - (5) **Remember from Berkof last time:**
 - **He was not yet raised above the possibility of erring, sinning, and dying.**
 - **He was not yet in possession of the highest degree of holiness, nor did he enjoy life in all its fullness.**
 - b. **We have also seen that God not only had a plan to create things but to give them purpose...**
 - (1) **All things would be fruitful and multiply after their own kind to fill the earth which fulfilled God's will thus glorifying Him...**
 - (2) **Man was created to do the same...to glorify God by being obedient ...by working and keeping the land...by walking with his God...by enjoying God's blessing...**
 - (3) **Christians should appreciate the significance of the order/structure of creation.**
 - **When we read from Genesis 1:3 to Genesis 2:3 we should see described the seven days of creation: the six days in which God creates and the Sabbath day on which He rests.**
 - **All of this is God's explanation of the first verse...His continued plan unfolded. Let's look at the passage briefly to prepare us for next week:**

- I want you to note that whereas Genesis 1:2 says that the earth was formless, days one, two and three are all devoted to giving the world form. If you'll look from verse 3 to verse 10, you will see that each of those days speaks of God's shaping the world, ordering it into form out of formlessness.
- Days four, five and six are all devoted to God's bringing fullness to the creation from emptiness/void. You notice that one, two and three are devoted to form; four, five and six are devoted to fullness. The first day of form and the first day of fullness are both devoted to what? The creation of light.
- So from formlessness and emptiness and darkness, God brings into the creation order and fullness and light. And so He impresses on the creation the stamp of His own character. His light. That is why the Scriptures can say, "*The heavens declare the glory of God*" (Ps. 19) because His order and His fullness and His light have been built into the creation as we see it. And so day to day utters forth praise to Him. That is why Jesus can say... "*I am the light of the world.*" And that is why the apostle Paul can say in Romans, chapter 1 that we see in the creation the reality of God. It testifies that He is the maker of heaven and earth and that we ought to worship Him.

(4) But then Gen. 2:4 alerts us to something not seen up to this point...God's Covenantal name...Yahweh...LORD God= Yahweh Elohim...as the days of creation played out all things were being accomplished by His plan...ALL THINGS...which included the Fall of Man.

(5) Gen. 3:15 shows us the promise of the Messiah...

- The One who would come to save His people...all part of the same plan....for there is no interruption in the text as if...whoops, now let me do something else...no, rather it is one continuous pouring out of His plan.
 - The promise of God's Deliverer-Seed (Gen. 3: 15) would come through Abraham's seed and would bring blessings to the nations (Gen. 12: 1-3). When Jesus commissioned the disciples to "*make disciples of all nations*" (Matt. 28: 19), He had the promise-word of the Abrahamic covenant in mind.
- c. Covenant is God plan ...it gives definition to God's purpose...it is His promise to do just as He said He would do...He didn't make the original promise with us...He made it with Himself...Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**
- d. The Covenant of grace/redemption is in place in time and space...the moment man falls and this covenant is still in place though we see that God reiterates this covenant throughout time with different covenant administrations or ratifications.**
- (1) Noahic Administration of the Covenant**
 - (2) Abrahamic Administration of the Covenant**
 - (3) Mosaic Administration of the Covenant**
 - (4) Davidic Administration of the Covenant**
 - (5) Christ the fulfillment of the Covenant**

(6) One Covenant of Grace/Redemption multiple administrations as His children grow and mature.

2. Before we move on to discuss the Noahic Administration of the Covenant or the covenant renewal with Noah, let's stop and consider together the central content of the Covenant of Grace which is easily defined by the doctrines of grace.
 - a. **The central truth of God's saving grace is succinctly stated in the assertion, *"Salvation is of the Lord."* Or *"Salvation belongs to the LORD."***
 - (1) **This strong declaration means that every aspect of man's salvation is from God and is entirely dependent upon God.**
 - (2) **The only contribution that we make is the sin that was laid upon Jesus Christ at the cross.**
 - (3) **The Apostle Paul affirmed this when he wrote, *"From Him and through Him and to Him are all things"* (Rom. 11:36). This is to say, salvation is God determined, God purchased, God applied, and God secured. From start to finish, salvation is of the Lord alone.**
 - b. **This truth is best summarized in the doctrines of grace, which are total depravity, unconditional election, definite atonement, effectual calling, and preserving grace. (or TULIP- Total depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace and Perseverance of the saints) These truths present the triune God as the author of our salvation from beginning to end. Each member of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Spirit—has a part to play in redemption, and they work together as one God to rescue those perishing under divine wrath. In perfect unity, the three divine persons do this work.**
 - (1) **Total Depravity – or Total Inability**
 - **As a result of Adam's fall, the entire human race is affected; all of Adam's descendants are spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1, 5).**
 - **By this one act of disobedience, he became morally polluted in every part of his being—mind, affections, body, and will. By this sin, death entered the world, and Adam's fellowship with God was broken.**
 - **This does not mean that all people are as bad as they could be. Rather, this doctrine says that, as a result of man's fall in Adam, all people are radically depraved from the inside and that their depravity affects every area of their lives.**
 - **Apart from grace, our minds are darkened by sin, unable to understand the truth. Our hearts are defiled, unable to love the truth. Our bodies are dying, progressing to physical death. Our wills are dead, unable to choose the good.**
 - **Moral inability to please God plagues every person from their entrance into the world. In their unregenerate state, no one seeks after God. No one is capable of doing good. All are under the curse of the law, which is eternal death.**

(2) Unconditional Election –

- Long before Adam sinned, God had already decreed and determined salvation for sinners. In eternity past, the Father chose a people in Christ who would be saved. Before time began, God elected many from among mankind whom He purposed to save from His wrath.
- Because man is dead in sin, he is unable (and stubbornly unwilling) to initiate a saving response to God.
- In light of this, God, from eternity past, mercifully elected a particular people unto salvation (Ephesians 1:4–6).
- These people are comprised of men and women from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (Revelation 5:9).
- Election and predestination are unconditional; they are not contingent on man's response to God's grace (Romans 8:29–30; 9:11; Ephesians 1:11–12) because man, in his fallen state, is both unable and unwilling to respond favorably to Christ's offer of salvation.
- This selection was not based upon any foreseen faith in those whom He chose. Nor was it prompted by their inherent goodness. Instead, according to His infinite love and inscrutable wisdom, God set His affection upon His elect.
- The Father gave the elect to His Son to be His bride. Each one chosen was predestined by the Father to be conformed to the image of His Son and to sing His praises forever.
- The Father commissioned His Son to enter this world and lay down His life to save these same chosen ones.
- Likewise, the Father commissioned the Spirit to bring these same elect ones to faith in Christ.
- The Son and the Spirit freely concurred in all these decisions, making salvation the undivided work of the triune God.

(3) Limited/Definite Atonement –

- The purpose of Christ's atoning death was not to merely make men savable and thus leaving the salvation of humanity contingent on man's response to God's grace.
- Nor did His death simply achieve a hypothetical benefit that may or may not be accepted.
- Neither did His death merely make all mankind redeemable.
- Instead, Jesus actually redeemed a specific people through His death, securing and guaranteeing their salvation. Not a drop of Jesus' blood was shed in vain. He truly saved all for whom He died.
- This doctrine of definite atonement is sometimes called limited atonement. Rather, the purpose of the atonement was to secure the redemption of a particular people (Ephesians 1:4–6; John 17:9). All whom God has elected and Christ died for will be saved (John 6:37–40, 44).

(4) Irresistible Grace or Effectual Calling –

- With oneness of purpose, the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit into the world to apply this salvation to those chosen and redeemed.

- **The Spirit came to convict the elect of sin, righteousness, and judgment and to turn to the Son all whom the Father gave to Him.**
- **At the divinely appointed time, the Spirit removes from each elect person his unbelieving heart of stone, hardened and dead in sin, and replaces it with a believing heart of flesh, responsive and alive unto God.**
- **God has elected a particular people to be the recipients of Christ's atoning work. These people are drawn to Christ by a grace that is irresistible. When God calls, man responds (John 6:37, 44; 10:16).**
- **This teaching does not mean that God saves men against their will. Rather, God changes the heart of the rebellious unbeliever so that he now desires to repent and be saved. God's elect will be drawn to Him, and that grace that draws them is, in fact, irresistible.**
- **God replaces the unbeliever's heart of stone with a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26). This call from the Spirit is effectual, meaning the elect will certainly respond when it is given.**
- **They will not finally resist it. Thus, the doctrine of effectual calling is sometimes called the doctrine of irresistible grace. In Reformed theology, regeneration precedes faith.**

(5) Perseverance of the Saints or Preserving Grace –

- **Once converted, every believer is kept eternally secure by all three persons of the Trinity. (John 10:27–29; Romans 8:29–30; Ephesians 1:3–14).**
 - **All whom God foreknew and predestined in eternity past, He will glorify in eternity future. No believer will drop out or fall away. Every believer is firmly held by the sovereign hands of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, never to be lost. None of Jesus' sheep for whom He laid down His life will perish.**
 - **The Holy Spirit permanently seals in Christ all whom He draws to faith. Once born again, none can ever be unborn. Once a believer, none can ever become an unbeliever. Once saved, none will ever be-come unsaved.**
 - **God will preserve them in faith forever, and they will persevere until the end.**
 - **It is also clear in Scripture that Christ continues to intercede for His people (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). This continues to provide believers with the assurance that those who belong to Christ are eternally His. Thus, the doctrine of preserving grace is often called the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.**
- c. From beginning to end, Salvation is of the Lord....salvation belongs to the Lord.**

(1) These five doctrines together form the doctrines of grace, so called because they summarize the salvation experience as the result of the covenant of grace of God, who acts independently of man's will.

(2) They are inseparably connected and therefore stand or fall together. To embrace any one of the five necessities embracing all five. No effort or act of man can add to the grace of God to bring about the redemption of the soul.

(3) We must remember:

- **Mercy is God withholding what we do deserve...divine judgment.**
- **Grace is God giving us what we do not deserve...salvation/ justification... being declared not guilty by the work of Christ alone!**
- **So we are now at peace with God, peace with one another in Christ and at peace with the creation. Harmony exists in Christ Jesus**

(4) For truly it is *“by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast”* (Ephesians 2:8–9).

(5) These doctrines speak together with one voice in giving the greatest glory to God. Such high theology produces high doxology. When it is rightly understood that God alone—Father, Son, and Spirit—saves sinners, then all glory goes to Him.

Covenants Study
Sunday School
March 27, 2022

A. Prayer

B. Review

4. What definition are we using for God's covenant and why?

c. ***"a covenant is a bond in blood sovereignly administered...or a bond of life and death sovereignly administered."*** -O Palmer Robertson

d. **Places all the emphasis and work of God!**

5. Does anyone remember the essential parts of a covenant?

e. **A clear definition of the parties involved...**

f. **A legally binding set of provisions that stipulates the conditions of the relationship**

g. **The promise of blessing for obedience *and* the condition of obtaining blessing**

h. **The consequence for disobedience.**

C. Doctrines of Grace- Before we move on to discuss the Noahic Administration of the Covenant or the covenant renewal with Noah, last week we stop to consider together the central content of the Covenant of Grace which is easily defined by the doctrines of grace.

1. The central truth of God's saving grace is succinctly stated in the assertion, *"Salvation is of the Lord."* Or *"Salvation belongs to the LORD."*

a. **This strong declaration means that every aspect of man's salvation is from God and is entirely dependent upon God.**

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c. From beginning to end, Salvation is of the Lord....salvation belongs to the Lord.

(6) These five doctrines together form the doctrines of grace, so called because they summarize the salvation experience as the result of the covenant of grace of God, who acts independently of man's will.

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(10) These doctrines speak together with one voice in giving the greatest glory to God. Such high theology produces high doxology. When it is rightly understood that God alone—Father, Son, and Spirit—saves sinners, then all glory goes to Him.

D. The Noahic Administration of the Covenant of Grace-

3. The organic nature of this covenant is seen in many ways but probably mostly in the re-establishments of the covenant with more information as God's people grows and matures organically. The Noahic Covenant is with toddlers if you will that notice everything and need concrete answers to their questions.

Covenants Study
Sunday School
April 3, 2022

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What did we say were the foundational doctrines of the Covenant of Grace? In other words: what 5 points did the church put out as an easy way to understand the foundation of the Covenant of Grace of the Gospel of Christ?
 - a. **Total depravity or inability**
 - b. **Unconditional Election**
 - c. **Limited, Definite/ Particular Atonement**
 - d. **Irresistible Grace/ Effectual Calling**
 - e. **Perseverance of the Saints/ Preserving Grace**
2. If you were to put it into one or two lines how would you sum up these 5 points?
 - a. **Justification comes by God's grace alone, through faith alone through the work of Christ alone to the Glory of God alone.**
 - b. ***"Salvation belongs to the LORD!" ...Alone!***

C. The Noahic Administration/Renewal of the Covenant of Grace-

4. The organic nature of this covenant is seen in many ways but probably mostly in the re-establishments of the covenant with more information as God's people grows and matures organically. The Noahic Covenant is with toddlers if you will that notice everything and need concrete answers to their questions.
5. Now let's turn to Genesis 6:8-9, 18, 7:1, 8:20-9:17.
 - a. **Gen. 6:8-9 and 7:1 we see Noah defined as *"righteous", "blameless" and having found favor with God* in a covenant of faith...redemption...grace is presupposed for the term *"righteous"* presupposes someone who is joined with the LORD....for righteousness can only be given by the Son to His own. Righteous- means:
(1) **He was one who had been made righteous by an act outside of himself- God's grace!**
 - **In a covenant of faith...redemption...grace is presupposed for the term *"righteous"* presupposes someone who is joined with the LORD....**
 - **for righteousness can only be given by the Son to His own.**
 - **Only those who have been given righteousness can be called righteous.**
 - **It doesn't mean sinless...a righteous man in the OT is one who hates sin, turns from it and repents of it, provides restitution for his sins, trusts God pursues obedience and enjoys being accepted by God's grace alone. Oh and by the way it holds this meaning also in the NT.**
 - **Noah righteousness is seen in many things and summed up in Heb. 11:7- *"By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world*****

and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith."

- Noah was "blameless"- this does not mean sinless...it can also mean one who doesn't always persist in blameworthy actions.
- Noah ***"found favor/grace in the eyes of the LORD."***
 - Because God justified Noah he was able to "find" favor with God. God had to place it there before Him and open His eyes to see it and his heart to want it.
 - Grace is God giving us what we do not deserve...salvation/ justification... being declared not guilty by the work of Christ alone!

(2) That he held to the standard of a covenant...those who follow the Lord are called righteous

- See Hebrews 11:7- ***"By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith."***
- II Peter 2:5- ***"...if He did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly..."***

(3) Noah and his seed and all creation benefit from the gracious relationship between and God. The re-constituting of the families of the earth after the flood is a sign of God's redemption/deliverance which is a sign of His covenant of grace...for it is by grace.

(4) Noah and his seed were chosen above all the other peoples of the day...

- He was the only one righteous in the land at the time and as the head of the household his whole family came under the covenant...
- For He had been elected and his family had been chosen before the foundations of the earth as God's plan unfolded.

b. Gen. 6:18- *"But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you."*

(1) Which covenant is in mind? Was this to be considered a new covenant or a continuation of an old one? Support your answer.

- The word ***"establish"*** suggests that this was more of a **confirmation of an already existing covenant relationship** rather than something brand new.
- The phrase could read then; ***"I will re-establish my covenant with you..."*** or... ***"I will ratify my covenant with you."***

(2) This is often known as the Noahic Covenant or the Noahic Administration of the Covenant. God revealing even more of Himself and His will to His growing children.

(3) This covenant seems to emphasize the close relationship between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace...serving almost as an illustration of how the 2 are so interconnected.

(4) Much of God's covenantal relationship with Noah is the same as the original covenant of works...how he is to work and keep the land...being fruitful and multiply...subduing the earth even though now the animal world will not respond positively as it had with Adam.

(5) This is the very first place in the Bible the term covenant (berith) is used...and it is obviously used in such a way that Noah knew what it was...

6. With that in mind, Question: Given that much of the church today says that we have to choose our salvation...or we have to do something to win God's favor... how did Noah and His family prove they were worthy before God chose them? In other words: How would have Noah come to a saving knowledge of faith?

- a. Same way we do...having been justified by faith...**
- b. Practically speaking it appears that he grew up always knowing the love of God and how important to be devoted to the Lord because God had gifted him with faith.**
- c. His family taught him ... When Noah was born Jared, his great grandfather was still alive (for maybe as much as the first 300 years of Noah's life), Methuselah his grandfather was still alive (actually until the year of the flood then he died) ...and His father Lamech was alive until 5 years before the flood so they would have had immense influence on his growing and maturing faith.**

7. Another question: How did God show His grace toward Noah and his family?

- a. He didn't kill them like the others.**
- b. He gave detailed instruction for the Ark.**
- c. He chooses to save them keeps them from drowning like the rest of mankind...**
- d. He brings them in...**
- e. He closes the door before the flood waters rises too far...**
- f. He doesn't require Noah to shut the door himself on the people of his community...**
- g. He doesn't enable them to see the destruction...he couldn't see the death or even the extent of the Flood...God kept him from such a burden.**
- h. The covenant renewal and The rainbow**

8. Where else do we see God's grace in the midst of this world-wide flood?

- a. In cleansing His created world from sin. This also had the effect of making the ground fertile again.**
- b. In choosing certain animals and certain numbers of animals.**
- c. In choosing some animals as substitutes for thank offerings and probably sin offerings by Noah and his family.**
- d. The rainbow**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
April 17, 2022

D. Prayer

E. Review

9. **Question:** Given that much of the church today says that we have to choose our salvation...or we have to do something to win God's favor...How did Noah and His family prove they were worthy enough before God for Him chose them? In other words; how would have Noah come to a saving knowledge of faith?
- a. **Same way we do...having been justified by faith...he was chosen from among all the people of the day. This whole section began with this verse; Hebrews 11:1-3- *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible."***
- (1) **Hebrews 11:7- *"By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith."***
- (2) **So just like us he was granted faith by God through Christ Jesus' work that he did not see but it had been promised and he had been taught about that promise.**
- a. **Practically speaking it appears that he grew up always knowing the love of God and how important to be devoted to the Lord because God had gifted him with faith.**
- b. **His family taught him ... When Noah was born Jared, his great grandfather was still alive (for maybe as much as the first 300 years of Noah's life), Methuselah his grandfather was still alive (actually until the year of the flood then he died)...and His father Lamech was alive until 5 years before the flood so they would have had immense influence on his growing and maturing faith.**
10. **Another question:** How did God show His grace toward Noah and his family?
- i. **He didn't kill them like the others.**
- j. **He gave detailed instruction for the Ark.**
- k. **He chooses to save them keeps them from drowning like the rest of mankind...**
- l. **He brings them in...**
- m. **He closes the door before the flood waters rises too far...**
- n. **He doesn't require Noah to shut the door himself on the people of his community...**
- o. **He doesn't enable them to see the destruction...he couldn't see the death or even the extent of the Flood...God kept him from such a burden.**
- p. **The covenant renewal and The rainbow**

F. Noahic Covenant Renewal continued:

1. See: **Gen 9:8-13-** ***“8-Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 9- ‘Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, 10- and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. 11- I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.’ 12 And God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: 13 I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.’”*** According to this passage how comprehensive was this covenant administration?

a. **The extent of this covenant covers all creation by God’s grace.**

- (1) **This does not mean that all men or creation are saved, but it does mean that there is no one who has ever walked on the face of the earth who has not received goodness/common grace from God.**
- (2) **This covenant is permanent...it is universal...it’s perpetual...generous...and undeserved.**
- (3) **Vs. 13- *“...the covenant between me and the earth.”***
- (4) **Romans 8:19-23- *“For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”***
 - **What type of groaning is this that is going on? How would you describe this?**
 - **See also 2 Cor. 5:1-5- *“For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.”***
 - **We *“groan”* as those clothed in Christ longing for the rest of our clothes...the rest of our raiment...the *“white robes”* God has promised us.**
- (5) **Genesis Chap 8- God said that He would never again destroy the whole earth by water on account of man’s sin. And then in vs. 11- *“I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”* All creation benefits from this promise.**

- b. Why and what is the message here? Who instituted this covenant?
God...no where do we see men seeking to make an agreement with God that would secure their relationship to one another...only God!
 - c. If God did it all what is our part? **Obedience through faith in Him.**
2. What is significant in the sign of the covenant (the rainbow) given here in **Gen. 9:11-17**? -***“I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth. God said to Noah, This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.’”***
 - a. Look again at the wording of vs. 11- ***“I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”*** Anything stand out to you here?
 - (1) He has already told Noah and his sons about this covenant before the flood.
 - (2) Then there is this interesting phrase... ***“never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood.”*** Sounds a lot like a precursor to the circumcision... ***“I won’t do it this way but another way...and this time it is to reflect the inward work of marking you as mine.”***
 - (3) In this one verse He reiterates that fact that He will preserve His creation .
 - b. The bow referred to here is the Hebrew word for “battle bow”. And this bow described with such beauty indicates that God has set it as a sign of His grace...
 - c. His covenantal promise to remember:
 - (1) God promises Noah that He will never do it again... ***“remember”*** is an interesting word for God. God actually says, ***“I will see it and remember...”*** He doesn’t say...when you see it remember.
 - The language is designed to reassure Noah just like the bow is designed to reassure Noah.
 - God knows that Noah will look at the bow in the clouds and say, that’s the sign of God’s promise, but in addition to that, Noah would have remembered that God had said ...when my bow appears in the clouds, I want you to remember my covenant...an act of worship and thanks!
 - (2) This is important because this is the first chapter in the Bible where covenant signs are discussed...and we will see them each time the covenant is re-established for the next generation.
 - Covenant signs are given to reassure us of the promises God makes in His promises and to whom He makes them. The prime function of the covenant signs.

- **Covenant signs do not bring about the reality to which they point...they confirm the reality in the covenant especially to God's children and their children and their children's children.**
 - **And for us to remember God's faithfulness, His forgiveness and His truthfulness to His covenant.**
 - **Isaiah 54:9-10- *"This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke you. For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you."***
- d. This sign is more than a mere reminder for us...**
- (1) It is a sign of God's promise to Noah and to all subsequent generations and to all His creation...it is a benefit for us as it is from God...a call to worship and a posture of thanksgiving.**
 - (2) The bow in the clouds does not bring about the blessing; it confirms the reality of the blessing. The bow did not spare Noah and his family...the bow reminds Noah that God spared because of His covenant faithfulness.**
 - (3) Its mere presence still provokes awe and comfort that the storm is either over or almost.**
- e. This sign of the covenant requires no active or voluntary participation on the part of man.**
- (1) Man was still growing and maturing...sort of like an infant we are still too young in God's economy... Little children are sometimes confused by what is right and wrong but they hardly forget the meaning of a picture they see all the time...**
 - (2) But we can observe and know that the rainbow is a reminder of God's covenant promise to never destroy the earth by water again. A reminder of His faithfulness and love toward His creation...both common grace toward all he created and special grace towards His own.**
- f. Once we come into the NT era and after Christ death, resurrection and ascension where does this rainbow show up again in the NT? Rev. 4:3...It is no accident that the throne of the righteous Judge is depicted as having *"...a rainbow around the throne..."* also is seen as a symbol of hope and faithfulness.**
- g. See this becomes the sign and seal of God's good purposes...**
- (1) Some signs change through the ages... ..to circumcision...to baptism/salvation...**
 - (2) But the rainbow remains as an on-going reminder of God's faithfulness to His covenant promises.**
 - (3) And according to Revelation 4 one remains for all eternity...the rainbow as a reminder of His authority and power.**
- h. Also in the NT era we/ Presbyterians call the sacraments signs and seals.**
- (1) As a sign...it is an outward sign of an inward reality. An outward reality like water and bread and wine that can be seen, touched, tasted, smelled, even heard that points to an internal spiritual reality.**

- (2) As a seal- it is a mark...a confirmation of the reality set forth.**
- (3) So they are signs and seals...the sign being the symbolic part and the seal the confirming part both of which are connected for the believer to assurance.**
- (4) They reassure us of the certainty of Grace Mercy and grace promised to us in His covenant of grace...in the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

3. We have been working with this definition of covenant: *"A covenant is a bond in blood sovereignly administered."* How is this worked out in the covenant with Noah?

- a. The re-establishment of the covenant with Noah is definitely a bond sovereignly administered...is that God does it all once again.**
- b. God destroyed man ...from the face of the earth...lots of blood... with the exception of Noah and his family who will receive God's grace.**
- c. Then after the flood we see why God had Noah bring more of certain kinds of animals into the ark...so there could be a blood sacrifice of thanks afterwards.**
- d. Then there is also "capital punishment" in Chapter 9:5-6- *"And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image."***
 - (1) Obviously, life and death are involved in these words. The man or animal who takes the life of a man must have their life taken.**
 - (2) Death shall come to the covenant-breaker who takes the life of a man, while blessings will be the result of the proper observance of these stipulations.**
 - (3) Man as the murderer is to be dealt with as God commands using other men as judge and executioner. God's word says, *"I will require a reckoning..."* which makes it clear that man becomes God's agent in the execution of His justice toward one who has murdered.**
 - (4) All of this in support of the sanctity of life.**
 - All life is sacred but it is obvious in these 2 verses alone that God places the highest value on man.**
 - For man may eat the beasts of the field.**
 - But out of reverence for God's law and obvious health risks man is not to eat meat raw...or physically drink blood...something attested to at the Counsel of Jerusalem in Acts 15 as well.**
 - The life of man or beast are required if a man is killed by either, because the man is made in the image of God and it is because of this that the murder must die.**
 - Even the context of the verses before and those afterward reveal God's commitment to preserve man after the Flood.**
- e. So...life and death are the reoccurring theme in Noah's administration of the covenant.**
- f. In Noah...in the flood we see God coming in judgment but He also provides a way for Noah and his family to be preserved so that God's grace continues to operate.**

4. How might **II Peter 3:3-9** help us with our understanding of God's covenant relationship re-established with Noah for the good of all His people always?
- "...knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.' For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the Day of Judgment and destruction of the ungodly. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."***
- a. People may mock the Word concerning the coming judgement...but the flood indicates the certainty of God's intentions.
 - b. By the word the world was created...by the same word the present world was "remade" after the flood and is sustained for the ultimate re-making and cleansing, this time by fire...and this is and has been all part of His covenantal plan.
 - c. For this same word...the covenant of grace was spoken to Noah just as it had been spoken to Adam after the Fall....so all things are happening because of God's covenant plan found in this covenant of grace.
 - d. Sin is just as much a problem after the flood as before. The flood of judgment did not eradicate sin; the covenant of grace did not guarantee righteousness.
 - e. If God's purpose was to fill the earth with the glory of His righteousness, then we must conclude one of two things:
 - (1) God is a failure, or God is preparing for something greater in the future.
 - (2) God is not a failure! And therefore the New Testament writers see the flood:
 - as a foreshadowing of the final judgment with fire (2 Peter 3:5-7), and
 - the ark as a foreshadowing of final salvation (1 Peter 3:20-21), and
 - The days of Noah as typical of the last days before the coming of the Son of Man (Matthew 24:37ff.).
 - The story of Noah and the flood is incomplete in itself. God still hates sin and no remedy was found. The story cries out for an epilogue.
 - f. God's gracious covenant with Noah was a response to a pure sacrifice. Is not this, too, a foreshadowing that God, who must find a remedy for sin, will find it in another greater sacrifice, namely, the sacrifice of His Son?
 - g. There is an epilogue to this story.

- (1) The final remedy for sin has been found in Good Friday and Easter. As Hebrews 9:26 says, "*Christ appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*"**
- (2) God still hates sin. We are still sinful. But God will never surrender His purpose to fill the earth with his glory. The final remedy is Jesus Christ.**

5. Concerning this fulfillment Jesus mentions Noah in the New Testament: **Matthew 24:36-39- "*But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.*"** So what is Jesus saying in this text to us about the fulfillment of the covenant of grace?
 - a. As the Covenant moves toward its fulfillment people don't know and people don't care...just like in the days of Noah.**
 - b. The ark of Noah represents the kingdom of God showing God's providential care for His children and His bringing them to the end by His great love. John will tell us in chapter 13 that Jesus will love his own till the end...the end of time and beyond.**
6. As we have looked at the Noahic administration of the Covenant of Grace what elements of the covenant provide encouragement for you today? Warning?
 - a. Believers in Christ may take comfort in the rainbow above the judgment-seat of God.**
 - b. By that symbol we are assured of the never-failing grace of the unchanging God...covenant maker.**
 - c. Thousands of years ago God re-instituted the covenant with Noah and gave the sign of His continuing grace and this sign will remind us forever and ever of our Assurance in the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY.**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
April 24, 2022

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

7. Jesus mentions Noah in the New Testament: **Matthew 24:36-39- “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”**
So what is Jesus saying in this text to us about the fulfillment of the covenant of grace?
- c. **As the Covenant moves toward its fulfillment people don’t know and people don’t care...just like in the days of Noah.**
 - d. **The ark of Noah represents the kingdom of God showing God’s providential care for His children and His bringing them to the end by His great love. John will tell us in chapter 13 that Jesus will love his own till the end...the end of time and beyond.**
 - e. **That unbelieving mankind will be ignorant of what is coming...even though they have been told for thousands of years. And believers should be able to rest in the coming future deliverance from this present evil age. II Peter 2:4-10 “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; if He did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes He condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if He rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.”**
 - (3) **God had Noah tell the people of His day what was going to happen, “a herald of righteousness...” and how His family was the only one who would be spared. Heb. 11:7- “By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.”**
 - (1) **God will not spare the unrighteous...but He will rescue His righteous.**
 - (2) **God’s promises have been true for eons!**
 - (3) **This is hope to a people of persecution...that the wicked will have their day...but in the end they will have condemnation and those who are His will experience fully His peace.**

8. As we have looked at the Noahic administration of the Covenant of Grace what elements of the covenant provide encouragement for you today? Warning?
 - d. **Believers in Christ may take comfort in the rainbow above the judgment-seat of God.**
 - e. **By that symbol we are assured of the never-failing grace of the unchanging God...covenant maker.**
 - f. **Thousands of years ago God re-instituted the covenant with Noah and gave the sign of His continuing grace and this sign will remind us forever and ever of our Assurance in the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY.**

C. Abrahamic renewal of the Covenant of Grace

1. It is helpful for us to note that we see the Covenant of Grace being formally introduced in Gen. 15 but the complete picture is not revealed until Gen. 17.
2. Before we look at Gen. 15 we must first walk back a minute to Gen. 11:10 through 12:9 and meet Abram. First, what is significant about Abram's family line that is spelled out from 11:10-32? - ***"These are the generations of Shem. When Shem was 100 years old, he fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood. And Shem lived after he fathered Arpachshad 500 years and had other sons and daughters. When Arpachshad had lived 35 years, he fathered Shelah. And Arpachshad lived after he fathered Shelah 403 years and had other sons and daughters. When Shelah had lived 30 years, he fathered Eber. And Shelah lived after he fathered Eber 403 years and had other sons and daughters. When Eber had lived 34 years, he fathered Peleg. And Eber lived after he fathered Peleg 430 years and had other sons and daughters. When Peleg had lived 30 years, he fathered Reu. And Peleg lived after he fathered Reu 209 years and had other sons and daughters. When Reu had lived 32 years, he fathered Serug. And Reu lived after he fathered Serug 207 years and had other sons and daughters. When Serug had lived 30 years, he fathered Nahor. And Serug lived after he fathered Nahor 200 years and had other sons and daughters. When Nahor had lived 29 years, he fathered Terah. And Nahor lived after he fathered Terah 119 years and had other sons and daughters. When Terah had lived 70 years, he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot. Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans. And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah. Now Sarai was barren; she had no child. Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran.***
 - a. **Side Note: Yes, Nahor seems to have married his brother's daughter which was acceptable at that time...changes when the Law comes into play.**
 - b. **Shem represents the line of the offspring of the woman...the elect...just like the breakdown from Gen. 5 of Adam's descendants through to Noah.**

- c. **The promise of God's Deliverer-Seed (Gen. 3: 15) would come through Abraham's seed and would bring blessings to the nations (Gen. 12: 1-3). When Jesus commissioned the disciples to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28: 19), He had the promise of the Abrahamic covenant in mind.**
 - d. **Interesting that we see ages decline after Shem**
 - (1) **He lived to be 600 years old which feel short than those before him by as much as 300 years sometimes more.**
 - (2) **It held steady in the mid 400's...and then falls another 200 years after Eber, the father of the Hebrews. Then after these none who even came close to 200 years.**
 - (3) **When the earth began to replenish, men's lives shortened...to the point that Moses wrote of 70 or 80 years would be average...though he himself lived to be 120.**
 - (4) **In the NT we will read that for the elect's sake men's days of trouble are shortened...all of this showing God's providence not a decay in the species.**
- 3. What difference is there between the summary statement of Terah's history in Genesis 11:32 and that of the eight generations that preceded him? What is significant about this?**
- a. **Each of the previous eight generations prior to Terah contain the same biographical information: the man's age is given at the time of the birth of his first born son, it is reported how many years he lived after the birth of that son, and it is reported that he had other sons and daughters. But no mention is made of his death.**
 - b. **The summary statement of Terah's history contains one phrase that is missing from the eight generations that preceded him: "Terah died in Haran." Because this addition is a striking deviation from the other eight generations in the covenant line, it is significant: Terah does not appear to persevere in the faith; he forsook the Lord's calling to press on to the Promised Land of Canaan, settling down in the city of Haran.**
- 4. What do we know about Abram from 11:27-12:9? "Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot. Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans. And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah. Now Sarai was barren; she had no child. Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran. Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.**

And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land.' So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

- a. He was one of 3 boys....Abram, Nahor and Haran. Offspring of Terah... lived in a very polytheistic and idolatrous culture. Both Ur and Haran were centers of worship for the moon god Sin.
- b. He was obedient...he was obedient to his father's leadership, even though it seems his father may not have remained true to the faith of his father's.

(1) Why did Terah leave Ur or Chorasán (as Ur is called in the Arabic text... (sounds like a town out of the Star Wars universe)?

- The way the text is written it seems to be a recounting of what Abram had been told before leaving and Abram told his father of the vision and Terah seems to be amenable to leave...though it doesn't mean that he believed ...Jewish traditions seems to indicate that he had made all the wealth he could make in Ur.
- The vision was to go from Ur to Canaan/ the Promised Land and so he followed his father as the head of the family even when his father stopped at Haran instead of going all the way to Canaan. He was obedient to God as well.

(2) Why did God choose Abram ...a pagan... to be the Father of the promise?

- Promise to Abram guarantees the blessings that we..Gentiles and Jews have.
- He was obedient to the LORD.

- c. He trusted as well...when God called he responded to his God even though he did not know where he was going only the direction he would go...Abram "went" after the Lord commanded him to go ...

(1) The Hebrew indicates that he was compelled to go...wouldn't have been his first choice to go.

(2) He was "happy" in Ur and wealthy it seems...with no reason to make such a move...but when God called he went.

5. Let's look closely at Gen. 12:1-3- ***"Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*** What is the significance of this text as a precursor of the fuller covenant with Abraham?

- a. This summons to him is actually a promise...to Abraham and then to every believers from every tribe and nation.

- b. God says, in so many words, I will give your offspring land...which he says later defining what He means by saying, *"Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you."***
- (1) So much of God's fulfillment in the OT centers around land—the promised land.**
 - (2) Looking for that land, trusting in the land to provide, fighting for the land...losing the land because of their sinfulness.**
 - (3) But the only land he owned in Canaan was his grave yard.**
- c. But there is the promised blessing. God says that he and his descendants will be a great nation and that his name would be great...**
- (1) 3 of the world's largest religions revere his name...Islam, Judaism and Christianity.**
 - (2) Christianity has been a blessing to billions throughout time.**
 - (3) Abram and his descendants...the children of the promise as Paul speaks of all elect believers... would be an agent of blessing to others...blessed to be a blessing. The basic reality we are all called to remember.**
 - (4) God is communicating with all the uses of the word "bless/blessing" something of extreme import.**
 - Barak = blessing= kneel- It is to bring a gift to another while kneeling out of respect.**
 - The extended meaning of this word is to do or give something of value to another.**
 - God "blesses" us by providing for our needs and we in turn "bless" God by giving Him of ourselves as His servants and as we serve others. In other words we are to emulate God because of all that He has done for us by blessing us to be a blessing.**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
May 1, 2022

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

6. Why did we determine the Abram was chosen to become the father of the children of the promise?
7. Let's look again at Gen. 12:1-3- ***“Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*** What is the significance of this text as a precursor of the fuller covenant with Abraham?
 - d. **This summons to him is actually a promise...to Abraham and then to every believers from every tribe and nation.**
 - e. **God says, in so many words, I will give your offspring land...which he says later defining what He means by saying, *“Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.”***
 - (4)**So much of God's fulfillment in the OT centers around land—the Promised Land.**
 - (5)**Looking for that land, trusting in the land to provide, fighting for the land...losing the land because of their sinfulness.**
 - (6)**But the only land he owned in Canaan was his grave yard.**
 - f. **But there is the promised blessing. God says that he and his descendants will be a great nation and that his name would be great...**
 - (5)**3 of the world's largest religions revere his name...Islam, Judaism and Christianity.**
 - (6)**Christianity has been a blessing to billions throughout time.**
 - (7)**Abram and his descendants...the children of the promise as Paul speaks of all elect believers... would be an agent of blessing to others...blessed to be a blessing. The basic reality we are all called to remember.**
 - (8) **God is communicating with all the uses of the word “bless/blessing” something of extreme import.**
 - **Barak = blessing= kneel- It is to bring a gift to another while kneeling out of respect.**
 - **The extended meaning of this word is to do or give something of value to another.**
 - **God “blesses” us by providing for our needs and we in turn “bless” God by giving Him of ourselves as His servants and as we serve others. In other words we are to emulate God because of all that He has done for us by blessing us to be a blessing.**

C. Now let's look at Gen. 15:1-6.

1. God tells Abram that He has been with him...that He is Abrams protector and reward, shield, but what is Abrams main concern in verses 1-3? Why?
 - a. **How dark the night must have been on that night on that hillside some 4000 years ago given Abrams personal struggle... Abram is struggling about an heir...something of absolute import to men in this culture.**
 - b. **Think of it this way, someone comes up to him and asks him his name.**
 - (1) **Abram, he says. Then the man responds, "Abram, what an interesting name. Doesn't that mean exalted father in your language? How many children do you have? None.**
 - (2) **How many times did that man answer that question in the seventy years of his adult life? It's almost a cruel joke. How many children do you have, Abram? None.**
 - c. **In verses 1-3- *"After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: 'Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.' But Abram said, 'O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.'"*, Abram is struggling with believing God's promise.**
 - (1) **He has just won a great victory and he has tithed to Melchizedek showing his faithfulness to God's will but God knew his own child was troubled so He says to Him, *"Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."***
 - **He is troubled and God seeks to address it by reminding Abram that He is His shield ...has been his shield and will be his shield...the God is dependable...but Abram was troubled.**
 - **Abram is not concerned for money, position or power.**
 - (2) **He is still all wrapped up with an heir....rather than looking to God and trusting him... "How could he trust God if God would not provide an heir...even with God's promises and provisions up to that point."**
 - (3) **Typical male...singularly focused on the here and now not on the big picture.**
 - (4) **It is hard sometimes for us to remember that Abram was JUST a man like you and me.**
 - **Abram just wants a son...he has been promised a son...and not only a son but a people with countless millions of descendants (Gen. 12:7)**
 - **But as a man Abram feels his life is approaching that termination point...he is old and only getting older which reminds him the end is near...just like all of us who are aging without any stop.**
 - **And just like us he doesn't think all that much is settled as to God's purposes in calling him out of Ur and giving him these promises...can you say, I believe, Help my unbelief?**
 - **Abram doubts God...just like we do. And God's word actually change his doubt (vs. 6)**

(5) It's important to see that Abram's struggle is with the confirming word of God's promise, and it's not a struggle of unbelief, per say. How can I say that?

- **In the Old Testament, when God's people manifest bold and brazen unbelief towards Him, especially in the context of His word and promise, normally the response is not gentle.**
- **But when God's believing people wrestle with Him, not complaining about Him, but wrestle with Him, complaining to them, begging Him to strengthen their faith, God often shows an incredibly tender, fatherly forbearance and helps them along gently.**
- **Furthermore, God's provision of a seed, of an heir was absolutely integral to God's plan of promises for Abram. So Abram here is not just struggling with the sting of childlessness, though no doubt that is part of it.**
 - **Abram has been many years by this time before the Lord.**
 - **He is incredibly wealthy. By human terms he is greatly blessed, he is successful as a businessman, he has a wonderful wife, he has an incredible extended family, faithful servants.**
 - **He has won victories in battle, but he has no son. And when he is gone without a son, there is no one of his line to leave those blessings to.**
 - **And more importantly than that, there is no one upon whom he can rest his hand and say, 'I am passing on to you, my son, the covenant blessings of God which you will pass on to your son, and they to their sons and on and on through the ages.'** Abram is acutely aware of this.
 - **So this thing of childlessness is coupled with the most acute spiritual struggle because God has made to him definite promises.**

2. How does God respond to him in verses 4-5? *"And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: 'This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.' And He brought him outside and said, 'Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.' Then He said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.'"*

- a. God tells him (because he was probably hanging his head in worry!) *"Look toward heaven and number the stars, if you are able to number them."***
- (1) He at once looks up and is probably immediately struck at the site of the universe spreading out before him...the awesomeness of it alone was too much ...**
- (2) You know what it is like when you actually stop and pay attention to the night sky when you are in a location where there are no city lights...no competing lights at all...the scene is magnificent.**

- b. But God had said *“count the stars, if you can”* ...this must have overwhelmed him in awe of God because he could see nothing but stars...uncountable numbers of stars...and this is how many his children would be?
 - (1) God's covenant signs (like miracles in the Newer Testament) are graciously given by God in order to confirm His spoken promises.
 - (2) God knows that we worldly-minded human beings struggle with the spiritual promises given to us in the word. And so He gives us tangible signs that we can see and touch in order to remind us of the sure reality of the invisible spiritual promises He has given to us in the covenant.
 - (3) And so God shows Abram the stars as a visible illustration of the spiritual promises that He has made to him.
- 3. What was Abram's response to such a display in verse 6? **Gen.15:6- *“And he believed the Lord, and He counted it to him as righteousness.”*** And what does that mean? (What does Abram actually believe and what was credited to him and how?)
 - a. This is the first time in the Bible that the ideas of faith and justification are linked together.
 - b. Abram's believing was, of course, of a very sturdy sort. He had to look at the facts of his own experience, recognize his age, recognize the age of his wife, Sarai, and then he had to believe that God was going to be faithful to this promise despite the evidence to the contrary.
 - c. Abram looked at the facts, and he said there is no way, there is absolutely no way, but my God is also one of the facts of this experience, and He has been faithful to me, and I will trust Him despite all the other evidence to the contrary.
 - d. And so we see here a glorious example of saving faith. Abram faces the hardest of trials, and because God is as real to him, or maybe we should say, more real to him than his trials, he continues to trust in God. Like Abram God declares us righteous on account of the faith He gives us in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - e. The faith of Abram is what makes him the “father” of all who believe (Rom. 4; Gal. 3)

Covenants Study
Sunday School
May 8, 2022

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. Compare Gen. 12:1-3...the beginning of God's Covenant renewal with Abram...with Gen. 15:1-6. How are the covenant promises beginning in Gen. 12 expanded upon for Abram and for all his seed in Gen. 15?
 - a. **Gen. 12:1-3- *"Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"***
 - b. **Gen. 15:1-6- *"After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: 'Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.' But Abram said, 'O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.' And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: 'This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.' And He brought him outside and said, 'Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.' Then He said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.' And he believed the LORD, and He counted it to him as righteousness."***
 - (1) God promises a land in both.
 - (2) God promises progeny in both.
 - (3) God promises blessing in both. *"I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."*
 - (4) God makes it clear who is in control of all the "impossible" things that Abram could see and not see.
 - (5) God defines the size that His family will be...the children of the promise.... God's elect.
 - (6) Abram now in faith questions God (interesting isn't it) with the full knowledge that it is God alone who can do as He has promised. *"Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir."*
 - (7) He recognizes that all good gifts come from God. Which shows us Abram's faith, *"And he believed the LORD, and He counted it to him as righteousness."*
2. What does verse 6 tell us about Abram's faith, *"And he believed the LORD, and He counted it to him as righteousness."* And what does it mean for us since this is used by Paul to speak of our relationship with God in the New Testament?
 - f. **That is a real faith based in God's work on him. This is the first time in the Bible that the ideas of faith and justification are linked together.**

- g. And so we see here a glorious example of saving faith. Abram faces the hardest of trials, and because God is as real to him, or maybe we should say, more real to him than his trials, he continues to trust in God.
 - h. Like Abram, God declares us righteous on account of the faith He gives us in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - i. Jesus said to the Jews in John 8:49-58, *“Jesus answered, ...Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.’ The Jews said to him, ‘Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?’ Jesus answered, ‘If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, He is our God. But you have not known Him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know Him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know Him and I keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.’ So the Jews said to him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.’”*
 - j. As the author to the Hebrews says in 11:13-16, *“These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city.”*
 - k. The faith of Abram is what makes him the “father” of all who believe (Rom. 4; Gal. 3)
- C. Now let’s look at Gen. 15:7-21- *“And He said to him, ‘I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.’ But he said, ‘O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?’ He said to him, ‘Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.’ And he brought Him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. Then the LORD said to Abram, ‘Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.’ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, ‘To your offspring I give this land, from the river of*

Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites."

1. After God satisfies Abram's heart, for the moment, concerning an heir, He turns His attention to the other thing He had promised Abram...the other thing that Abram would have been concerned about...the land of Canaan. God's response is nothing short of shocking. God tells Abram to go take animals, to slaughter the large animals and lay them side to side, to kill the birds and lay them in a row so the animals are parallel to one another with a space in between. Abram's response to God's sign is simply to trust and obey.
2. So what is going on here? What is God communicating to Abram?
 - a. **Vs. 7- "And He said to him, 'I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.'",**
 - (1) The first thing God does is confirm to Abram that He is the God that delivers His people.**
 - (2) Then He confirms His promise of a land.**
 - b. Why would this be an important thing for God to say here?
 - (1) He is proving His trustworthiness... "Look at what I did...if I did that I WILL do as I say here."**
 - (2) He doesn't need to prove His trustworthiness...He chooses to so that Abram is assured and comforted and certain...**
 - c. **In the Old Testament when tribes or nations came into conflict and one overlord or king conquered another tribe, very often as an act of loyalty, the king or the overlord would make the conquered peoples walk between the pieces of slaughtered animals, symbolizing their loyalty.**
 - (1) As long as you are obedient and loyal to me, I will protect you, I will provide you a system of justice, and I will be one who blesses you.**
 - (2) But if you rebel against me, be it done to you as we have done to these animals. May you be slaughtered, even as we have slaughtered these animals.**
 - (3) In other words, walking between the pieces of animals was a self-curse, technically an oath of self-destruction.**
 - (4) After vows were made and oaths were sworn in the ancient world, covenants were ratified by a cutting rite. The drama of Genesis 15 includes such a rite.**
3. What is really on Abram's mind when He asks, ***"Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?" (Gen. 15: 8)***
 - a. **Abraham already believed God, but he asked the Lord for assurance.**
 - b. **And God gave it. God instructs him to cut up several animals and place the pieces on the ground that He can cut a covenant with Abram.**
4. What is going on in verses 9-11? What does this section say to us or is it simply extra information?
 - a. **It seems that it is taking time...that God is taking His time.**
 - b. **It may have taken awhile for Abram to cut these animals heifer, goat and ram in half.**
 - c. **And at the same time he had to fight off the vultures.**

- d. **God's timing is not always our timing.**
 - e. **Look at how God expects Abram to be involved with His own blessing and assurance. It is said that it takes 12-24 hours for vultures to smell the decaying flesh so Abram had a long day at least.**
 - f. **As far as to the question concerning which way the animals were cut ...long ways or side to side... the Hebrew word "half" or "divide" here doesn't designate how the cut was made but that the animal is in 2 pieces and they are set directly opposite each other.**
5. What things do you suppose Abram might be terrified by since Gen. 15: 12-16 certainly seems to suggest terror with the words... *"And, behold, a dreadful and great darkness fell upon him."* with blessings to come?
- a. **A great nightmare seems to have gripped him ... or a great depression while he was out...a great fear...terror!**
 - b. **Was it because he recognized immediately what this ritual indicated?**
 - c. **Was it because he knew He couldn't walk between those animals with sincere loyalty?**
 - d. **Was it because he feared death that awaited him for his inability to live up to God's commands?**
 - e. **Probably all the above and things I can't even imagine...**
 - f. **Every time people encounter the presence of God in the OT...there is great fear associated with that time. As there should be.**
 - g. **But because of this Abram would *"know for certain"* (Gen. 15:13) that his seed would in fact possess the land because God Himself ran the bloody gauntlet committing Himself completely to keeping His promise of being the God of Abrams children who would believe.**
 - h. **How would the foretelling of His death be both a terror and a blessing?**
 - i. **The promise of a Land come shining forth in that God will rescue His people to live in the Promised Land as long as they would walk with Him. *"And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."* When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, *'To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.'***

Covenants Study
Sunday School
May 15, 2022

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. Look again at **Gen. 15:7- “And He said to him, ‘I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.’** In this verse what is God communicating to Abram?
 - a. **The first thing God “shows” Abram is how important this is by using “legal” language to establish this section of the covenant renewal.**
 - b. **The next thing God does is to confirm to Abram that He is the God that delivers His people.**
 - c. **Then He confirms His promise of a land.**
 - (1) **He is proving His trustworthiness... “Look at what I did...if I did that I WILL do as I say here.”**
 - (2) **He doesn’t need to prove His trustworthiness...He chooses to...so that Abram is assured and comforted ...**
2. Now let’s look at verses **Gen. 15:8-16- “But he said, ‘O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?’ He said to him, ‘Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.’ And he brought Him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. Then the LORD said to Abram, ‘Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.’** There is a lot on Abram’s mind while awake and while asleep, so what all is he dealing with here?
 - a. **Uncertainty...fear...that he might be able to live up to such a covenant...and blessing...in that, God assures Abram and the promise that his children would receive the land of the promise continues throughout this covenant renewal.**
 - b. **Abraham already believed God, but he asked the Lord for assurance.**
 - (1) **And God gave it.**
 - (2) **God instructs him to cut up several animals and place the pieces on the ground that He can cut a covenant with Abram...just like the suzerain treaties he would have been familiar with in Chaldea/Babylon.**
 - c. **Abram was all alone to have to cut up these animals while at the same time keeping the vultures and other scavengers from messing with this cut up animals.**
 - (1) **Revealing the work that we do with God...created to do the work God created beforehand for us to do as we walk in His way.**

- (2) Often it is painstaking/tiring work and it must not be avoided.
 - (3) Look at how God expects Abram to be involved with His own blessing and assurance. It is said that it takes 12-24 hours for vultures to smell the decaying flesh so Abram had a long day at least.
 - d. A great nightmare seems to have gripped him ... or a great depression while he was out...a great fear...terror!
 - (1) Was it because he recognized immediately what this ritual indicated?
 - (2) Was it because he knew He couldn't walk between those animals with sincere loyalty?
 - (3) Was it because he feared death that awaited him for his inability to live up to God's commands?
 - (4) Probably all the above and things I can't even imagine...
 - e. Every time people encounter the presence of God in the OT...there is great fear associated with that time. As there should be.
 - f. His children would suffer immensely before they would be delivered.
3. How would the foretelling of His death in **verses 15-16** be both a terror and a blessing?
- a. To know for certain of your death would bring about a moment of fear, I would think.
 - b. But then to know that you would be a good old age...when he already is a good old age in anyone's book at this point...might be funny and reassuring at the same time.
 - c. The knowledge that God would take care of your generations would have been a great blessing.
 - (1) The promise of a land as a continual theme in God's promise come shining forth in that God will rescue His people to live in the Promised Land as long as they would walk with Him.
 - (2) *"And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."*
 - d. What is significant about the prophecy concerning the Amorites being here?
 - (1) Adds to Abrams assurance of God's deliverance and work in judgment so his children can live peacefully even after he is gone.
 - (2)
4. We come now to **Gen. 15:17-21**- *"When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.'"* With Abram apparently still in the "deep sleep" or "tardema" a state used to speak for "divine revelations...what is understood and is equally shocking in this encounter with His God?
- a. In Genesis 15, God the LORD, God the sovereign, God the Overlord, He walks between the pieces.

- (1) **Not the vassal, not the servant, not Abram, but God walks between the pieces in order to say to Abram this.**
 - (2) ***"Abram, I promise unto my own death that I will fulfill my covenant commitments to you. Abram, be it done to me as you have done to these animals if I do not fulfill my covenant promises to you."***
 - b. **God knows we can't fulfill the covenant so He doesn't require Abram to pass through as would have been the custom of the time.**
 - (1) **That had to be a great relief to Abram.**
 - (2) **This covenant is bigger than us. We wouldn't chose to walk through such a scene...for like God we would be promising to have a punishment like what was done to these animals done to us if we can't keep this covenant.**
 - (3) **God knows we can't do this... but He will require that we keep the covenant stipulations or terms.**
 - (4) **And because He has walked through this "mess" He is committing to us that He will keep His covenant with His total existence.**
 - (5) **He alone can fulfill His law and He alone is accountable to make sure we keep His law...and He alone is responsible to provide a way for us to keep it ...and that provision is the sacrifice of God the Son...Jesus.**
 - c. **What is the significance of this? In this ritual God Himself was swearing an oath.**
 - (1) **As if His Word of promise wasn't enough God shows His resolve to Abram and to us limited beings...His Immanuel Principle once again.**
 - (2) **He is represented by the theophany of burning objects that pass between the animal pieces.**
 - **It signified God's glory... the Holy One...like the pillar of fire and the lamp in the tabernacle.**
 - **They symbolized the very presence of God.**
 - (3) **The symbolism is clear: If God fails to keep His promise, He will be torn asunder like the animals. *"If I fail to keep my promise to you,"* God is saying, *"may my immutable being suffer mutation, may my eternal glory be destroyed, and may my very deity be ruined."***
 - (4) **Again, God had already shown His trustworthiness and His faithfulness, but God goes all the way for His own and swears by the highest thing He can: Himself. This would give assurance to Abram and future generations once and for all time that God WILL accomplish all the He has promised. It is an almost unprecedented manifestation of God's grace...but he will do it again.**
5. **How is this scene of this covenant ritual similar to what Christ goes through on the Cross? Different?**
- a. **For God assumed to Himself the obligations of both parties in the covenant.**
 - b. **So Christ came. He kept the law of the covenant perfectly...yet He died. He underwent the curse of the covenant...taking upon Himself our transgressions...or as Isaiah tells us, *"...the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."* (Is. 53:6).**
 - c.

6. What, again, are the essential parts of a covenant?
 - a. **A clear definition of the parties involved...**
 - b. **A legally binding set of provisions that stipulates the conditions of the relationship**
 - c. **The promise of blessing for obedience *and* the condition of obtaining blessing**
 - d. **The consequence for disobedience.**

7. So according to this first phase of explanation of the Covenant of Grace found in Gen. 15, who would you say are the parties of the Covenant?
 - a. **One answer could be; God... in the person of the Father and the God the Son as the representative of elect sinners given to Him by the Father. Gal. 3:16- *"Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, 'And to offsprings,' referring to many, but referring to one, 'And to your offspring,' who is Christ."***
 - b. **But it could also be correct to say; God and the elect sinners. The Covenant of Grace is not made directly with elect sinners but through our union with Christ.**

- C.** Genesis 16 is full of the man of faith NOT exhibiting that faith very well. Even after the assurances given by God to him he still seeks to do things on his own and he gets his wife in on the sin as well. I know she is the one to suggest all that happens but I can only imagine ...since I am a man...all the whining by Abram...in Hebrew, of course... which would have led her to seek to remedy this for her husband. This sin sets up a conflict that will not end until the world is made new. **Gen. 16:11-12- *"And the angel of the LORD said to her, 'Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael (God Hears) because the LORD has listened to your affliction. He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.'"***

- D.** Now skip over to chapter 17. Read verses 1-14.-***"When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.' Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, 'Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.'* And God said to Abraham, 'As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations,**

whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

1. Once again who is it that established this covenant? Did Abram have anything to do with establishing it in any way? Why didn't God get his input or why didn't God seek his involvement? What does that communicate to us today?
2. How does God present Himself to Abram?
 - a. **Yahweh El Shaddai= Yahweh the Almighty One...for what He was getting ready to do...He gives His covenantal name that speaks to His promises and the title that speaks of His sovereignty.**
 - b. **Abram is to walk before Him and be blameless... (shades of pre-fall Eden) ...it means that he is to be blameless, a man of integrity, a man who is whole-hearted in his commitment to God.**
 - c. **In other words, he's not to be a hypocrite. He is to truly love God and trust God and worship God from the inside out and his outward actions are to flow from that inward trust in God.**
 - d. **Matthew Henry says this: *"To be a Christian is to walk before God in our integrity; it is to set God always before us, and to think, and speak, and act in everything, as those who are always under His eye; it is to have a constant regard to His word as our rule and to His glory as our end in all our actions, and to be continually in His fear. It is to be inward with Him in all the duties of worship, for in them particularly we walk before God, and it is to be entire for Him, in all holy conversation. I know no religion but sincerity."***
3. Why does God change Abrams name?
 - a. **Abram is too small a name... *"exalted father"* ...so God changes it to Abraham... *"father of many nations"* to emphasize the "fullness" of His covenant and how prominent Abraham will become.**
 - b. **These name changes show that they are under God's sovereign rule...naming always speaks of whose a thing is...if I name it; it is mine...God owns all things and can name them or re-name them as He sees fit.**
4. What does God promise Abraham here in **verses 6-8**?
 - a. **Make him exceedingly fruitful**
 - b. **Make him into nations, and kings will come from him**
 - c. **He will establish...further establish His covenant between God and Abraham and His descendants...the children of the promise.**
 - d. **God will give the Promised Land**
 - e. **He will be their/our God.**
 - f. **5 "I wills" from God...speaking about His promises...and the promises while a bit more spelled out are the same.**

5. Most covenants were accompanied by a sign and seal. What was to be the sign and seal of the covenant with Abraham in **17:9-14**? **Circumcision.**
 - a. What had been the covenant signs up to this point? **The tree of life and the rainbow....also, if you think about it...the stars that were a sign of the promise to Abram concerning his offspring.**
 - b. God says here in verse **10**, "***This is My covenant that you shall keep, that every male among you shall be circumcised.***" What is God saying here?
 - (1) This is the covenant sign that you be circumcised. The sign represents the covenant itself. Looks at an outward work that symbolizes and inward work of God.**
 - (2) In this passage the closest possible identification is made between the sign of the covenant and the covenant itself. They are so closely related that the sign is said to be the covenant, and the covenant is said to be the sign. And that language is reiterated throughout the passage.**
 - (3) By wording it this way He also underscores the seriousness and the requirement of it to be fulfilled.**
 - c. Why do you suppose God would have required such a radical sign and seal of this covenant?
 - (1) Just like what began in Gen. 15 with the cutting of the animals for God to walk between in His covenant ceremony...this sign continues this but with men.**
 - **The rite of circumcision was used to ratify the covenant between God and Abraham (and his descendants).**
 - **Circumcision involved the cutting off of the male's foreskin of flesh. It symbolized both positive and negative sanctions.**
 - **It symbolized the blessing of Abraham and his descendants being consecrated, set apart from the mass of fallen humanity to be God's chosen people.**
 - **Circumcision also dramatized the penalty for covenant breaking. "If I fail to keep my covenant oath," the Jew was saying, "may I be separated from God's blessings even as my foreskin has been separated from my body."**
 - **The ultimate rite of covenant ratification was the ratification of the New Covenant by the blood of Christ. Jesus made this covenant known in the upper room during the Last Supper, then ratified it the next day by pouring out his blood on the cross.**
 - **Just as copies of Hittite suzerainty treaties were deposited in a public place for safekeeping, so God instructed Israel to place the tablets of stone in the mercy seat, which was housed first in the tabernacle and later in the temple.**

- The Ark of the Covenant where the tablets were kept was also called the ark of the testimony: Ex. 25:21-22- *"You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony..."*

- (2) God wanted and expected that His people would be different.
- (3) God gives this sign, this sign that is designed to remind Abraham, to teach Abraham, to mark or seal Abraham in his faith to assure Abraham.
- (4) And God appoints that covenant sign in order to confirm Abraham's faith, in order to strengthen Abraham's faith, in order to establish Abraham's faith.
- (5) Just as He gave him this name to reiterate to him the promises that He had made to him, now He is going to give him a sign.
- (6) In fact, He is going to carve this sign into his body so that everywhere he goes he can't get away from the sign that God has given him that He will be faithful to His promises.
- (7) This sign signifies the need for cleansing from sin. It is a bloody sacrament, and that blood itself speaks of the pollution of sin and the need for the covering of that sin.
- (8) While God did not require us to walk between the cut up animals He wanted His children to bear the sign of God's covenant upon them. Blood must be shed as a sacrifice...a remembrance...as a consecration of God's people before Him.
- (9) This sign also has the significance of marking a person as belonging to God and to His covenant. That is, it is a sign and a seal.
 - A seal is a mark of ownership or a deposit guaranteeing the promises of God to come to fulfillment.
 - And the sign of the covenant is both a sign, that is, an outward sign of spiritual reality and it's a mark of God's ownership.
 - And that seal as part of the covenant community leads us not to presumption, but to responsibility, even as we see in this passage.

6. What does the sign of the covenant do?

- a. In and of itself the sign does nothing. The sign is given in conjunction with the promise. God had already made promises to Abraham. And the sign is given in the context of faith.
- b. God gives the sign to confirm His word, His promise, and to assure us in our faith as a seal. The sign provides an outward mark of the covenant community. All those males and their families who have received the sign of the covenant and are sealed into the church.
- c. Notice that it is made very clear that this sign of the covenant is a boundary. Gen. 17:10-14- *"This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring,*

both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

(1) Those who are circumcised are part of the community.

(2) Those who aren't are to be cut off from His people.

(3) So this sign is a sign of membership in the visible church.

d. This sign, of course, does not bring about salvation. Paul makes that amply clear in Romans 4.

(1) Abraham was pronounced to be a child of God, a friend of God, in Genesis 15, when it was said that God accepted his faith and counted it to him as righteousness.

(2) And Paul makes a big point in Romans 4 that that happened before the sign of circumcision was given to Abraham. So the sign itself does not bring about the faith.

e. It is designed to strengthen a faith that is already there and it is a seal to remind us of God's work on our behalf.

(1) The promise is given in the Word of God. Faith is placed in that word, and then the sacrament comes along behind it in order to...

(2) do what? To strengthen our belief in the word. That's why the Reformers said the sacrament must never be administered apart from the Word because the sacrament is simply a visible word.

7. Who ALL are included in this covenant?

a. Gen. 17:7-11- “And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.” And God said to Abraham, ‘As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.”

b. And then in the New Testament:

(1) Acts 2:39- “For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself.”

(2) Rom. 4:13-18- “For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, ‘I have made you the father of many nations’—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into

existence the things that do not exist. In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, 'So shall your offspring be.'"

- (3) Gal. 3:16-** ***"Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, 'And to offsprings' referring to many, but referring to one, 'And to your offspring,' who is Christ." Gal. 3:29- "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."***

Covenants Study
Sunday School
May 22, 2022

E. Prayer

F. Review

G. God's covenant renewal with Abraham continued:

1. Just to re-cap...what was Abraham promised by God? **A son-progeny beyond counting, a Land and the promise he would be the father of many nations.**
2. In Chapter 17:1-14 we see some of the stipulations, blessing and consequences of the covenant. In **Gen. 17:6-8- *"I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. 7 And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. 8 And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."*** What does God promise Abraham yet again and why does He say it again at this point?
 - a. ***"I will make you exceedingly fruitful,***
 - b. ***I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.***
 - c. ***I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.***
 - d. ***I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, for an everlasting possession,***
 - e. ***I will be their God."***
3. According to vs 9-14- ***"And God said to Abraham, 'As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. 10 This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. 12 He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, 13 both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. 14 Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.'"*** How important are these "you shall"?
 - a. **You is plural here interestingly...so God is talking to Abraham and his seed already.**
 - b. **You shall keep my covenant..." you" equals- *you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.***

- c. **You...every male...among “...you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. 12 He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring,**
 - d. **An everlasting covenant... So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. 14 Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”**
 - e. Given the New Testaments position against circumcision how do we square such a passage?
 - (1) **When God decrees something it is perpetual unless He changes it.**
 - (2) **Water Baptism takes the place of circumcision...the sign of the Law...but this was changed by Christ commissioned by Christ...as the new sign of the covenant for all believers, male and female.**
4. Given that this is spoken to Abraham and these words have governed this people for a few thousand years, what do these stipulations, blessings and consequences communicate to us?
5. Most covenants were accompanied by a sign and seal. What was to be the sign and seal of the covenant with Abraham in **17:9-14**? **Circumcision.**
- d. What had been the covenant signs up to this point? **The tree of life and the rainbow.... also, if you think about it...the stars that were a sign of the promise to Abram concerning his offspring.**
 - e. God says here in verse **10**, **“This is My covenant that you shall keep, that every male among you shall be circumcised.”** What is God saying here?
 - (4) **This is the covenant sign that you be circumcised. The sign represents the covenant itself. Looks at an outward work that symbolizes and inward work of God.**
 - (5) **In this passage the closest possible identification is made between the sign of the covenant and the covenant itself. They are so closely related that the sign is said to be the covenant, and the covenant is said to be the sign. And that language is reiterated throughout the passage.**
 - (6) **By wording it this way He also underscores the seriousness and the requirement of it to be fulfilled.**
 - f. Why do you suppose God would have required such a radical sign and seal of this covenant?
 - (10) **Just like what began in Gen. 15 with the cutting of the animals for God to walk between in His covenant ceremony...this sign continues this but with men.**
 - **The rite of circumcision was used to ratify the covenant between God and Abraham (and his descendants).**
 - **Circumcision involved the cutting off of the male’s foreskin of flesh. It symbolized both positive and negative sanctions.**

- It symbolized the blessing of Abraham and his descendants being consecrated, set apart from the mass of fallen humanity to be God's chosen people.
 - Circumcision also dramatized the penalty for covenant breaking. "If I fail to keep my covenant oath," the Jew was saying, "may I be separated from God's blessings even as my foreskin has been separated from my body."
 - The ultimate rite of covenant ratification was the ratification of the New Covenant by the blood of Christ. Jesus made this covenant known in the upper room during the Last Supper, then ratified it the next day by pouring out his blood on the cross.
 - Just as copies of Hittite suzerainty treaties were deposited in a public place for safekeeping, so God instructed Israel to place the tablets of stone in the mercy seat, which was housed first in the tabernacle and later in the temple.
 - The Ark of the Covenant where the tablets were kept was also called the ark of the testimony: Ex. 25:21-22- *"You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony..."*
- (11) God wanted and expected that His people would be different.
- (12) God gives this sign, this sign that is designed to remind Abraham, to teach Abraham, to mark or seal Abraham in his faith to assure Abraham.
- (13) And God appoints that covenant sign in order to confirm Abraham's faith, in order to strengthen Abraham's faith, in order to establish Abraham's faith.
- (14) Just as He gave him this name to reiterate to him the promises that He had made to him, now He is going to give him a sign.
- (15) In fact, He is going to carve this sign into his body so that everywhere he goes he can't get away from the sign that God has given him that He will be faithful to His promises.
- (16) This sign signifies the need for cleansing from sin. It is a bloody sacrament, and that blood itself speaks of the pollution of sin and the need for the covering of that sin.
- (17) While God did not require us to walk between the cut up animals He wanted His children to bear the sign of God's covenant upon them. Blood must be shed as a sacrifice...a remembrance...as a consecration of God's people before Him.
- (18) This sign also has the significance of marking a person as belonging to God and to His covenant. That is, it is a sign and a seal.
- A seal is a mark of ownership or a deposit guaranteeing the promises of God to come to fulfillment.
 - And the sign of the covenant is both a sign, that is, an outward sign of spiritual reality and it's a mark of God's ownership.
 - And that seal as part of the covenant community leads us not to presumption, but to responsibility, even as we see in this passage.

6. What does the sign of the covenant do?
 - f. **In and of itself the sign does nothing. The sign is given in conjunction with the promise. God had already made promises to Abraham. And the sign is given in the context of faith.**
 - g. **God gives the sign to confirm His word, His promise, and to assure us in our faith as a seal. The sign provides an outward mark of the covenant community. All those males and their families who have received the sign of the covenant and are sealed into the church.**
 - h. **Notice that it is made very clear that this sign of the covenant is a boundary. Gen. 17:10-14- *"This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."***
 - (4) **Those who are circumcised are part of the community.**
 - (5) **Those who aren't are to be cut off from His people.**
 - (6) **So this sign is a sign of membership in the visible church.**
 - i. **This sign, of course, does not bring about salvation. Paul makes that amply clear in Romans 4.**
 - (3) **Abraham was pronounced to be a child of God, a friend of God, in Genesis 15, when it was said that God accepted his faith and counted it to him as righteousness.**
 - (4) **And Paul makes a big point in Romans 4 that that happened before the sign of circumcision was given to Abraham. So the sign itself does not bring about the faith.**
 - j. **It is designed to strengthen a faith that is already there and it is a seal to remind us of God's work on our behalf.**
 - (3) **The promise is given in the Word of God. Faith is placed in that word, and then the sacrament comes along behind it in order to...**
 - (4) **do what? To strengthen our belief in the word. That's why the Reformers said the sacrament must never be administered apart from the Word because the sacrament is simply a visible word.**
7. Who ALL are included in this covenant?
 - c. **Gen. 17:7-11- *"And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."* And God said to Abraham, 'As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be**

circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you."

d. And then in the New Testament:

(4) Acts 2:39- "For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself."

(5) Rom. 4:13-18- "For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring— not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations'—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, 'So shall your offspring be.'"

(6) Gal. 3:16- "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, 'And to offsprings' referring to many, but referring to one, 'And to your offspring,' who is Christ." Gal. 3:29- "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."

Covenants Study
Sunday School
June 5, 2022

A. Prayer

B. The renewal of the covenant with Moses and the Law

1. This is considered another covenant renewal because of the structure of this covenant renewal that is given in Exodus 19-24 and the whole book of Deuteronomy. Just for fun, what are the components of a covenant?
 - a. **A clear definition of the parties involved...**
 - b. **A legally binding set of provisions that stipulates the conditions of the relationship**
 - c. **The promise of blessing for obedience *and* the condition of obtaining blessing**
 - d. **The consequence for disobedience.**
 - e. **In his book of the covenant, O Palmer Robertson elaborates a bit more when he says;**
 - (1) **A perambulatory declaration of lordship of the King- See Ex. 20:2, Duet. 5: 1-6**
 - (2) **A historical prologue emphasizing past acts of grace/benevolence— (some passages as above).**
 - (3) **Provisions for multiple copies to be deposited before the people and their gods...hence the second set of the commandments that went into the ark of God.**
2. I love this: Thomas Boston defines the Covenant of Grace – *God's gracious, eternal purpose of redemption, conceived before the creation of the world, first announced in Genesis 3:15, progressively revealed in history, accomplished in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, and appropriated by faith in Him.*
3. Read Ex. 19:16- 20: 21. We began looking at this passage last week. What were some of the things that we learn about God in this passage?
 - a. **He is a God with standards...this could be a “duh” statement except for the fact that most people think we are the ones who set the standards for living...redefining them as we see fit.**
 - b. **He left nothing out so that we have “no excuse” ...we can't say we weren't told.**
 - c. **He is All-Powerful ...All Sovereign!**
 - d. **He is a jealous God...the Only One who truly has the “right” to be jealous...all attention given to others is an offense.**
 - e. **God's presence is known by Moses and these people...no question...and to be in the presence of God is a terrible and frightening thing.**
 - f. **He reveals a desire for relationship by giving the Law.**
 - g. **God reveals Himself in specific ways.**
 - h. **His grace is evident in how He warns Moses so that they don't do something they are not supposed to do.**
 - i. **He is a “fearful” God that expects His people to fear Him.**
 - (1) **He is not to be taken lightly...once again...this should be another “duh” statement except that we act as if the universe revolves around us and what we want and who we are.**

(2) Fear of the LORD is a requirement of the LORD of His people.

- **Ex. 19:16- “On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled.”**
- **Ex. 20:18-21 “Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, ‘You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.’ Moses said to the people, ‘Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of Him may be before you, that you may not sin.’ The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.”**
- **Deut. 10:12-13- “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?”**
- **Proverbs 1:7- “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.”**
- **Hebrews 12:18-21- “For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, ‘If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.’ Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, ‘I tremble with fear.’”**

(3) Fear of the Lord is often downplayed even by me as we seek to make this fit with our knowing He is an all loving God by using words like respect and awe only...I/we too often downplay what truly is to be meant.

- **“Fear” = respect and awe are involved, but there is more:**
 - **the Hebrew noun “pa-had” means “dread, a sort of panic.”**
 - **It means the same thing in Greek, where the word is “phobos”, from which we get the word “phobia.” Which almost always speaks to those “fears” that truly unsettle someone...paralyzing them in their tracts, causing them to run away, causing blood pressure to rise...causing one to lose control of an otherwise sensible life.**
 - **The fear of God is a form of xenophobia—a fear of the stranger, or, in this case, the One who is utterly strange and altogether different.**
 - **Another Hebrew word for “fear” is “ya reh” which means being moved to reverence or an awe that stops your mouth for it is so incomprehensible. The fear of the Lord uses both of these words in the same phrase.**

- There is a play on the words however when “yareh” is used...The fear of the LORD= *“yareh eth Yahweh”*-a word play...something that we often see in Hebrew. We are to yareh ...Yahweh!
- The fear of God is not primarily a fear of something (for instance, judgment) but of someone.
 - It is God Himself who provokes our phobia and He tests us so that we maintain this fear of Him.
 - He is different from us, not only because we are created beings, created by Him, but because we are sinful beings before a Holy God.
 - There isn't anyone like God. We don't simply acknowledge Him as unique, but that He IS unique. God is not just a supreme being at the top of the ladder. He's above the ladder he created.
- Whenever God revealed Himself to people in Scripture, they were afraid.
 - Be very skeptical if someone reports a vision of God and describes it as a casual conversation.
 - In the Bible, God or his messengers have to say, *“Do not be afraid”*, like here in Ex, 20:20 (and, for some, repeat it) because people are afraid, hiding their faces from the glory of the holy God.
 - This type of fear is a disorienting experience, the recognition one has in sensing that he or she is not in charge... Or the recognition that the One they are standing before is All-powerful and someone we CANNOT fully comprehend...in fact, we only comprehend what He has enabled us to comprehend...thus humbling us even farther...or at least it should.
 - Abram, Moses, Joshua, David, and the rest simply fell down in worship. While beholding a vision of God's majesty.
 - When Jesus calmed the storm the Gospels of Mark and Matthew specifically explain the reaction of the disciples.
 - 1.) In Matthew they “marveled”- The Greek word here is *“ethaumasán”*, from *“thamazô”*, which means *“astonished out of one's senses.”*
 - 2.) In Mark the passage more accurately reads, Mark 4:41- *“They feared (ephobethesan) with great fear (megan phobon)”*.
 - 3.) During the storm, they knew that He could save them from mortal danger—and He did. But then they felt a sense that He was the greater threat!
 - 4.) This fear seems to cause them and us to terrified by His devastating power and exhilarated by His majesty all at the same time. It is being gripped by a deep awe that makes you want to simultaneously get closer and run away.

- (4) The real crisis confronting us is that God is not our buddy, an indulgent grandfather, a life coach, or a golf partner.**
- **He is the sovereign Creator of heaven and earth, demanding an account from each of us for our sins—first of all against Him, but also against our neighbors and the rest of the creation He has made.**
 - **Only against this backdrop can we be struck by the force of that precious title, “Friend of Sinners.”**
4. With so much positive about the Law why do people recoil from it so much and so easily?
- a. **Our fallen nature naturally rejects the Law.**
 - b. **As redeemed people the Church has not often taught correctly on the place of the Law in our lives today...so it is easy to recoil at the suggestion that we are required to keep the Law today. It is not grace if our lives are to be governed by the law many would say.**
 - c. **It is one thing to talk about such comfortable things as: the benefits of the oneness with God, of fellowship with the Creator, even of harmony in the covenant, but...**
 - d. **It's another thing to talk about rules, requirements, duties and commands. The very mention of these seems to smash the sense of comfortable communion with the Maker.**
 - e. **Laws speak of standardization; of conformity to an outward norm...some people go so far as to speak of coercion.**
 - f. **But covenant suggests a relationship, trust and friendship, but true trust, true friendship and true relationship can only be found within structure.**
 - g. **We must always remember that the Covenant is larger than the law that is introduced and codified here. Covenant embraces all aspects of the law; but law as a category cannot exhaust all the various elements of covenant.**
5. Just so we are clear here, is there anything new in these laws? Haven't they already been present so that man knew this already? So what is different?
- a. **These laws had always been present as eternal truths since they define God's character and nature, but they had not been laid out in such a clear fashion...in a list together...codified! Because these 10 Commandments or Ten Words of God arise out of God's nature, these are not something that suddenly appears for the first time at Sinai.**
 - b. **And also, although these moral laws were inherent in the image of God in man from the beginning of man's creation, the corruption of sin had the effect of “blurring” the clarity of these laws. At Sinai God reasserts the clear law that has always been evident and that man has always been bound to in covenant with God.**
- (1) Adam and Eve knew immediately that they had sinned against God and His law though it had not been written down physically for them...**
- (2) Cain knew immediately that he had sinned when he wasn't obedient to God's will in the sacrifice and then again he knew he had done wrong when he murdered his brother long before the actual law was given against pre-meditated murder.**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
June 12, 2022

A. Prayer

B. Review- The Fear of God

1. God provided a mediator in Moses for the people for all the reasons we talked about but also because the people needed one.
 - a. **The people couldn't come before God because of their sinful nature even after having been delivered.**
 - b. **He is Holy and they are not so thankful by His great steadfast love He provided a mediator.**
2. He provided a Mediator in Christ Jesus because we too can't come before Him on our own.
 - a. **We can't come before God even on our own because of our sinful nature even after having been redeemed and justified.**
 - b. **He is Holy and we are not fully... yet.**
 - c. **We can only come before Him through our Mediator...Christ our Lord.... because He is too Holy for us to come before Him without Christ between us and the Father.**
 - d. **Practically, when we make our petitions, when we cry out to Him (even as His children)it is not us going into the throne room...but Christ who is our great high Priest and mediator.**
 - e. **We cannot yet go before the Father on our own.**

C. Ex. 20:1-17

1. A simple exercise to see how this works... Choose one or two of the 10 Commandments. What does it reveal to us about God? What does it teach us about ourselves?

Covenants Study
Sunday School
June 19, 2022

A. Prayer

B. Moving on: Consider Ex. 20:1-17 again:

1. What was the purpose for God giving the Law if it was not to do away with the covenant of Grace or add to the covenant of works as some have suggested?
 - a. **The Law was not introduced to nullify the promise as Paul will say generations later. The Law was introduced to demonstrate the need for the promise. As a guardian for the elect and as a Judge for the non-elect.**
 - b. **The Law reveals God's character.**
 - (1) **The Law outlines the features of the image of God which man is to be conformed /transformed to.**
 - (2) **It has been said that the Law draws a picture of the Creator so that man can clearly see the shape of the One with whom he is to have fellowship...true fellowship and union through Christ.**
 - (3) **Only as we are transformed into that image through Christ is true fellowship achievable...which is God's absolute goal for all who are in Christ Jesus.**
 - (4) **It is a pathway to how His people are to know, love, and worship Him.**
 - c. **As the history of God's people progressed, God added to the covenant of grace... the law. This law was revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai and occupies a prominent place throughout the entire Old Testament (see Ex. 19:16 through Deuteronomy) and the New Testament.**
 - d. **The law is also as some have said in the past a mirror to our sinful soul exposing our need for salvation and restoration.**
 - (1) **The law enables us to see ourselves as we really are...Rom. 7:7-12-
"What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good."**
 - (2) **The law gives us a standard...God's holiness... to which we are to conform and be transformed. This is God's grace so that we know what is expected of us. This is God's love for us so that we know the goal that he intends for all who are His. That is one reason why Paul says, "So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good."**

2. The giving of the Law must not be confused with the original covenant of works made with Adam before the Fall.
 - a. **In the original circumstance the sinless man was not offered a provision for blessing in the event of disobedience since that wasn't on the radar yet. Provision of blessing did not come until after the Fall.**
 - b. **By the time the Law comes into play God had already provided a way for deliverance from the judgment by the promise of a Messiah and more recently and physically by the blood of the Passover Lamb which looked forward to Christ coming as the final lamb of sacrifice.**
 - c. **It should be made very clear that this is the covenant of grace... as I said earlier it does not do away with the Covenant renewal made with Abraham this is the giving of the "law of faith" for the believer not a "law of works" ...we had that in the garden... pre-fall. The law given under Moses and the promise given under Abraham go hand in hand because both manifest God's gracious will to His redeemed.**
 - (1) **See Ex. 20:2- *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."***
 - **The Law is given by the covenant –keeping God who has "already" delivered and redeemed His people...redeemed in the sense of being purchased out of slavery.**
 - **God saved His people to be able to do the law.**
 - **The exodus demonstrates God's grace...the people did not deserve to be rescued...once again it was His grace towards His own because of His promise in the covenant of grace that He delivered them...Gen. 15: 13-14.**
 - **But also because this was the foundational covenant that He had made with Himself before the foundation of the earth to save His own elect people.**
 - **Vs. 2 is not calling upon the Hebrews to keep this law so as to win God's favor for they already have that by virtue of being delivered by God.**
 - **They like us were to keep the commandments out of gratitude for what God had done for them.... a "law of faith" not a "law of works".**
 - (2) **Gal. 3:13-14- *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree'— so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith."***, basically states that if we are not in Christ we are still under the curse of the Covenant of Works...a curse because Adam our representative head broke that covenant. But in Christ all the works of that covenant have been fulfilled.
 - (3) **See Gal. 3:17-19- *"This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise. The law was added because of transgressions"* (Gal. 3:19). The law is not a substitute for grace. God never intended that man would be saved by keeping the law.**

(4) Gal. 2:16-*"By the works of the law shall no one will be justified"*
The law was added simply as a means of administering the covenant of grace more effectively.

(5) Rom. 3:20- *"For by works of the Law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin"*. These words of the apostle Paul make clear what the purpose of the law was. The purpose of the law was to increase Israel's sense of sin and thereby bring them to see their need of a Savior. Grace from God so that His children would not stay lost.

3. Reformed Understanding of the complete purposes of the Law:

- a. **The first purpose of the law is to be a mirror.** On the one hand, the law of God reflects and mirrors the perfect righteousness of God. And the law highlights our weakness and sin. It serves to reveal to us our need of a Savior.
- b. **The second purpose of the law is that it serves as a restraint of evil.** The law cannot change the heart but it serves to protect the righteous against the unjust. The law allows for a limited measure of justice on earth until the last judgment. Since the law is written on the hearts of men, it has made its way into laws of all cultures of the earth.
- c. **The third purpose of the law is to reveal to God's children what is pleasing to God our Father.** The Christian delights in the law as God Himself delights in it. Jesus said, *"If you love Me, keep My commandments"* (John 14:15) This is the highest function of the law, to serve as an instrument for the people of God to give Him honor and glory.
- d. **The Reformed church is in the minority in this understanding with the greater body of Christ in disagreement.**
 - (1) We must remember that the Law is subservient to the Gospel which is the Covenant of Grace.
 - (2) The Law's purpose is to convince us and humble us...and the Gospel, once we are justified by faith alone, enables us to fulfill our desired obedience to the law.
 - (3) The law sends us (who are the Elect) to the Gospel for our justification, the Gospel send us back to the law to define the life God has called us to.
 - (4) The believer's obedience to the law is nothing else but the expression of our thankfulness to God who has freely justified us and with that we might serve Him without fear. Luke 1:68-75- *"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath that He swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days."*
 - (5) The Law was not introduced to nullify the promise. The law was introduced to demonstrate the need for the promise.

4. How, by studying God's law, do we learn about what pleases Him and what offends Him?
 - a. **We learn God's very character. This is God's grace to us to allow and enable us to really know Him...that is to us who believe.**
 - b. **The moral law is always binding upon us.**
 - c. **Our redemption is from the curse of God's law- His wrath... not from our duty to obey it.**
 - d. **We are justified, not because of our obedience to the law, but in order that we may become obedient to it. To love Christ is to keep His commandments. To love God is to obey His law.**
5. What 3 types of law do we generally refer to when describing the laws by which the covenant of grace was administered from the time of Moses to the coming of Christ? **The ceremonial law, the civil law, and the moral law.**
 - a. **The ceremonial law, as set forth in the book of Leviticus, was composed of numerous symbols and types. A symbol is a material representation of some spiritual truth. A type is a symbol intended to foreshadow something that is to come in the future. The tabernacle was a perfect symbol and type of the work of Christ as the Mediator between God and man.**
 - b. **The civil law was that part of God's law that was to govern Israel as a nation and society. These civil laws tended to emphasize the national, temporal, and external aspects of the covenant.**
 - c. **The civil law was the application of the moral law to the social and civil life of Israel. Israel was a theocracy (ruled by God). The laws of sanitation, for instance, were revealed by God and made binding on the people of Israel but they also pointed to these people who had been separated...called out by God... to be holy. The moral laws while defining God's character specifically point us toward personal holiness as well. God's people were to be a royal priesthood, reflecting God's holiness...the purpose of upholding the moral law.**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
June 26, 2022

A. Prayer
B. Review

1. Since the Law was NOT introduced to nullify the promise, in fact, it was introduced to demonstrate the need for the promise; then what is the purpose of the law since Christ has come and fulfilled the Law?

a. **It is the same as it has always been...**

b. **As part of the Covenant of grace its purposes are:**

(1) The first purpose of the law is to be a mirror.

- **The law of God reflects and mirrors the perfect righteousness of God.**
- **The law of God serves to reveal to us our sin.**
- **The Law of God exasperates our sin to bring further all manner of our sin...See Rom. 7:7-12.**
 - **The moment we are told "Thou shall not..." our fallen nature does what...not just the sin but the sin to the nth degree.**
 - **Paul says he is alive to sin...on one hand, alive in a worldly sense wanting to do more than even what is revealed to him... then on the other, saying to himself there must be some way to make himself more righteous.**

(2) The second purpose of the law is that it serves as a restraint of evil.

The law cannot change the heart but it serves to protect the righteous against the unjust. The law allows for a limited measure of justice on earth until the last judgment. Since the law is written on the hearts of men, it has made its way into laws of all cultures of the earth.

(3) The third purpose of the law is to reveal to God's children what is pleasing to God our Father. The Christian delights in the law as God Himself delights in it. Jesus said, "*If you love Me, keep My commandments*" (John 14:15) This is the highest function of the law, to serve as an instrument for the people of God to give Him honor and glory. Or as John Calvin says...it is for our sanctification. It is the pattern for our obedience as believers because we have been justified.

2. What were the 3 main types of the Law?
Ceremonial, Civil, Moral

C. Mosaic Covenant continued:

6. Which type of the law revealed at Mount Sinai was never to pass away? The moral law summarized in the Ten Commandments.

a. **In the moral law is revealed man's duty to God and to his neighbor.**

b. **The moral law has the same functions today that it did in the time of Moses.**

(1) It is still God's means to convict men of their sin and to show them their need of a Savior.

(2) It still remains as a standard of conduct after we have accepted Christ as our Savior.

- (3) Christ delivers men from the curse of the law ,Gal. 3:13- *“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us— for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’, but not from the moral obligation to keep the law as an expression of faith in and love for Christ.*
 - (4) When a lawyer came to Jesus seeking eternal life, Jesus confronted him with a summary of the Ten Commandments to convict him of his sin.
 - (5) See Luke 10:25-29- *“And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the Law? How do you read it?’ And he answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.’ And he said to him, ‘You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.’ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’”*
 - (6) Paul in writing to the Christians at Rome sets forth the commandments of the Old Testament as the guide and standard for Christian conduct (see...
 - Rom. 3:31- *“Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.”*
 - Rom. 13:9- *“For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,’ and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”*
- c. God reveals Himself to His children even more through these commands. He shows us what is of utmost important to Him.
- (1) In Ex. 20:2, He tells us His name (He revealed it to Moses but here it is revealed to His children). “Yahweh” means “I am” and it can also mean, “I cause to be”. He then is the one who “is” and the One that “causes”.
 - (2) He longs to be close to us, His children, so He keeps nothing of importance from us.
- d. The law expresses the way God walks, and we need instruction in that so that we can walk in God’s way and to be the kind of people God originally created us to be. So the law adds depth to the Covenant of Grace. it doesn’t take away any of the promises made to Abraham.
- (1) The people needed a mediator then to be kept in line...Moses...and we need one now as well...Jesus Christ our eternal Mediator between us and God. Gal. 3:19-20- *“...it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.”*
 - (2) Moses was the type...Jesus is the actual.
 - (3) While the Law is inferior to the Covenant of Grace it is added as well as we look forward to the One who will justify His own by Faith comes...He has come and now the law is our standard ...a sign of the justification of the Elect as we follow it.

(4) Obedience to the Law cannot make our justification by faith more certain for our justification just like Abraham's was based in righteousness...the righteousness of Christ alone.

7. Now to the contemporary dilemma. Doesn't the Bible teach that we are not under the law but under grace **Rom. 6:14- "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace."**? Absolutely...but what does that mean for us today?

- a. **A covenant relationship requires structure ...an even playing field...so the relationship can grow. Boundaries are crucial.**
- b. **Many often today are confused about the law at Sinai...confused because they wonder if Israel as a people were living in an age of grace in the OT rather than law.**

(1) This is what is often taught in the Church today to justify the belief stated or unstated of 2 types of salvation in the Bible...for the Jews...keeping the Law...for everyone else God's grace.

(2) Quote by C.I. Schofield, "The most obvious and striking division of the Word of truth is that between law and grace.... Scripture never, in any dispensation, mingles these two principles. Law always has a place and work distinct and wholly diverse from that of grace. Everywhere the Scriptures present law and grace in sharp contrasted spheres." (Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth) Schofield's own reference Bible, which many households have one, were even more clear when he stated, "Christians today are not under law, but under grace...Christian are freed from the law and its demands."

- **Making the point as before that they are never to be understood as working together.**
- **But this position is taken solely, it seems, because of his Dispensational Pre-millennial views...that is in support of the view which makes it clear there HAS to be two types of salvation so that ALL Israel can be saved.**
- **But the truth is this:**
 - **Rom. 9:27- "And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: 'Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved, 28 for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.'"**
 - **Rom. 11:5-7- "But what is God's reply to him? 'I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened."**
- **All Israel will be saved...that is the Israel of God...the children of the promise...His true church ...all the elect of God...both Jew and Gentile!**

- c. But Moses seems to have no such confusion about the law and God's desire is that we do not either...so He has Moses repeatedly remind the people and us of the Lord's grace and favor to them and to us is the fundamental motivation for keeping the law...and that it is through this faith given by God through His grace that we can keep the law.
 - (1) See Deut. 4:37-40- *"And because He loved your fathers and chose their offspring after them and brought you out of Egypt with His own presence, by His great power, driving out before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is this day, know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. Therefore you shall keep His statutes and His commandments, which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land that the Lord your God is giving you for all time."*
 - (2) Because of His mercy and grace we must gladly...keep the law...and by faith we can! The law was given only to those aware of their constant need for mercy and pardon. It was given to those who lived in the Lord's grace and steadfast love and who were dependent on His faithfulness to His covenant.
- d. The N.T. teaches us that the fullest state of blessing in the life of the believer comes from keeping the law.
 - (1) See Matt. 5:17-19- *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."*
 - (2) Matt. 7:24- *"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock."*
- e. Salvation is by grace ...we live a life of faith by the law of God...The law is not a hindrance or barrier for our lives; rather God's law defines how human life was intended to be lived.
- f. Paul teaches that Christ is the end of the law to all who believe -Rom. 10:4- *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."*
 - (1) Christ fulfilled all righteousness. He kept the whole law perfectly, while at the same time bearing in Himself the complete curse of the law.
 - (2) From every perspective the negative force of the Mosaic administration of the covenant concludes in Jesus Christ.
 - (3) The convicting, condemning power of the law exhausts its accusations in Christ. Rom. 8:31-34- *"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who*

was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”

- g. I Cor. 2:14-16- *“The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ‘For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?’ But we have the mind of Christ. “***
- (1) This speaks of how the Law is hidden from the eyes of the unregenerate...**
- (2) Oh, God’s common grace has revealed certain aspects...hence the laws of men...but overall the law and its many facets cannot be perceived by fallen men.**
- h. So the purpose of the Law is not to achieve salvation, but for the believer to express our love and gratitude to the Father because of the deliverance He has already granted...and for the non-believer only judgement...this is God’s grace in keeping His covenantal promise to be OUR God and we His people according to His word.**
8. Why is it important that we see God’s grace in the Law?
9. How might you say that the Mosaic covenant renewal advances the covenant of Grace?
- a. The Mosaic covenant renewal provides necessary order and structure to God’s law.**
- b. The mosaic covenant renewal is obviously more comprehensive... even though now the judicial and ceremonial laws are not binding, many of the principles from them are extremely helpful in helping us live our lives well before the Lord.**
- c. The Mosaic renewal has a greater capacity of keeping us humble. The more we are made aware of our sin...as Paul...the more we repent and seek the Lord.**
- d. By revealing the character of God, the Mosaic renewal gives us a greater picture of the holiness of God and the holiness expected of all God’s people. The bar is high...but in Christ Jesus and through the Spirit of God we can achieve experiencing all that God has promised us by His grace through such clear direction.**
- e. But even having said this, the Mosaic renewal is seen as inferior to the Covenant of Grace for it is only one aspect of God’s Covenant for His people.**
10. *“Grace is given, not because we have done good works, but in order that we may have the power to do them, not because we have fulfilled the Law, but in order that we may be able to fulfill it.”-Augustine*
11. What do you think is being communicated in this quote? Elton Trueblood- *“The worst blasphemy is not profanity, but lip service.”* What does it say to us about the place of the Law in the midst of the covenant of grace?
12. **Homework:** Do this at home and bring back so answers next week for Mike. Since the Law has been fulfilled by Jesus but the moral law is still applicable

to all who believe, then... Choose one of the 10 Commandments that governs an area of your life that needs improvement. Use the following questions to develop a plan of obedience:

- a. How does this portrait of God suggest what I should be like?
- b. What is the first step I should take to become like this?
- c. When can I take that step?
- d. Who will help me?
- e. What encouragements are implied by the commandment that I can claim?

D. Davidic Covenant Renewal- Kingdom defined- II Samuel 7

1. How does this promise by God fit into the covenant structure we have discussed?
 - a. **Parties are clearly defined...God, David, and David's progeny.**
 - b. **Set of provisions stipulating the conditions of the relationship. A list of "I wills" from God.**
 - c. **There are blessing.**
 - (1) **There is no list of "you shall"**
 - (2) **There is little by way of consequences for not keeping this covenant since this covenant is not dependent upon David or his progeny doing "good".**
 - (3) **But the implication of David's sons walking with God is there in his prayer from vs. 18-29...which brings with it because of what has been said before ...consequences if they don't...and of course the first test in in the very next chapter.**
 - d. **While this chapter does not find the word "covenant" in it...Scripture elsewhere does refer to this as a covenant...**
 - (1) **II Sam. 23:5- "For does not my house stand so with God? For He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure."**
 - (2) **Ps. 89:3-4 "You have said, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'"**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
July 3, 2022

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Why is it important that we see God's grace in the Law?
2. How might you say that the Mosaic covenant renewal advances the covenant of Grace?
 - f. The Mosaic covenant renewal provides necessary order and structure to God's law.**
 - g. The mosaic covenant renewal is obviously more comprehensive... even though now the judicial and ceremonial laws are not binding, many of the principles from them are extremely helpful in helping us live our lives well before the Lord.**
 - h. The Mosaic renewal has a greater capacity of keeping us humble. The more we are made aware of our sin...as Paul...the more we repent and seek the Lord.**
 - i. By revealing the character of God, the Mosaic renewal gives us a greater picture of the holiness of God and the holiness expected of all God's people. The bar is high...but in Christ Jesus and through the Spirit of God we can achieve experiencing all that God has promised us by His grace through such clear direction.**
 - j. But even having said this, the Mosaic renewal is seen as inferior to the Covenant of Grace for it is only one aspect of God's Covenant for His people.**
3. *"Grace is given, not because we have done good works, but in order that we may have the power to do them, not because we have fulfilled the Law, but in order that we may be able to fulfill it."*-Augustine
4. Who did the homework? **See Ex. 20:1-17.** Since the Law has been fulfilled by Jesus but the moral law is still applicable to all who believe, then... Choose one of the 10 Commandments that governs an area of your life that needs improvement. Use the following questions to develop a plan of obedience:
 - f. How does this portrait of God suggest what I should be like?
 - g. What is the first step I should take to become like this?
 - h. When can I take that step?
 - i. Who will help me?
 - j. What encouragements are implied by the commandment that I can claim?

C. Davidic Covenant Renewal- Kingdom defined- II Samuel 7

2. How does this promise by God fit into the covenant structure we have discussed?
 - e. Parties are clearly defined...God, David, and David's progeny.**
 - f. Set of provisions stipulating the conditions of the relationship. A list of "I wills" from God.**
 - g. There are blessings.**
 - (4) There is no list of "you shall"**

- (5) There is little by way of consequences for not keeping this covenant since this covenant is not dependent upon David or his progeny doing "good".
 - (6) But the implication of David's sons walking with God is there in his prayer from vs. 18-29...which brings with it because of what has been said before ...consequences if they don't...and of course the first test in in the very next chapter.
 - h. While this chapter does not find the word "covenant" in it...Scripture elsewhere does refer to this as a covenant...
 - (3) II Sam. 23:5- *"For does not my house stand so with God? For He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure."*
 - (4) Ps. 89:3-4 *"You have said, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'"*
3. There are a number of events that set the stage for this covenant renewal with David.
- a. II Sam. 5-
 - (1) David becomes the King actual.
 - David had been anointed to take Saul's place long before he actually takes the throne. See I Sam. 16:1, 12-13- *"The LORD said to Samuel, 'How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.' ... And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the LORD said, 'Arise, anoint him, for this is he.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah."*
 - God had established His covenant with Israel establishing Himself as KING over all.
 - But even in the law there was a provision for the future king ...that would be God's steward and represent God to the people and the people to God as a priest.
 - Saul doesn't count because God gave the people what they wanted ...a king like the kings around them.
 - But now he takes over the throne. II Sam. 5:1-5- *"Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, 'Behold, we are your bone and flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the LORD said to you, You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince¹ over Israel.' So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years."*

- David fulfills the offices of King and Priest . But also the office of Prophet, since God used David in that role as well .
- This was the first time all three offices had been represented since Moses and they were fulfilled in David, the one through whom the Messiah would come our true Prophet, Priest and King.
- David like Moses was also the covenant mediator...a type of Christ .
 - In fact, every king from David's line going forward will have this role...standing between the people and God.
 - This is a distinctive on-going role that only comes about in this covenant.

(2)David conquers Jerusalem. This is all about providing a way to unify the people of God. II Sam. 5:6-7,9- *"And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land... David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. And David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built the city all around from the Millo inward. And David became greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him."* "the Millo" is a fortification that had been built by the Jebusites ...or maybe this is an explanation looking back explaining how the city expanded after David took over. Either way it is a mound of dirt usually used as a fortification...

- b. II Sam. 6- David brings the ark to Jerusalem. II Sam. 6:1-2, 12-15 *"David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale-judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim...So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing. And when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal. And David danced before the LORD with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn."***

(1)This action showed the people physically the unity of the human throne and the reign of God who directed the affairs of the Davidic throne.

(2)As we see throughout the Psalms, David's desire was that his rule would manifest God's rule on earth...he understood the command to work and keep ...as doing what God would do...following God's lead.

- c. II Sam. 7- David found rest from all his enemies. II Sam. 7:1-*"Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies..."***

(1)Thus giving us an example of what the Kingdom of God is all about.

(2)That being said, the King ruling in security with all his enemies brought under his feet since he rules I the name of God Almighty.

(3)And with this rest he sought to honor God by building a temple for the Ark, for God to dwell in.

- **David had already presumed upon the LORD without seeking His guidance on how to get the ark which led to a death...so this time he seeks out Nathan, the prophet of God, concerning what he wanted to do.**
- **In II Sam. 7:4-7, God basically tells Nathan to tell David, NO...you can't build the Temple. *"But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, 'Go and tell my servant David, Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'"***
- **But He has something greater to tell him. II Sam. 7:9-16**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
July 10, 2022

A. Prayer

B. Continuation of the Davidic Renewal- II Samuel 7

4. What does God promise David in this covenant renewal **II Sam. 7:8-16?**

- a. **God confirms His presence with David. II Sam. 7:8-9- “Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you.’”** At the heart of the Davidic covenant is the Immanuel principle!
- b. **God reaffirms the promise of the land- II Sam. 7:10-11-“And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies...”**
- c. **God would establish a dynasty with David. II Sam. 7:9 and 11-“And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth...Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house.”**
 - (1) Interestingly, there is in many Hittite suzerainty treaties of the day also a promise of dynasties...for conquered peoples...as long as they were obedient to the Crown...the Suzerain. Also found in these documents are provisions for punishing descendants that don't live up to this treaty while at the same time maintaining the original line.
 - (2) Think the promise to Abraham about how large his offspring would be and how kings would come from him. That kings would come through David to sit on the throne.
 - (3) **Gen. 17:6- “I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.”**
 - (4) **God's continuing covenant:**
 - So the Abrahamic covenant promised a realm a dynasty of kings and a people for God's kingdom.
 - The Mosaic covenant provided the law for the kingdom.
 - The Davidic covenant now provides a human king ...a type of the king to come.
 - Keith Matheson says, “*God's creational purpose to establish His kingdom with His image-bearer exercising dominion now reaches a new stage in its progressive accomplishments.*”
- d. **That David's son (Solomon) would build the Temple...the house of God. II Sam. 7:12-15-“When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the**

stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him..."

(1) Or "I will be his father, and he shall be my son." (Hebrew vs. 14).

(2) Since this designation would have been unthinkable at the time to be conferred on an individual...a nation perhaps... (Ex. 4:22- Israel is call God's son)..But never an individual...but a descendant of David will be called the son of God.

(3) Of course this is speaking of Christ Jesus the last King of God's Israel. Heb. 1:5-"For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'? Or again, I will be to Him a father, and He shall be to me a son'?"

(4) Then there is this: vs. 14 "...When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him..." Solomon sins egregiously before the LORD in his curiosity and passions.

- **And the kingdom is taken from him by God and given to someone who is not from the line of David...Jeroboam, the servant of Solomon. I Kings 11:11- *"Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, 'Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant.'"***
- **But even for the sake of David, God won't split the kingdom until after Solomon is no longer king. I Kings 11:12-"Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son."**
- **Most of it that is...But because of His promise God gives Judah to remain in the hands of David's progeny. I Kings 11:13- *"However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen."***
- **God's point is clear even the sin of Solomon (and David for that matter) will not and cannot terminate the covenant commitment made to David and Jerusalem for the sake of Christ to come. In fact this will be the repeated phrase that reemphasizes God's unconditional commitment/promise - *"...for David's sake"* or something to that effect.**
- **O Palmer Robertson says on this point, *"Taken as a whole, the books of Kings present quite convincingly a distinctive pattern for understanding the history of Israel's monarchy and this pattern continually underscores God's covenantal faithfulness"***

Covenants Study
Sunday School
July 17, 2022

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. Let's go back to the Law a minute: How did Jesus see the law?

a. **Jesus summed up the law this way,**

(1) Matt. 22: 37-40- *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."* And then, John 13:34-*"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another"*.

b. **He did this to reinforce the purpose for the Law for the Elect.**

(1) Jesus says here each of the Ten Commandments is an expression of love for God or neighbor. This means the commandments are not merely restrictive (what to avoid) but are prescriptive (what to pursue)...especially for us believers.

(2) Consequently, every law, command, and moral exhortation in Scripture is an application of how to love in a practical, sacrificial, costly way, much like Jesus has loved me through the cross.

- **But how can I love so unselfishly and sacrificially as Christ? Simple—not easy, but simple.**
- **By abiding by faith like a branch in a Vine, drawing the life-giving, motive-changing, fruit-producing sap of the Spirit, who fills us as we consciously see ourselves clothed in the perfect gift-righteousness of Jesus.**
- **Indeed, the only way to love like Jesus is to be filled to the fullness of God (filled with the Spirit) by embracing the height, depth, width, and breadth of his love for you in Christ.**
- **Then, motives change and new abilities grow as we find ourselves desiring to sacrifice for and give ourselves to bless others as Jesus has blessed/loved us—all to the praise of God's glorious grace.**

c. **Paul speaks of our freedom from the condemnation of the law this way, Gal. 5:13-*"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."***

(1) He did this for the same reasons as Paul...the Law has its place and it is good for those who believe enabling us to love God and our neighbor...

(2) And it is good for the non-believer, as well. God by His common grace gives them structure for the common good.

2. What perhaps is the biggest piece of information to come from God's covenant renewal with David?

a. **That The King...the Messiah (Jesus Christ) would come through David's lineage. And that through this One... a kingdom would be established forever.**

(1) Gen. 49:10- *"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute (or Shiloh) comes to him and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples."*

(2) II Sam. 7:13- *"I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."*

(3) II Sam. 7:16- *"And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."*

- ***"forever"*** and yet there was an interruption in the dynasty from the last king of Judah until Christ came.
- Since this kingdom is typological it is an illustration and a prophecy of what is to come.
- David's dynasty was always intended to anticipate. ..to serve as a type and a sign that looked forward to the dynasty of the Redeemer that truly is forever and ever., Amen!

(4) II Sam. 7:19- *"And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O LORD God. You have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come, and this is instruction for mankind, O Lord God!"*

(5) Jer. 23:5-6 *"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and He shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which He will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'"*

- b. David's throne was maintained by God for over 400 years...the longest dynasty in biblical history.**
- c. This promise of the coming of the KING reaffirms what has been said before...so it is nothing new since we find it all the way back to Gen. 3:15.**
- d. In His Covenant God makes promises to His people in order to clearly declare His good intentions, remind them of His presence and provision, and encourage them to trust that He'll carry out His plans throughout all of creation.**
- e. In each of these covenant renewals we have looked at so far, God encourages His people in order to prepare them to wait and watch for His better provision until it comes in full. Heb. 11:13-16 *"These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city."***
- f. We see the unconditional nature of this renewal...which supports the covenant of grace as a whole:**
 - (1) While there are blessing and curses the covenant itself is not dependent upon the obedience of David's progeny for its fulfillment.**
 - (2) The surety of the promise rest solely on God's faithfulness.**

3. This covenant is later summarized in Chronicles:
 - a. **I Chr. 17:10-15- “Moreover, I declare to you that the LORD will build you a house. When your days are fulfilled to walk with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you, but I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever. In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.”**
 - b. **II Chr. 6:16-17-“Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk in my law as you have walked before me.’ Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David.”**
 4. What are some distinguishing markers between the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenant renewals?
 - a. **Established enforce and maintained by God Himself.**
 - b. **Abraham- size of his people**
 - c. **Moses- structure for His people**
 - d. **David- established the leadership and where it would come from forever.**
- C. A few words about the “new covenant”- Jesus, Jeremiah and the New Covenant.
1. But before we consider the “main text”, let’s consider the immediate context:

Jer. 31:27-30-“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass that as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring harm, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, declares the LORD. In those days they shall no longer say: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’ But everyone shall die for his own iniquity. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.”

 - a. **Jeremiah had insisted that judgment was inevitable...when the other “prophets” were saying “Peace, Peace”...he wasn’t.**
 - b. **God had promised punishment upon them if they broke His covenant.**
 - (1) **The nation must experience the covenantal curse because of all the covenantal violation they were guilty of...**
 - **Not just because they sinned...**
 - **Not just because they were unrepentant...but they refused to repent.**
 - (2) **They openly rejected the love and provision of God before all the people around them.**
 - (3) **The seed will be cast out of the land...and for a time they will be classified as... “...not my people.” (lo ammi) when they had previously been “my people” (Ammi)**

- (4) There had to be judgment because they are covenant breakers but restoration will come because God had promised it back I Gen. 3:15 and then again to Abraham and then again to David.

2. Turn to **Jeremiah 31:31-34**—***“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”*** Now let’s consider Jeremiah 31:31-34. Now what is this all about?
- a. **Jeremiah is the one prophet who uses the phrase new covenant.**
 - b. **He uses this phrase only in one passage... Jer. 31:31-34 (see above).**
 - (1) **This is an interesting fact because so much is made about this covenant being different than the Covenant of Grace or at the least yet another covenant.**
 - (2) **We struggle with it when its direct interpretation is found in the NT pertaining to the fulfillment of everything that had been promised.**
 - c. **This idea is developed in other places in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.**
 - (1) **Jer. 32:37-41—*“Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.”***
 - (2) **Jer. 50:4-5—*“In those days and in that time, declares the LORD, the people of Israel and the people of Judah shall come together, weeping as they come, and they shall seek the LORD their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with faces turned toward it, saying, ‘Come, let us join ourselves to the LORD in an everlasting covenant that will never be forgotten.”***
 - (3) **Ezekiel 16:59-63—*“For thus says the LORD God: I will deal with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant, yet I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish for you an everlasting covenant. Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you take your sisters, both your elder and your younger, and I give them to you as daughters, but not on account of the covenant with you. I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am***

the Lord, that you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth again because of your shame, when I atone for you for all that you have done, declares the LORD God.

- (4) Ezekiel 34:25-31- "I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land. And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them. They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them. They shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will provide for them renowned plantations so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the LORD God. And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the LORD God."**
- (5) Ezekiel 37:24-28- "My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore."**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
July 24, 2022

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What were some of the things we said about some of the distinguishing markers between the Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic covenant renewals?
 - a. **Established enforce and maintained by God Himself.**
 - b. **Abraham- size of his people**
 - c. **Moses- structure for His people**
 - d. **David- established the leadership and where it would come from forever.**
2. Are all these covenants separate covenants or are they simply part of a single Covenant of Grace? How would you support your answer since so many in the Church don't like covenant theology?

C. The New Covenant.

3. Now let's consider **Jeremiah 31:31-34**- ***"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."*** A few things to see here. Now what is this all about?
 - d. **This is the same chapter where we read:**
 - (1) **Jer. 31:1- *"At that time, declares the LORD, I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they shall be my people."***
 - (2) **Jer. 31:13-14- *"I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, declares the LORD."***
 - (3) **Jer. 31:30- *"But everyone shall die for his own iniquity. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge."***
 - e. **Jeremiah is the one prophet who uses the phrase new covenant.**
 - f. **He uses this phrase only in one passage... Jer. 31-31-34 (see above).**
 - (3) **This is an interesting fact because so much is made about this covenant being different than the Covenant of Grace or at the very least another covenant.**
 - (4) **We also struggle with it when its direct interpretation is found in the NT pertaining to the fulfillment of everything that had been promised.**
 - g. **God had already placed the law on the hearts of men from Eden...He has codified the law under Moses.**

- h. **He has already told us that He would be our God and we would be His people.**
 - i. So from first blush, what is “new” about this “new covenant”.
4. We looked at a few other passages to set our mind in gear on this. This idea is developed in other places in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.
- a. **Jer. 32:37-41-“ Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.”**
 - b. **Ezekiel 16:59-63-“ For thus says the LORD God: I will deal with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant, yet I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish for you an everlasting covenant. Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you take your sisters, both your elder and your younger, and I give them to you as daughters, but not on account of the covenant with you. I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the Lord, that you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth again because of your shame, when I atone for you for all that you have done, declares the LORD God.”**
 - c. **Ezekiel 37:24-28- “My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children’s children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.”**
- (1) What do these texts say to us?
- **Surety of promises**
 - **Balance in judgement and restoration...blessings and curses.**
 - **God has a plan ...He establishes it...He implemented it...he sustains it...and He will bring it to the end.**
 - **His steadfast love endures forever.**
 - **His faithfulness is without end.**

(2) Is there anything “new” here? I thought we were talking about a New Covenant?

- **Nowhere does Jeremiah condemn the “old” covenant... he condemns the people for breaking it.**
- **Just like Paul does not condemn the law ...he condemns men’s misuse and misunderstanding of the laws purpose.**
- **Even Jeremiah and then Jesus speak and show a continuity ...this is the Covenant of Grace established before time...declared at the beginning for the redemption of His Elect...the Israel of God ...and the blessings of this covenant will continue forever.**

5. Now with all of this in mind...what are some of the “promises” or special emphasis related to the new covenant talked about in the OT?

a. **The return of the exiles to the land.**

(1) **Exile represented the consequences of a people breaking His covenant.**

(2) **But under the new covenant the people will be restored.**

b. **God promises a new heart. This change is promised so that we might experience the promises. Blessing and benefits of the covenant. Ezek. 36:26-32- “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. And I will deliver you from all your uncleanness. And I will summon the grain and make it abundant and play no famine upon you. I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations. Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominations. It is not for your sake that I will act, declares the LORD God; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel.”**

(1) **Look at all the “I wills”...and then the “you will remember”**

(2) **What is He referring to when He says, “It is not for your sake that I will act, declares the LORD God; let that be known to you.”? (see vs. 22)**

(3) **These words are more properly fulfilled before and after Peter’s sermon in Acts 2. (Go to Acts 2:1-36)**

- **The universal application of the Spirit upon all God’s children ...male and female...in a broader way than during the OT period.**
- **The Messiah/offspring...the Christ ...the Promised One has come and all the prophecies are fulfilled in Him and Him alone. Thi sis the One that the Father’s look forward to...the One that Moses and David were types of...the One that had been promised from Gen. 3:15.**

- **Acts 2 is almost a covenant renewal in and of itself...**
 - **Reminding us of what had been predestined to occur...what had been prophesied and what had actually happened and what had been given to His own.**
 - **The only natural response to this message is then... for those of the Elect... Acts 2:37-41-*“Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.’ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this crooked generation.’ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.”***
 - **What promise is being spoken of here?**
 - **Something new? Of course not!**
- (4) With the words from Joel we see the OT Church renewed...a Reformation...if you will.**
- (5) But there is nothing “new” here. The Coming of the Messiah...His death, resurrection and ascension, Church and the promises have all been spoken of before...they are simply fulfilled...TO BE FULFILLED on the Day of Christ’s Second Coming.**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
July 31, 2022

A. Prayer

B. Review- the New Covenant- **Jeremiah 31:31-34**- ***“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”***

1. How does this “covenant compare with the others...namely the one Covenant of Grace?
 - a. **Surety of promises**
 - b. **Balance in judgement and restoration...blessings and curses.**
 - c. **God has a plan ...He establishes it...He implemented it...He sustains it...and He will bring it to the end.**
 - d. **His steadfast love endures forever.**
 - e. **His faithfulness is without end.**
2. Soo... Is there anything “new” here? I thought we were talking about a New Covenant?
 - a. **Nowhere does Jeremiah condemn the “old” covenant... he condemns the people for breaking it.**
 - b. **Just like Paul does not condemn the law ...he condemns men’s misuse and misunderstanding of the laws purpose.**
 - c. **Even Jeremiah and then Jesus speak and show a continuity ...this is the Covenant of Grace established before time...declared at the beginning for the redemption of His Elect...the Israel of God ...and the blessings of this covenant will continue forever.**
3. Now with all of this in mind...what are some of the “promises” or special emphasis related in this “new covenant” and haven’t they already BEEN promised before in the OT?
 - c. **The return of the exiles to the land.**
 - d. **God promises a new heart. This change is promised so that we might experience the promises. Blessing and benefits of the covenant**
 - e. **Full forgiveness of sins comes from this new covenant...see Jer. 31:34 and 33:8-9- “I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me. And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them. They shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it.”**

- (1) Not that there wasn't forgiveness before...but here it speaks to the certainty after Christ's final sacrifice.**
- (2) Isn't this the forgiveness the joy of every believer in Christ today?**
- (3) Those of us who share in His death and resurrection easily identify with this blessing.**

f. Permanency is an essential characteristic of this covenant.

- (1) The other covenants had aspects of permanency but this covenant is unique in that in its wholeness it is everlasting...**
- (2) When Christ returns all things WILL be made NEW and it will remain that way forever more.**
- (3) This covenant IS the Covenant of Grace established in eternity past ...it is permanent...it has proven itself to be.**
- (4) It is also the last covenant renewal because it takes us to where we had be planned to be from before the beginning. It accomplishes all the God had intended in His redemptive plan.**
- (5) This is the day that those of old only saw but didn't experience completely...Heb. 11:13-16- *"These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city."* And yet we are still waiting for the fuller fullness of this New Covenant even though we experience more and have more lasting blessings...Christ has not yet come...fulling completely this New Covenant.**

4. Okay, so what are these to us...especially the one concerning the land?

a. Palestine has not been promised to us or anyone else as a political nation. God doesn't work in politics!

- (1) Palestine is not being promised as a homeland for all believers and Jews as some would want us to believe.**
- (2) Some might insist (and some do) that the "literal" fulfillment of new covenant prophecy requires the return of ethnic Israel to a geographically local in Palestine.**
- (3) Yet the replacement of the typological with the actual, which is a principle of biblical interpretation, obviously points to another kind of "literal" fulfillment. The Israel of God...His Elect... will have the New Earth!**
- (4) We are not Christians Zionist who think that all true believers past and present and future will somehow all congregate and live in the region of Palestine/Israel. Maybe a Harry Potter tent???**

b. The land and the promise made to Adam and to Abraham point to the New Earth...all things made new in the Lord so all is God's.

- (1) Right now God has made Satan the lord of this world...though He still rules...in that day even a better Eden will be.**
- (2) On that day...the whole cosmos will be restored and renewed.**

(3) Think of it this way:

- **Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden to work and keep it...they chose to sin and were cast out.**
- **Abraham was promised a land...and Moses brought the people to this land with Joshua bringing them into it...but they sinned and God cast them out.**
- **This being true all along though God promised restoration under the One He would provide first declared in Gen. 3:15 after man fell in sin.**
- **Christ comes, the Holy Spirit is left behind and we are left with the promise of the Promised Land...the New Earth as Christ will return and make all things new. This ol' world will be burned up and be renewed.**
- **So as a member of the Israel of God, by faith in Jesus Christ...we may look forward to our complete restoration to the "land" that God has promised from the beginning.**

5. The promises of the New Covenant are great ones, to be sure, but are they for us? Are they being fulfilled in this age? Look at these New Testament passages to answer these questions:

- a. **Luke 1:71-75- "...that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath that He swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days."** Which covenant is this referring to?
- b. **Luke 22:20- "And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'"**
- c. **Heb. 10:15-17- "And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,' then He adds, 'I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.'"**
- d. **1 John 2:27- "But the anointing that you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in Him."**
- e. What do these NT texts tell us?
 - (1) **That the promises of the New Covenant do apply to us...today.**
 - (2) **Every time we participate in the Lord's Supper we are participating in one of its principle blessings.**
 - (3) **The Hebrew texts seem to imply that Jeremiah had us in mind when he wrote the text from God.**
 - (4) **And according to John the Holy Spirit gives all the knowledge we need to accept the physical reality of these promises. We who believe don't have to wait to know...as these did...the fullness of life that comes through the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on us.**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
August 7, 2022

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. Looking at **Jeremiah 31:31-34** ***“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”***
2. We immediately recognize that there is NOTHING “new” here so what did we say that these promises mean?
 - a. ***“I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah...”***
 - b. ***“I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.”***
 - c. ***“I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”***
 - d. ***“I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”***
 - (1) I will renew the one true Covenant of Grace with them.
 - (2) The provisions of that Covenant have never changed but they must be renewed since all that I have taught has been rejected or relegated to the side of their lives.
 - (3) Much like the flood, the people who died in the wilderness, the people will pay for their sins and die in the campaign and then in Exile, but as there is always judgment there is also restoration so Jeremiah prophesies that God will renew His covenant through One who is better...who will fulfill all things...and that One's complete fulfillment is yet to come...even unto Christ's Second coming.
 - (4) Vs. 34 seems to be clearly still in the future when Christ comes to make all things new after the judgment.

- C. Continuing in the “New Covenant”

6. Why was it necessary for God to make a new covenant of grace with man...or did He?
 - a. **One way to answer this is that the reason God entered into a new or another covenant renewal was because of the limitations of the old covenant.**
 - (1) The old covenant (think Older Testament....think older in the sense of not fulfilled...the time prior to Christ's 1st Coming) was not sufficient to accomplish God's full purpose of grace as given to Adam and more particularly to Abraham.

(2) In the words of the writer to the Hebrews the old covenant was not "faultless"...it had definite limitations, so what are we being told in these passages?

- **Heb. 8:6-7- *"But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant He mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second."***
- **Heb. 8:13-9:1-*"In speaking of a new covenant, He makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and man earthly place of holiness."***
- **Heb. 9:15-21- *"Therefore He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.' And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."***
- **Hebrews 13:20-21 *"Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."***
 - **"New" is associated with "better"**
 - **The contrast is actually made between the Mosaic Covenant...specifically the Law...and the better covenant the Covenant of Grace and the mediation of Christ.**
 - **All of Hebrews is heavy on the contrast between Moses and Christ...Christ is better than...**
 - **The Law directed the life of Israel for so long...it defined their sin and it defined their lifestyle and even though there was no salvation from it... it still stood as the penultimate and pre-eminent means God used to teach His people obedience before Christ.**
 - **Also, it revealed His love for His elect...His remnant...the true Israel by giving them a codified standard to live by. It couldn't be lived out perfectly as the hence the need, until Christ for the sacrifices.**

- Hence the Old Covenant... mostly represents the difference between the Law of sin and death and the law of the Spirit of Life that has set us and all God's children free in Christ Jesus. Rom. 8:2
- The Law proved itself ineffective because it was never intended for anything other than the revelation of sin and the need of a redeemer...it was powerless to justify or satisfy or sanctify the soul....not being its intended purpose.
- So the New Covenant is bringing back the Abrahamic covenant and relating to that which makes the law obsolete in that keeping the law allowed for "momentary" forgiveness but not on-going forgiveness...now complete forgiveness is in Christ....the offspring talked about and promised to Abraham...
- The "New Covenant" of Jeremiah is like the Abrahamic because it stresses the unconditional nature of God's grace.
- God by sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh provides the promised remedy to the Covenant of Works broken by Adam.
- Since the law is powerless to save, Christ is "mighty to save"...hence fulfilling the promise of Gen. 3:15
- Octavius Winslow reminds us concerning God's grace over the law: *"Salvation is by grace; and not to him that works, but to him that believes, the precious boon is given. The turpitude of your guilt, the number of your transgressions, the depth of your unworthiness, the extent of your poverty, the distance that you have wandered from God, are no valid objections, no insurmountable difficulties, to your being saved. Jesus saves sinners 'to the uttermost,'- to the uttermost degree of guilt- to the uttermost limit of unworthiness- to the uttermost extent of time. And not only let us look to Christ for salvation, but also for strength. Is the law weak? 'Christ is the power of God.' He is prepared to perfect His strength in our weakness. And the felt conviction of that weakness will be the measure of our strength. Without Him we can do nothing; but strong in His might, we can do all things. 'In the Lord I have righteousness and strength.' And 'in Him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.'"*
- Christ sacrifice meets the necessary requirements of the Law as promised in the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace...for the redeemer of God's elect has come and given Himself as a ransom for many. Rom. 8:1-4-*"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."*

- **The Hebrews 9:15-21 passages actually ties Christ's salvation all the way back to include all OT saints as well...all God's elect from all peoples, places and times.**
 - **The Hebrew 13 passage ties the new covenant with the eternal covenant ...the Covenant of Grace.**
- b. Many struggle with the supposed dichotomy between the Old and New Testaments...but there is none...the NT is simply a continuation and fulfillment of the OT. The New Testament gospel represents the Covenant of Grace and the OT is represented by the Law.**
- c. The OT, as the author of Hebrews keeps trying to make clear was a type of the fulfilled Abrahamic/New Covenant...Covenant of Grace.**
 - (1) The Aaronic Priesthood was merely a type of the priesthood of Melchizedek ...the priesthood of Christ.**
 - (2) The sacrifices were types of the ultimate sacrifice made by Christ**
 - (3) Both of these were abrogated in the New Covenant/ Covenant of Grace.**
 - (4) One God. One people. One salvation for all time.**
 - (5) God's Word is whole but it moves from limited fulfillment to complete fulfillment at the consummation.**
 - (6) From imperfect because of men to perfect because of the son of God.**
- d. The word "new" spoken of here speaks of a fulfillment and a fulfilling of what had been promised before on the day of Christ's second Coming.**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
August 14, 2022

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. The Author of Hebrews makes it clear that the OLD Covenant (think the Law of Moses) was inadequate...it had limitations...wasn't "faultless". **Heb. 8:6-7-
"But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant He mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second."** What would you say were some of the "limitations" of the old covenant?
 - a. **Aaronic priesthood limited.**
 - b. **One limitation was that the Old Testament sacrifices had no power in themselves to save.**
 - c. **Another limitation was that the knowledge of the work of Christ as revealed in the Old Testament sacrifices was not as full or as clear as the knowledge revealed in the New Testament.**
 - d. **Still another limitation was the fact that the Holy Spirit was not given in fullness during the Old Testament dispensation.**
 - e. **God's Word is whole but it moves from limited fulfillment to complete fulfillment at the consummation. From imperfect because of men to perfect because of the son of God.**
 - f. **Finally, there was the limitation that under the "old" covenant of grace, the offer of salvation was confined almost entirely to the nation of Israel.**
 - (1) **True, to be sure, there were some proselytes (Gentile converts) who shared the blessings of the covenant by becoming Jews and adopting the Jewish faith.**
 - (2) **But for the most part, the Gentiles were not included in the covenant of grace as administered under the Old Testament. God had a new covenant or better covenant of grace for man.**
2. Look at **Galatians 3:19-29- "Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."**

- a. **As we have said from the beginning this and all the other Covenant renewals are not new covenants...**
 - (1) **They are renewals of the existing covenant...each providing more understanding and access to God and His grace through following in His ways.**
 - (2) **Also, providing us with a continually growing framework in which to understand and know God as we as a “people...a nation” mature to the place of that understanding...the organic growth of the church.**
 - (3) **We are not dispensationalists who seeking a solution to these covenant renewals...gave us different dispensation because obviously men thwarted God’s plan and He had to start all over again...hence the need for the Old Covenant and the New Covenant as two separate things.**
- b. **Also, there is no such dichotomy in God’s Word...it has been one continuous covenant of grace from before the beginning...**
 - (1) **The Covenant of Works was put in place for us to see the level of perfection required...like the law something that man would never be able to attain to on our own.**
 - (2) **The Covenant renewal with Noah re-establishes the relationship between God and His people after God cleanses the earth of the extreme sinfulness that it had lowered itself to.**
 - (3) **Then came the fuller expression of the Covenant of Grace at the renewal with Abraham. Fuller in that we were first introduced to this covenant being in affect in Gen. 3:15.**
 - (4) **But with the Law came greater understanding of who God is and How He loves us as well as how we ...His elect are to love Him...and the standard from which He will use to judge the non-elect.**
- c. **Now Christ has come to fulfill the Covenant of Works as the One perfect man...as well as the Covenant of Grace as the perfect sacrifice...substitutionary atonement for all who are Gods...that God chose before the foundations of the earth and the ones who were given to the Son for His own.**
- d. **So from a human perspective we see that the Covenant of Grace has always been...the older covenant and the newer covenant, as some theologians want to speak of the Old and New Testaments...are meaning the growing expression of that one Covenant of Grace.**

Covenants Study
Sunday School
August 21, 2022

C. Prayer

D. Review

3. Last week we ended with some of the things that are different/better under Christ's administration of the covenant? What makes this covenant "new"?
 - a. **The long-awaited seed of the woman promised by God in Gen. 3:15 has come and has fulfilled the law portion of the covenant of grace. Christ fulfills and satisfies the penalty of the Laws.**
 - (1) **The long awaited and anticipated "offspring" of Abraham has come.**
 - (2) **And that one son of David who would rule over all has come and is coming again.**
 - b. **Whereas the first Adam failed miserably to keep the covenant of works, the 2nd and last Adam, Jesus Christ, kept it perfectly. As God and Man the only One who could.**
 - c. **Man received a clearer and fuller revelation of grace than that received by the Old Testament saints.**
 - (1) **No longer need men look through types and symbols which were but shadows of the Christ who was to come. Henceforth, when Christ returns we will see Christ face to face.**
 - (2) **As John testified, *"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14). This will become reality when all things are made new.**
 - d. **Under the Old Covenant, God's people desperately awaited the coming One; now we celebrate the risen, ascended and interceding One who perfectly fulfilled all the righteous demands of the law.**
 - e. **Jesus' coming marked the fulfilling and doing away with the requirements of civil and ceremonial laws of the OT as requirements for holiness.**
 - (1) **But they were not done away with totally...principles from them still apply in some cases.**
 - (2) **Men are no longer bound by these laws. See Mark 7:14-23- *"And He called the people to Him again and said to them, 'Hear me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.'* And when He had entered the house and left the people, His disciples asked Him about the parable. And He said to them, *'Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?'* (Thus He declared all foods clean.) And He said, *'What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.'*" By doing this Jesus declared that these rituals were never meant to make people morally clean or unclean.**

(3) Think Psalm 51:16-17- *"For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."* ...

- **Actually, David and the Prophets say this a lot...that it is by grace alone that God delights in His people. So not even this is a New Covenant concept...but bedrock in the Covenant of Grace.**
- **Without faith and love from a repentant and changed heart these outward expressions are worthless before God as is all our outward expressions of the faith we claim. *"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."***

(4) Jesus' teaching is designed to rebuke the Pharisees and the teachers of the law for adding to the Word of God such requirements that were never intended to keep His children from outside from getting inside.

f. The knowledge of the Lord was no longer to be confined to the nation Israel. The time of Israel's separation from the nations came to an end...the church (the true Israel) is sent into the entire world to do what the original Israel failed to do. In fact, the full knowledge of the Lord was to come to all nations.

(1) Matt. 28:19- *"Go, therefore and make disciples..."*

(2) Mark 16:15- *"Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."*

(3) Acts 1:8- *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth."*

g. God now has poured out the Holy Spirit in greater abundance and power than in Old Testament times.

(1) Christ had revealed to His disciples that *"the Holy Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified."*

(2) He had instructed His disciples to wait in Jerusalem *"for the promise of the Father....John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.... But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you"* (Acts 1:4, 5, 8).

(3) On the day of Pentecost these promises were fulfilled and the Holy Spirit was poured forth in great abundance and power upon the church of Christ.

(4) The Holy Spirit applies God's grace to men's hearts by giving them the faith to lay hold upon Christ.

h. Men from every nation and tribe and tongue can now worship the true God in spirit and truth. See Jesus and the Samaritan woman...John 4:19-26. Jesus makes clear to the Gentile hearers and readers that they are included in His family.

i. Abraham and Moses received rich blessings indeed from the hand of their God!

(1) God promised to Abraham, *"I will be your God."* This is the heart of all the rich blessings of God's covenant.

- (2) Moses was told God's personal name...that he and the children of Israel would know who God is and how much He loved them. *"I am that I am."*
- (3) The children of Israel were regarded as *sons* *"...and you will be my people."*
- But they did not receive as rich an inheritance as do we.
 - Their blessings were more external, temporal, and earthly.
 - Many of their blessings centered in an earthly land and in external symbols—though not exclusively so.
 - Our blessings are more internal, spiritual, and heavenly.
 - In the Old Testament period the law was more external—written upon tables of stone.
 - By faith we walk in the presence of our Savior. The fruit of the Spirit are made to abound within our souls, even *"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control."*
- (4) There have been a lot of *"I WILL's"* thrown around by God in these covenant renewals...what about Jesus? Are they of the same force? Do we consider them to be so? These are just some of the many of Jesus' *"I will"* statements...covenantal language if we would only hear it!
- Matt. 4:19- *"And He said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.'"*
 - Matthew 10:32-33 *"So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven."*
 - Matthew 11:28- *"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*
 - John 6:37- *"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out."*
 - John 14:18- *"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."*
 - Are these promises any less powerful than God's promises made in His covenant renewals? Why or why not?
- (5) Jesus' coming and the establishment of the Church ...the Temple... His kingdom ...and now we await His Coming again when He makes all things new and we get to fully experience all the blessings of the New Covenant forever.
- (6) These are all "new" in the sense that the prophecy has been fulfilled...
- e. They are not "NEW" because those things were only looked forward to ...longed after...by the OT saints that knew they were coming...as types and prophesy
 - f. But they are NEW as in they have found their fulfillment when Christ came...and their complete fulfillment in His 2nd Coming.

4. Just for grins...Look at **Isaiah 4:2-6**-***"In that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel. And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, when the LORD shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning. Then the LORD will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy. There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain."*** How does this passage help us to understand the Covenant of Grace and it being an all-inclusive covenant?

a. **John 15:1-11**- ***"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."***

(1) In this passage just like the Isaiah one we see God's gracious care of His own.

(2) We also see His judgement on those who aren't His.

(3) Think again of **Gen. 3:15**- **John 15**

- The seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.
- Those that are pruned to produce fruit and those who are cut off and thrown into the fire.
- Or from **Rom. 8:5**-***"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit."*** – Those of the flesh in contrast to those of the Spirit.
- A constant picture in the Bible that is clearly part and parcel of the Covenant of Grace...blessings and curses.

b. **Phil. 1:6**- ***"And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."***

c. **Hebrews 12:7-12**- ***"It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected***

them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees..."