

What is Covenant Theology?

March 13, 2022

Harvest Fellowship PCA

Part VII Christ – The Covenant of Consummation

An Overview

Covenantal Framework & Jesus

Covenant Map (notional with arrows)

Review- What is a covenant?

Covenant established by Jesus

The Covenant of Consummation*

Covenant established by Jesus

The Details of the New Covenant and Jesus our High Priest

The Consummation: People of God, The Promise, The Place – Israel of God

Most Frequent Question to Ask

Remarks – Semper Reformada

References

FRAMEWORK – Covenant of Redemption

Covenant of Works

Between God and man, requiring
perfect, personal obedience,

OFFERING LIFE

AND

THREATENING DEATH

Covenant of Grace

Between God and the ELECT, requiring FAITH,
Offering FORGIVENESS

AND

ETERNAL LIFE

Secured by God's promise

(or oath) (e.g. John 3:16)

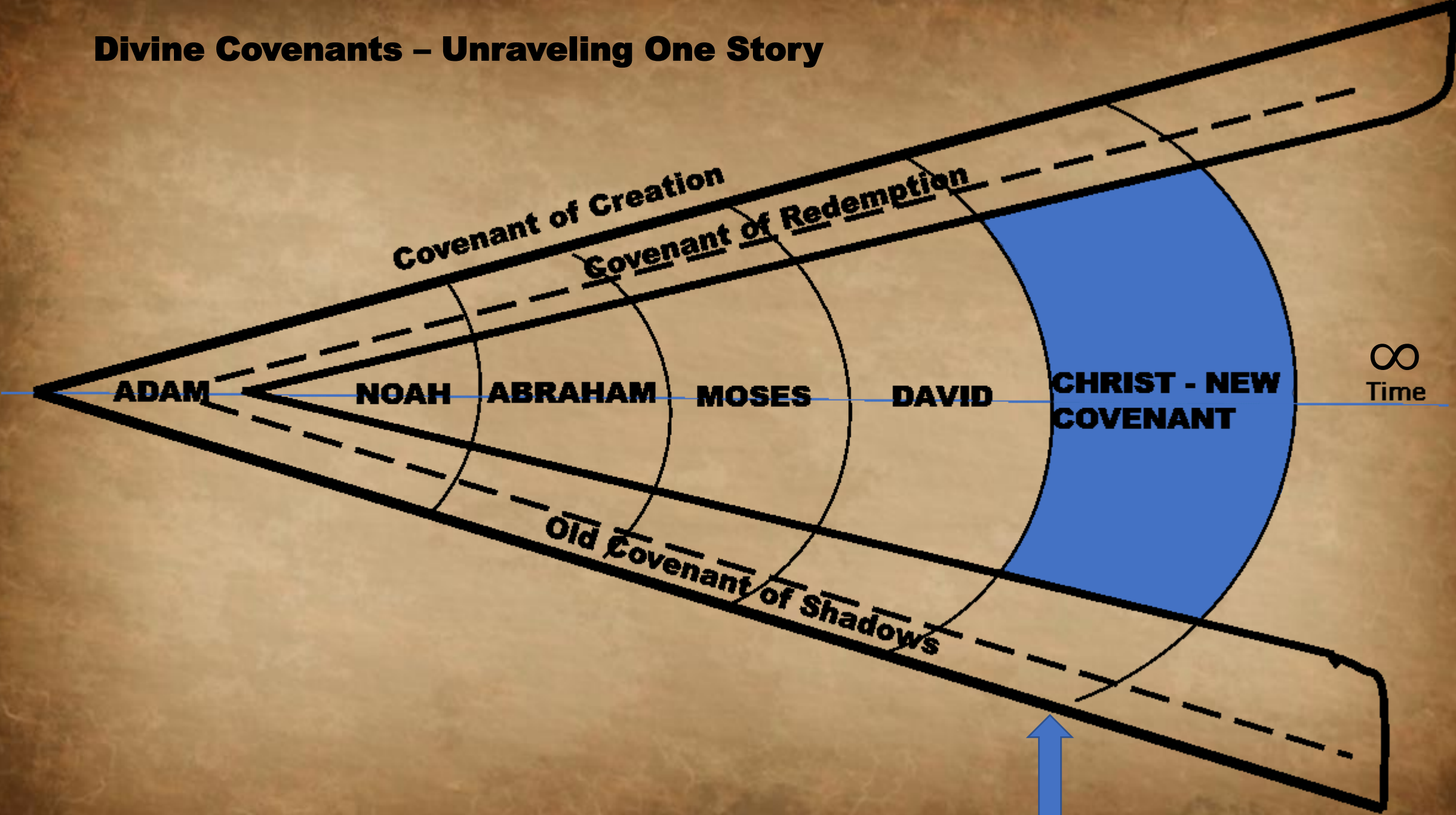
**Today's topic:
Of Jesus Christ –**

The Covenant of the Consummation

(*working terminologies and ideas)

Reference: Elements attributed to Rev Richard Phillips ; Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC

Divine Covenants – Unraveling One Story



Reference: O Palmer Robertson: “Christ of the Covenants pg 167-200

Review: What is a Covenant?

- How does God's work of establishing a covenant differ from a contract?
 - **A COVENANT** is a formal, binding agreement, a compact. It is a seal between two or more parties, especially for the performance of some action. It had stipulations of rewards and consequences if the agreement was broken.
 - In the biblical context, it is derived from the root word meaning **"TO CUT"**. It was usually formal, serious and had life and death implications. When a covenant was established or sealed, it was done with an animal sacrifice and sealed in blood. (Merriam Webster dictionary)
 - In the Bible, a covenant can only be established and sealed by an **oath**, which usually involves an **oath-taking ceremony** like circumcision (that is, in ancient Israel, the act of circumcising a child constituted a covenant oath). The oath is so important in a covenant that the word oath is sometimes used as a **synonym for covenant** (cf. Deuteronomy. 29:12, 14)

What is a Covenant?

It is another aspect that speaks of a THEME/ STRUCTURE of how to know what we know (ontology); of God saving me from Eternity “past”

- ... a covenant is a relationship of “oaths and bonds” and involves mutual, though not necessarily equal commitments...
 - Michael Horton
- **A covenant is a bond in blood sovereignly administered**
 - **O. Palmer Robertson**
 - The Covenant is a means where God established His relationship with man in the form of agreements, oaths, bilateral agreements, unilateral pronouncements, and Royal grants.
 - It is **ONE STORY**, with different administrations (methods of revelation of the same purpose – **REDEMPTION**).

Covenant established by Jesus:

Matthew 26:26 – 29

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” ²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸ **for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.** ²⁹ I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.”

BIG Question:

**How was this new covenant efficacious?
(or How DID JESUS make this work?)**

The words were “vivified” from Jeremiah’s prophecy centuries before, and now works because of Christ’s work...

The Provisions of the Covenant

Jeremiah 31:31 - 34

³¹ “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,

³² 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.

³³ 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.

³⁴ 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.”

Hebrews 8: 8 - 12

⁸ “...Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

⁹ 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. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord.

¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel

after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

¹¹ And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.

¹² For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”

Key Provisions of NEW COVENANT to REMEMBER:

From Hebrews 8: 10 – 12 & Jeremiah 31:33

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD:

- 1) I will put my law within them, and**
- 2) I will write it on their hearts. And....**
- 3) I will be their God, and they shall be my people.**
- 4) They shall ALL know ME; from the least to the greatest**
- 5) I will be merciful toward their iniquities**
- 6) I will remember their sins no more**

Characteristics of this New (Divine) Covenant:

- It is UNCONDITIONAL**
- It was initiated by GOD ..or It was inaugurated by Christ**
- It is constantly working transforming enemies into sons of God (Romans 5: 10)**
- It is in effect NOW**
- It is available to the Elect – by Faith practicing Obedience (Romans 12:1)**

Details established in the New Blood of Christ

Note the parallel passage to emphasize the importance of Christ's work NOW ..

Exodus 24: 6 – 8

..from the Moses' role as Priest

⁵ And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD.

⁶ And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar.

⁷ 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."

⁸ 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."

Hebrews 9: 18

...to Christ our High Priest at work:

- ⁸ Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood.
- ¹⁹ 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,
- ²⁰ saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you."
- ²¹ And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship.
- ²² **Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.**

Other passages on the New Covenant- Details established in the New Blood of Christ

Hebrews 9: 27 -28

²³ Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

²⁴ For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

²⁵ **Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own,**

²⁶ for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, **he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.**

²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,

²⁸ **so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.**

Knowing more of the New Covenant- Details established in the New Blood of Christ

Recall : The Blood of Christ that washes away our sin...

- In the past, Isaiah spoke of a prophet who:

...because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors; yet **he bore the sin of many,**
and makes **intercession for the transgressors.**

(I Corinthians)

- **He entered history as a man**

- ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:
- ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(Matthew 1: 21 – 23)

Knowing more of the New Covenant- Details established in the New Blood of Christ

How the Blood of Christ PROVIDES a BETTER COVENANT:

- **He has established a sacrament for us to always remember how we no longer need to be under the law (and follow the Mosaic Covenant)**

²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

(I Corinthians 11; 25)

- **Christ established a BETTER Ministry**
 - ⁶ 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.
 - ⁷ For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. **(Hebrews 8: 6-7)**

Knowing more of the New Covenant- Details established in the New Blood of Christ

How the Blood of Christ PROVIDES a BETTER COVENANT:

- **Christ established a BETTER Ministry – HOW?**

byRedemption Through the Blood of Christ

- ¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)
- ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves **but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.**
- ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh,
- ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

(Hebrews 9: 11 – 14, 15)

Knowing more of the New Covenant- Details established in the New Blood of Christ

How the Blood of Christ PROVIDES a BETTER COVENANT:

- **Christ established a BETTER Ministry than Moses: – HOW?**

byRedemption Through the Blood of Christ

- ¹⁵ **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.
- ¹⁶ For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established.
- ¹⁷ For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.
- ¹⁸ **Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood.**
- ¹⁹ **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,**
- ²⁰ **saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.”**
- ²¹ **And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship.**
- ²² **Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.**

(Hebrews 9: 11 – 14, 15)

The New Covenant – fulfilled and established in Christ

- **Biblical Reference (Jer 31:31-40, Luk 22:14 – 23, Hebrews 8:8-12)**
- **“The cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in MY BLOOD” (Luke 22:20 (see also..Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, and John 6:54))**
- **Participating Parties: God and Christ’s new People (Eph 1:11-14)**
- **Covenant Relationship Type: Royal Grant**
- **Covenant Conditions and Obligations: None (Unconditional)**
- **Sanctions and Curses: None; but those who do not believe in the Son are condemned (John 3: 18 – 21)**
- **Promise and Blessing: Righteousness of Christ imputed to me & Christ taking my sin (“double imputation” – II Cor 5:21)**
- **Token / Sign Baptism / Lord’s Supper (reference)**
- **WHAT does it mean to ME? Salvation by FAITH, through Jesus Christ’ atoning work in me (John 6: 29,6:35, John 11:25, Acts 4:12, Romans 6: 23, Romans 10:13)**

The Consummation: People of God, The Promise, The Place – Israel of God

Premise:

- **The Divine Covenant is a Single Covenant expressed in different ways (various administrations).**
- **From Adam to Christ, three Key Themes emerge:**
 - a. **People of God**
 - b. **Promise**
 - c. **Land The Place**

God's Divine Covenant Established with	People of God	Promise	LAND	What I inherited
Adam	Through Adam all die (Genesis 2: 16 – 17, Romans 5:12)	Eternal Life (Genesis 2: 9,16)	The Garden (Genesis 2: 15)	Death (Genesis 2:17, Romans 5: 12 – 14)
Noah	Through Noah the earth is preserved for the gospel harvest	Never again will a flood destroy the earth	The earth (Genesis 9:1)	The Earth is preserved, for gospel harvest (Isaiah 55:11, Luke 10:2)
Abraham	A new people from his loins and Sarah's womb (Genesis 12,15, 17, I Peter 2:9)	Offspring as numerous as the number of stars in the sky (Genesis 15:5)	Promised Land Genesis 12:7, 15: 18 The GREATER CITY: Hebrews 11:10	We are the offspring and receive the promises by becoming Abraham's offspring through faith in Christ (Galatians 3: 9,14)
Moses	Israel – a people of slaves freed by the I AM Exodus 6:7	"I will be your God, and you will be MY PEOPLE (Exodus 6: 7, 19:5)	The Promised Land – Canaan (Exodus 3: 4, 8)	The Church is the New Israel, that is grafted to the vine that is Christ (Hebrews 8:8 – 12, Romans 11:11-24)
David	Establish a house of David and a throne for Israel and the Gentile world (II Samuel 7:13)	A royal Son on David's throne (2 Samuel 7:1-17, Luke 1:31-33)	Rest in Israel	Through this Royal line we will get a Royal King : Christ
Christ- the new Covenant	People whom God gave to the Son (Matt 17, Jer 31:31– 40, Luke 22:14 – 23, Hebrews 8:8 -12)	Imputed Righteousness, Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Eternal Life (John 3: 16, Romans 5: 8-12)	Paradise, My Father's House (John 14, Luke 23:43, Revelation 2;7)	Personal salvation through faith in the name of Jesus Christ. (Romans 10:9-10, 13)

Reference: Some content from Rev Richard Phillips ; Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC

Key Take Away.. God's PURPOSE for you and me

From Jeremiah 31:33

³³ 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 point to Christ in His role as High Priest (John 17: 6 – 9, 26)

⁶ “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. ⁸ For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹ I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours...²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”..

Most Frequent Question to ask..and some Answers

1) Are the Divine Covenants different from one another?

The Divine covenants (as opposed to ordinary covenants) are a SINGLE STORY of God's redemptive work to bring a people to Himself. Each covenant distinct but one follows the other, and expands on the theme of the redemption of a people (of the elect; OT and NT), promise of a place(land) and the pursuit of God's own possession (us).

2) How does each covenant affect me?

In and through Christ, "all the promises of God find their "YES" in Him (II Cor 1:20). In Ch

3) Does the LAW (or Ten Commandments) affect Christians (the Elect) now?

Yes, the purpose of the New Covenant is to fulfill the benefits and provision of the old Covenants; which is to heed to the call to faith, the Obedience required and fulfilled through Christ.

4) How were the elect in the Old Testament saved (prior to Christ)?

Since Adam's fall, people were saved through FAITH in Christ and HIS gospel. But Christ and HIS gospel were presented to them differently according to a particular covenant.

e.g."Abraham believed God and I was counted to him for righteousness (Gen 15:6 ,Rom 4:3, Gal 3:6 Heb 11:3)"

5) Will there be another Covenant after the New Covenant?

NO. Recall Jesus said: "I am the ALPHA and OMEGA, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

(Revelations 22:13).

Remarks...Semper Reformada (always reforming)

- a) The Covenant as a theological foundation to show God's Redemption story is constantly improving
- b) This particular Covenant topic took the longest to assemble since it was explicit in one place, but the provisions and details needed to be gathered from various parts of Scripture and knitted together to form a coherent whole.
- c) I only have culled the teachings of three theologians. They were not always consistent with each other. When I went online, to sites like Ligonier and Gospel Coalition, I got more diverse opinions!
- d) Due to lack of time, there were more topics that were not expressed in this series. But this was a start!

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The “ covenant theology in all respects (is) (not) definitive and there is no further need for correction ,modification and expansion. Theology must always be undergoing reformation. The human understanding is IMPERFECT.

However architectonic may be the systematic constructions of any one generations or group of generations...there always remains the need for correction and reconstruction so that the structure may be brought into closer approximation to the SCRIPTURE and the reproduction be a more faithful transcript or reflection of heavenly exemplar.....but with the help of classic covenant theologians,..we can contribute to a ore biblically articulated and formulated construction of the covenant concept and of its application to our faith, love, and hope.”

- John Murray pg 4 - 5

Reference: John Murray :”The Covenant of Grace

References

(used in this lesson)

- O. Palmer Robertson, The Christ of the Covenants
- Michael S. Horton, God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology
- Understanding Covenant Theology; by Rev. Richard D Phillips, Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC
- John Murray “The Covenants of Grace” (1953)
- Reformation Study Bible
- Bible Gateway website
 - URL: <https://www.biblegateway.com>
 - Accessed: February XX, 2022

Questions