



Chapter Nine: God's Covenants



Covenant is a relation between the Lord and a people whom he has sovereignly consecrated to himself. He rules over them by the sanctions of his law and fulfills in and through them the purposes of his grace.”

Covenant & Law

Covenant & Grace

God unilaterally & graciously imposes his covenant.

By his power, God maintains & enforces its sanctions: he blesses obedience & curses disobedience.

God declares the covenant law and holds us responsible for keeping it.

By his own authority, God imposes promises & warnings.

Covenant & Presence

God is with us.

Covenant is about relationship: God enters into our life, loving, guiding, disciplining.

The Covenant Document

The name of the Great King — “I am the Lord your God...” (Ex 20:1 a)

Historical Prologue — “... who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Ex 20:1b). Point: grace comes first!

The general law — “You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex 20:3). Point: the fundamental law is love!

Specific commands — “no idols ... no coveting” (Ex 20:4-17). Point: love takes on feet!

Sanctions — e.g., “visiting iniquity ... showing steadfast love” (Ex 20:5; Dt 27-30)

Administration — Dt 31-34, esp. the song of witness

Covenant Basics

Covenant of Works — The failed test in the Garden (Hos 6:7; WCF 7.2; WSC 12). Point: Christ obeyed where Adam disobeyed.

Covenant of Grace — A summary of the biblical covenants by which God saves us (WCF 7.3; WLC 32).

Pactum Salutis (Pact of Salvation or “Covenant of Redemption”) — The Son agrees to come for us (Jn 10:29; 17:6; Gal 4:4; Rom 5:19; Php 2:5-12; Heb 5:7-9). Point: we are covenant-breakers in Adam, but covenant-keepers “in Christ” (1 Co 15:22).

Blessings & Condition — The blessing is life in Christ (Jn 10:10). The terms of the covenant have been met by Christ; we are simply asked to trust him for eternal life ... faith earns nothing, but is simply “the empty hand that reaches out to receive God’s unmerited favor, his grace.”

Frame, SBL, ch. 9



Adam

Grace — Humanity is spared its death-sentence.

Noah

Grace — Family of 8 saved to re-found humanity.

Abraham

Grace — God chooses one family through whom to redeem humanity.

Moses

Grace — A single, righteous Ruler, God's son (2Sm 7:14; Ps 2), raised from shepherd boy to king ... for a united people.

David

Grace — I will put my Law ... I will write ... I will forgive ... I will remember their sins no more. I will be their God & they will be my people (Jer 31:31-33; 33:21-22; Ezk 34:23-31; 36:24-28).

New Covenant

Law — Cultural Mandate stays intact. Trust God for the Seed that will crush the Serpent's head.

Law — Build an ark. Renewal of Cultural Mandate, with adjustments. Trust God that he will not destroy again by flood.

Law — Come out from Ur ... Circumcise yourself & your sons. Offer your son.

Law — Decalogue (a path of life and a magnet for sin). Circumcise your hearts. Perform sacrifices.

Law — "You (David) and your sons must be faithful" (2Sm 7:14; Ps 89:30-37).

Law — The law will be in us, on our hearts. We will know God.



Promise — Children will come. The land will produce. A Redeemer will come.

Promise — God won't do this again ... the dove & the olive branch.

Promise — A homeland. A seed (Isaac, not Esau). A ram in Isaac's place.

Promise — The Promised Land. Redemption by blood (under ceremonial pictures of animal sacrifices, feasts, prophets, priests, kings).

Promise — A Greater Son (Pss 2, 22, 72 & 110)

Promise — A final sacrifice that will once and for all deal with sin (Heb 8-10). God will be present (incarnation, pouring out of Spirit, *parousia*). We will receive a better homeland (compare Jer 31 :27, 38-40 with Heb II:13-16; 12:18-24; Rev 21-22)