

"What We Believe"

Session 7

Covenant: God Pursues

I) INTRODUCTION

- A) Humanity has sinned against God in a dark, detestable and grievous way. It started with Adam and Eve and continues today with us. God created the Earth for us, gave us companionship and has done nothing but bless us and show us grace.
- B) Our response to Him was sin, damnable, horrible, inexcusable sin.
- C) Because God is by nature a Trinitarian God, He is a God of covenant.
- D) And this is why God's response to our sin was covenant.

II) What Is A Covenant?

- A) According to the Bible, a covenant is an unchangeable, divinely imposed legal agreement between God and man that determines the conditions of their relationship.
- B) A covenant is like a will, in that the person receiving the will can't change it, but can only receive it or reject it. God has determined the covenant, which means that both parties aren't equal. God is greater than we are.
- C) A covenant is unchangeable. They can be suspended or replaced, but never changed once they have gone forth.
- D) In the Old Testament the word *covenant* appears hundreds of times.
 - 1) Job made a covenant with his eyes (Job 31:1) Brotherly love is spoken of as covenant (1st Sam. 18:3) Marriage is spoken of as a covenant (Prov. 2:16-17) The elders of the Israel made a covenant with King David (2nd Sam. 5:3).
- E) The establishing of a covenant is called "cutting covenant" and it usually includes the slaughtering of an animal. A covenant that comes from God means that there is no bargaining, or negotiations which means that God conceived it, determined it and God Himself dispensed it.
- F) In the Bible there are hundreds of lesser covenants and five major covenants.
 - 1) Noah and his family (**Genesis 6:18; 9:8-17**).
 - 2) Abraham and his descendants (**Genesis 12:1-3; 15:18; 17:1-14; 22:16-18**).
 - 3) Moses and the Israelites (**Exodus 3:4-10; 6:7; 19:5-6; 24:8**).
 - 4) David and the kingdom of Israel (**2nd Samuel 7:8-19; Psalms 89:3**).
 - 5) The New Covenant of Jesus and the Church (**Matthew 16:17-19; 26:26; Luke 22:20**).
- G) Covenants themselves don't solve the problems, but rather they point to Jesus who solves every problem.

III) What Is The Noachic Covenant?

- A) Noah's story begins in Genesis 5:1 and continues through Genesis 10:32 with Noah's calling taking place in Genesis 6:9-14.
- B) **Genesis 6:9-14** *"This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. And Noah had three sons; Shem, Ham and Japheth. The earth was also corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth."*
- C) When the Bible says that Noah was a just man, perfect in his generation, this doesn't mean that he was better than everyone else alive or that he earned God's favor. This means that Noah found grace and favor in God's sight, and God's hand upon Noah made him great.
- D) God begins to tell Noah that He is going to destroy the earth, and that Noah is to build an ark, call everyone, including the animals to come into it before the flood breaks out and destroys, flooding the entire earth, including the death of everyone who refuses to get aboard.
- E) This ark would be the present day size of a giant battleship that could hold 522 modern day railroad-boxcars. Noah would spend a huge portion of his life building this boat with mostly only help from his sons, in an environment where it had never rained. (**Genesis 6:1-22**).
- F) **Genesis 7:1-8:19** tells us that God spoke to Noah, his family and the animals to board the Ark as it was starting to rain. The rain would fall for 40 days and 40 nights, destroying every living person except for Noah and his family who boarded the Ark.
- G) **Genesis 8:20-22** tells us when Noah got off the boat, and saw that his family were the only ones left on the earth, that Noah was moved by the grace of God toward him and built an altar, sacrificed an animal and worshipped. God's response to Noah's faith in building an ark and worshipping Him was to give him a sign in a rainbow connected to a promise.
- H) But **Genesis 9:18-28** tells us that that Noah responded to the grace of God by having a party, got drunk and passed out naked. Though all the wicked people of the earth were killed, the sin nature from Adam is still fully alive inside Noah.
- I) The sign of the covenant internally was faith, as we seen Noah building an ark solely on God's word. The sign of the covenant externally is the rainbow which was God's promise to humanity that He would never flood the earth again.

IV) What Is The Abrahamic Covenant?

- A) God hadn't spoken to humanity between Noah's covenant and Abraham's covenant. Abram was nothing more than Noah, a sinner living among a scattered people. We don't know much about Abram before his calling other than his wife was barren and he was living in Haran.
- B) In **Genesis 12:1-3** God spoke to him and told him to leave his father's house, that his barren wife would become pregnant, that he would become the father of all nations and that through his seed would come the answer for sin and death.

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- C) **Genesis 12:4-9** tells us that Abram obeyed God by packing up his family and following God into a place he knew not of.
- D) God's pattern from Adam to Noah is that though He pursued them, man failed God. But this didn't stop God from again pursuing those who fail Him. Abraham would be no different.
- E) In **Genesis 16** he would force the birth of this promised nation in his own power by sleeping with his wife's maidservant and birthing Ishmael.
- F) In the midst of Abram's sin, God would come and confirm His covenant with him to make him a father of all nations through circumcision. Circumcision began in **Genesis 19** when Abram was 99 years old. Because of the way that Abram responded to God in the midst of his fall, God gave him the promise that he would change his name from Abram (Exalted father) to Abraham (Father of a multitude).
- G) In **Genesis 21**, Abraham and his wife Sarah would receive the promised child Isaac, in whom not only would the nations be blessed, but would also come the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Seed of God who would fulfill all things within Himself. (**Galatians 3:16**).
- H) **Genesis 22:1-19** says that God asked Abraham to take this promised son, and go up the hill and sacrifice him to God. This would mean that Abraham would dismember his son, sacrifice him and burn him on the altar before God. Abraham left the following morning, as an act of instant obedience. Just as Abraham has the knife in the air about to sacrifice his son, an angel would shout his name, commanding him to stop.
- I) Though Isaac was the promised son, he wouldn't end all things as Jesus Christ, but prefigured Him.
 - 1) (Isaac and Jesus were both sons of a promise that was given many years before their birth) (Isaac and Jesus were both born to women who could not have conceived apart from a miracle) (Isaac and Jesus were both firstborn sons) (Isaac and Jesus were both greatly loved by their Father) (Isaac and Jesus went to the top of Mount Moriah/Mount Zion) (Isaac carried the wood for his own sacrifice, just as Jesus carried His wooden cross to His crucifixion) (Isaac and Jesus willingly laid down their lives to their father) (Isaac was brought back from the dead figuratively and Jesus Christ was raised from the dead literally)
- J) The sign of the covenant that God cut with Abraham internally was faith and the external sign of the covenant was circumcision. Abraham's life tells that we also can have faith like him, believing for a son from an aging barren wife, land that he doesn't possess and the sacrifice of a promised son.

V) What Is The Mosaic Covenant?

- A) Moses is no different than Adam, Noah and Abraham, just another sinner saved by grace.
- B) The book of Exodus powerfully demonstrates the faithfulness of God's covenant promise to Abraham. Out of a barren elderly couple would come as many as 1,000,000 people in little over 400 years.

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- C) The book of Genesis closes with Joseph being sold into slavery to protect the land in the midst of a coming famine. But after Joseph's death, a new leader would come into power and forget Joseph and force the children of Israel into hard labor and slavery.
- D) In **Exodus 3** God appears to Moses in the burning bush calling him to be God's deliver and lead the children of Israel out of Egypt into the Promised Land.
- E) God then acted on behalf of His covenant people and released judgments on Pharaoh and once again cut covenant with His people through the Passover lamb in **Exodus 12**. God would then lead His people in **Exodus 19** to the foot of Mount Sinai to give Moses and the people of God the Ten Commandments.
- F) God's people's response to His gracious dealing with them would continue humanity's problem of moving away from God further and further, resulting in disobedience, defilement and spiritual adultery leading them once again into judgment.
- G) The sign of the covenant internally was faith and the sign of the covenant externally was the celebration of the Passover which would prefigure the death of Jesus.
 - 1) From Genesis to Deuteronomy God gave over 600 commands and many ask, are we still under the Old Testament law?
 - (i) The New Testament says
 - (a) The law is holy, righteous and good (**Romans 7:12, 1st Tim 1:8**).
 - (b) The law helps us see our sins (**Gal. 3:19-25**).
 - (c) Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law for us (**Matthew 5:17-18**).
 - (d) Those who said believers are required to keep the whole law to be sanctified are wrong (**Galatians 5**).
 - 2) The Old Testament laws can be broken down into 3 categories.
 - (i) Ceremonial laws.
 - (a) Which include priesthood, sacrifices, temples, cleanness which are fulfilled in Christ and no longer binding upon us.
 - (b) They are no longer binding because Jesus is our Priest, our sacrifice, our Temple and our Cleanness.
 - (ii) Civil Laws
 - (a) This is referring to the laws pertaining to Israel as a nation ruled by God.
 - (iii) Moral Laws
 - (a) These are commands such as rape, theft and murder.
 - (b) These laws are still binding upon us because when Christ came He repeated 9 of the 10 commandments with the only exception being the Sabbath as that is a part of our ceremonial law and Jesus is our rest.

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- 3) What we can take away from this is that both ceremonial laws and civil laws are no longer binding upon us, but moral laws are. We don't serve the law anymore, but we serve Jesus Christ, who is our fulfillment of the law.

VI) What Is The Davidic Covenant?

- A) Just like Noah, Abraham and Moses, David was a sinner who found grace in God. David was a murderer, a liar and an adulterer.
- B) Because God is faithful to His covenant with His Noah, sinners continued to live and increase in the Earth. Because God was faithful to His covenant with Abraham, his descendants became a great nation. And because God was faithful to His covenant with Moses, the nation settled into the Promised Land which would set the stage for the establishing of a kingship to rule over the kingdom of Israel and in **2nd Samuel 7:8-16** God chooses David to be the next covenant head.
- C) David was moved by the gracious promise that both he and His Seed, would rule over the people of God forever.
- D) David would transform the nation from a loose confederation of tribes into a strong empire.
- E) Just like the fall of God's other covenant men, David and his sons would also fall and lose the kingdom into the hands of the Babylonians. But the prophets foretold that a descendant of David would restore the nation.
- F) If we look at Israel today, we would ask ourselves, what happened to God's promises? Did God promise David and His people an unending dynasty?
- G) This promise to the people of God would find, and will find, its fulfillment in Jesus Christ right now in part, and later in fullness.
- H) Jesus will return at the second coming to sit on David's throne and rule the earth in fullness, as David did in part. David offered protection in part as King, but when Jesus returns as King He will offer unending protection, wealth and fullness of His presence forever.
- I) The Davidic covenant was King David. The internal sign of the covenant with David was worship in the temple, and the external sign of the covenant was the throne of David that One would sit on forever from the line of David.
 - 1) **Revelation 5:5** *"But one of the elders said to me, do not weep. Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed..."*
 - 2) **Revelation 22:16** *"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the Churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning star."*

VII) What Is The New Covenant?

- A) The New Covenant is the fulfillment of all the prior covenants in the Person and work of Jesus Christ.
- B) Many years after Jeremiah prophesied, as the Passover approached and Jesus would sit down with His disciples and do something totally different than they had done for thousands of years. He would tell them at what we call the *communion table*, that He is the Great Passover Lamb

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about to be slain for the sins of mankind, and through His shed blood (cutting covenant) He would remove the past covenants and fulfill in Himself what we call the New Covenant which is better than all previous ones.

- C) Jesus is better than Noah who brings judgment of sin, salvation by grace to the family of God and new world free from sin. Jesus is better than Abraham, the blessing to the nations of the earth. Jesus is better than Moses as God’s prophet who fulfilled the law for us, allows God’s wrath to Passover us because of His shed blood and He defeated Pharaoh/satan and continues to journey with us through our sin and grumbling. And Jesus is better than David who is seated on a Throne in Heaven as King of all Kings and is coming again to establish His external Kingdom of peace and prosperity.
- D) **1st John 4:10** *“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”*
- E) Covenant is that God stooped so low to come for us, become like us, covered us, loved us, washed us and now fights for us **WHEN WE REPENT!**