

The Covenantal Structure of Scripture
Foundational for the Gospel

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March 13, 2024

A) Why study Covenant Theology?

1) Main reason: you will understand the Bible better

- a) a lot of ideas you are already somewhat familiar with
- b) covenant theology gives structure to the whole Bible

B) Two overarching covenants in Scripture

1) Summary: there are two overarching covenants in Scripture that give structure to Scripture and redemptive history

2) The two covenants are the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace

C) The Covenant of Works (Genesis 1-2)

1) Does God's relationship with Adam, and then Eve, include a covenant relationship?

2) Many question whether there is a covenant between God and Adam in Genesis 1-2

- a) the word covenant does not occur in Genesis 1-2 but first occurs in Gen. 6:18
- b) Two main reasons for understanding the relationship between God and Adam as a covenant relationship
 - i) there are other passages where a covenant relationship is established but the word "covenant does not appear" (2 Samuel 7)
 - ii) other passages refer to 2 Samuel 7 as a covenant (Ps. 89:3-4; 132:11-12)

-Hosea 6:7 refers to God's relationship with Adam as a covenant
ESV: like Adam they transgressed the covenant

3) Evidence for a covenant with Adam in Genesis 1-2: the elements of a covenant are present

- a) the parties of the covenant are clearly identified with God as the superior party and Adam as the inferior party
- b) there is a command with a penalty attached (Gen. 2:16-17)

-the command (read vv. 9, 15-17)

-the purpose of this command is to provide a probationary test

-the penalty emphasizes one side of what will happen but you should expect the other side of obedience and its results is also part of the covenant

-the blessings side is in the text: What other tree is mentioned?

-the tree of life (Gen. 2:9): the symbol of life that Adam would have inherited if he had not disobeyed God

c) the representative principle is part of covenant relationships

4) Implications of the Covenant of Works

a) God's relationship with Adam and Eve before sin

- i) regular fellowship with God (Gen. 3:8 implications)
- ii) no need of a mediator
- iii) no need of redemptive grace (unmerited favor; demerited favor)
- iv) a benevolent relationship: God freely bestows all kinds of gifts and favors, temporal and eternal, upon Adam's life before sin

b) Adam's salvation before sin based on his obedience

- i) not because he brought God into his debt
- ii) God arranged the covenant relationship so that if Adam obeyed he would inherit eternal life

c) The COW is foundational for the gospel

- i) although the probationary test for Adam is over, the obligation to perfectly keep God's law remains for every human being
- ii) Adam's sin is imputed to us (Rom. 5:12-14)
- iii) Christ fulfills the requirements of the COW for us

-he bore the curse of breaking the law for us (Gal. 3:13)

-he kept the law perfectly for us so that we can be justified by faith

-the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us

D) The Covenant of Grace

- 1) The Covenant of Grace is an overarching covenant that structures redemptive history in the individual covenants of the OT that are fulfilled in the NC – see chart?
- 2) Evidence for the unity of the Covenant of Grace
 - a) The same substance includes the same promise of eternal life, the need for a mediator, the condition of faith
 - b) Each covenant is called by God “my covenant”
 - Noah (Gen. 6:18); Abraham (Gen. 17:2); Moses (Exod. 19:5); David (Ps. 132:12); New Covenant (Isa. 59:21; Rom. 11:27)
- 3) Genesis 3: the initiation of the covenant of grace
 - a) Sin brought spiritual death to Adam and Eve which is evident in the changes that sin brought to their relationships
 - i) internal changes: shame and guilt
 - ii) change in their relationship with God
 - iii) change in their relationships with each other
 - iv) change in their relationship to creation
 - b) God’s response of grace
 - i) God must cover their shame and guilt with animal garments (Gen. 3:21)
 - ii) although God’s judgment against sin makes the job he gave Adam and Eve to do more difficult, history continues
 - iii) God promises that someone will come who will defeat the serpent (Gen. 3:15)
 - c) Adam’s response of faith (Gen. 3:20)