

Covenant Theology

Week 1: What is Covenant Theology?

"The doctrine of the Covenant lies at the root of all true theology. It has been said that he who well understands the distinction between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace is a master of divinity. I am persuaded that most of the mistakes which men make concerning the doctrines of Scriptures are based upon fundamental errors with regard to the covenants of law and the covenants of grace. May God grant us now the power to instruct and you the grace to receive instruction on this vital subject."
C.H. Spurgeon

What is Covenant Theology?

- The history of redemption from beginning to end is one big story.
- That story unfolds through a series of covenants that God makes with His people.
- Those covenants are God's own system for revealing Himself and His salvation.
- Therefore, covenant theology seeks to understand the whole Bible in the context of God's covenants.

What is a Covenant? A covenant is a relational agreement between two parties involving binding commitments confirmed by an oath.

- *Relational Agreement* — Two individuals or parties enter into a formal relationship
- *Binding Commitments* — That relationship is defined by certain obligations or commitments
- *Confirmed by an Oath* — Those commitments are further guaranteed or confirmed by an oath

The Use of "Covenant" in the Bible: The word "covenant" appears over 300 times in the Bible. Sometimes those covenants are between people, at other times they are made between God and man.

Examples:

- Isaac and Abimelech (Genesis 26:26-31)
- Israel and the Gibeonites (Joshua 9:15; 18-21)
- Marriage (Proverbs 2:17; Malachi 2:14)

Covenants Often Involve Sanctions or Threats:

- Hebrew: "Cut a Covenant"
- Israel and Hebrew Slaves (Jeremiah 34:18-20)
- "Covenant by sacrifice" (Psalm 50:5)
- Jonathan and David (20:12-17)
- God and Abraham (Genesis 15:9-10, 17)

God Always Enters Into Relationship with Us Through Covenant

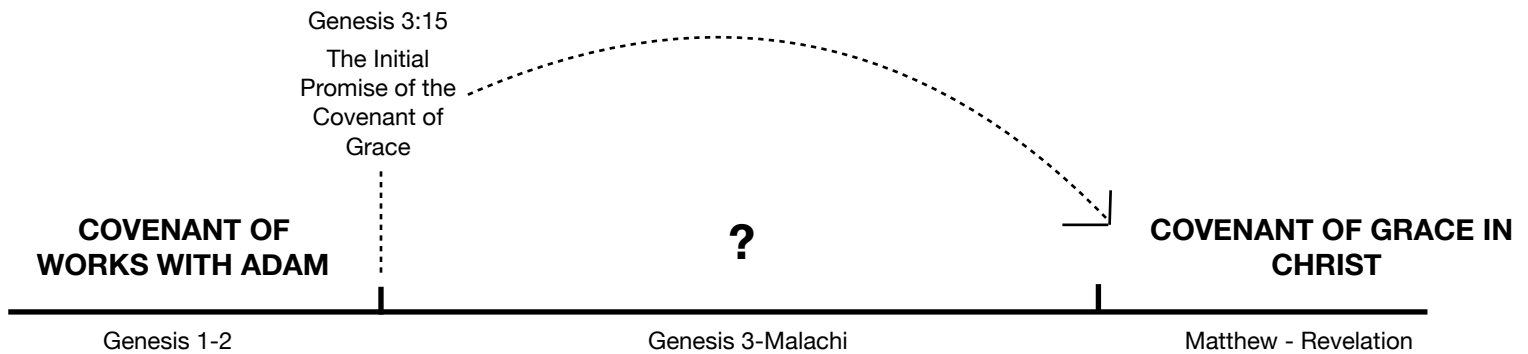
- God is Transcendent and Self-Sufficient (Acts 17:24-25; Job 35:6-7)
- God is Personal and Relational (Psalm 113:5-9)
- The way that the transcendent God has condescends to enter into relationship with us is by covenant.

2LBC 7.1: "The distance between God and the creature is so great that, although reasonable creatures owe obedience to him as their Creator, they could never have attained the reward of life except by some voluntary condescension [stooping down] on the part of God. He has been pleased to express this condescension by way of covenant."

Overview of the Covenants

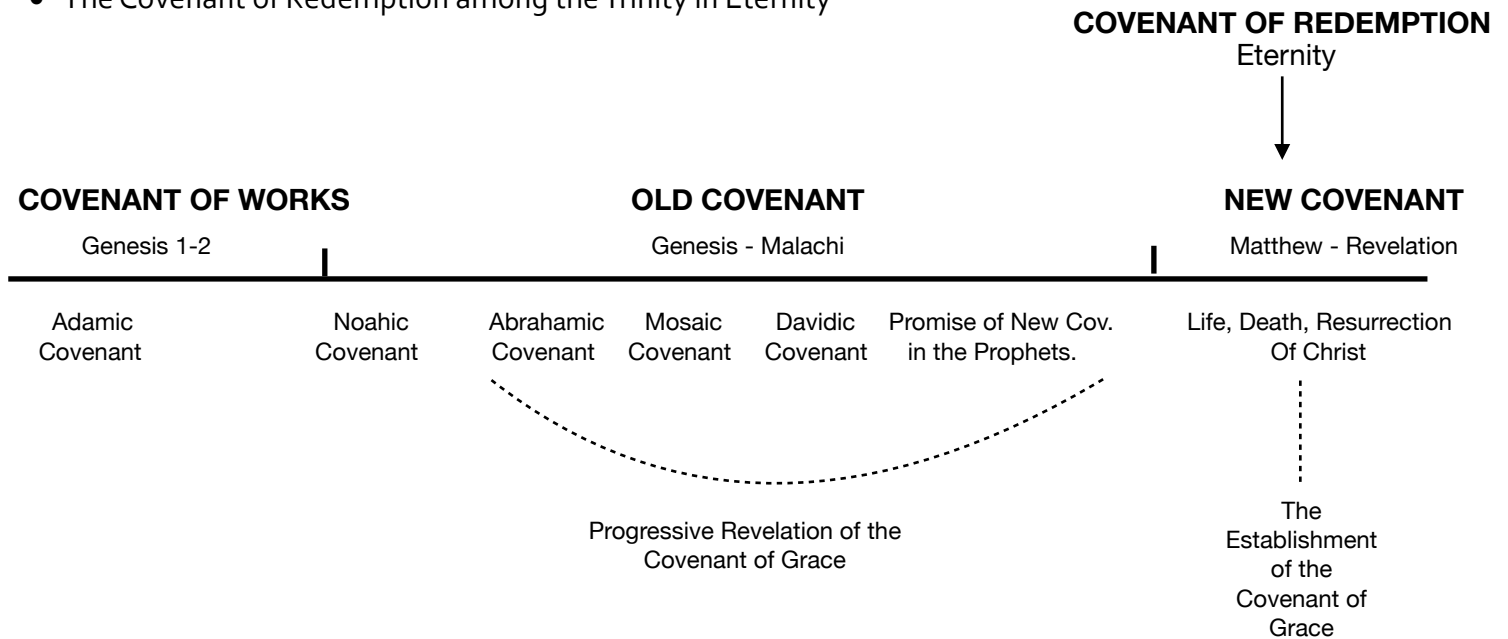
A. The Two Kinds of Covenants

- Covenant of Works (or "Covenant of Law")
- Covenant of Grace (or "Covenant of Promise")



B. The Major Covenants in Redemptive History

- The Old Covenant: God's covenant relationship with the nation of Israel
- The New Covenant: God's covenant of grace with all who are in Christ
- The Covenant of Redemption among the Trinity in Eternity



Why Is Covenant Theology Important?

- *It Helps Us Understand the Bible*
- *It Clarifies the Gospel*
- *It Strengthens Our Assurance*
- *It Keeps Christ at the Center*
- *It Reveals the Wisdom of God*
- *It's What Makes Us Baptist*