

I Corinthians Lesson # 17
Hermeneutics Digression & The Covenants
Pentwater Bible Church
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January 31, 2010

COVENANTS THAT GOD MADE WITH MANKIND ARE PIVOTAL EVENTS IN HUMAN HISTORY.

The Covenants that God has made cannot be overstressed as to their importance. They must be fully understood in order to get a complete understanding of the story line of the Bible from creation to the New Jerusalem.

The Hebrew word for covenant is *berith* and it means a binding agreement between two parties. At initiation it sometimes is one-sided and other times it is two sided. It can also be called a deal, pact, arrangement or treaty. One-sided meaning one party that has the stronger negotiating position can initiate and enforce the arrangement between the two parties. Frequently in the OT it was sealed by some blood sacrifice (Gen 15: 17).

There are eight major covenants that God has made with man. They explain the outworking of God's purposes with man. They are:

1. The Edenic (Gen 2:16) God Commands Adam to eat freely of all but one tree.
2. The Adamic (Gen 3:15) Protoevangelim; God sets up the redeemer
3. The Noahic (Gen 9:16) Rainbow in the heavens signifies: Institutes Human Government; Protection of human life up to and including capital punishment; no additional ground curses will come from God including another universal flood; the order of nature is confirmed (weather comes for the first time); animal flesh is added to man's diet; one of Ham's sons, Canaan, will be servants to his brethren; Shem will have a peculiar relationship to the Lord (Jews and Christ); From Japheth will descend the *enlarged* races i.e. Government Science and Art (Gen 9: 27);
4. The Abrahamic (Gen12: 2)
5. The Palestinian or Land (Deut 30:3)
6. The Davidic (II Sam 7:16)
7. The Mosaic (Exodus 19:5)
8. The New (Jeremiah 31:31-34 & Hebrews 8:8)

Three of these are universal and general to *all* of mankind. They are the Adamic, the Noahic and the Edenic. This is because all mankind is represented as present in Adam in his failure. All the other covenants are made with Israel the chosen people. Christians *partake* in the New Covenant, but it was made with Israel and will be fulfilled with them.

Within God's covenants there are *conditional* and *unconditional* covenants. Conditional means that God will do something for mankind *if* mankind responds properly to God's conditions. A thorough understanding of the covenants will allow one to discern which sections of the Bible have commandments that pertain to the Christian and which do not.

ALL SCRIPTURE IS WRITTEN FOR US; ALL SCRIPTURE IS NOT WRITTEN TO US.

Understanding the covenants is *one* of the keys to unlocking the difficulty of reading and understanding God's Plan for the ages and what our responsibility to Him is in this day and age. In short, we will be able to more easily understand the Bible text and see our place in time and human history.

The word covenant is a synonym testament.

The Bible is divided into two main categories, The Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The Old Covenant is not for the Church but serves as an example for us to avoid the same sins that came upon them.

1 Corinthians 10:11-13 Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.

Abrahamic Covenant

This is one of the *unconditional* covenants that God made with Israel. The Abrahamic Covenant promised a seed, land, and blessings. The three major promises of this covenant were personal promises to Abraham, national promises to Israel and universal promises to all the people of the earth. God promised that He would bless him and make him a blessing to others, to make his name great, to give him many descendents, to make him the father of a multitude of nations, to give him the land of Caanan for always and to bless them that blessed Abraham and to curse them that cursed him. (Gen 12; 13; 15 & 17) God also made national promises concerning Israel. They are: to make a great nation of his descendents; to give land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates to his descendents forever; and to give the Abrahamic covenant to his descendents for ever. Finally, God made universal covenants to Abraham that would affect everybody on the earth; it would affect all families of the earth who would be blessed. This promise is intended to be applicable to Israel regarding the blessing and cursing effects. Parts of the covenant have already been fulfilled. For example God did bless him with wealth. His name is great and Israel is a great nation. The blessings to all have been given to all through the oracles of God they received and they brought forth the Messiah. The promise of the land has not been fulfilled yet. His descendents are indeed in the land but in unbelief and do not have the boundaries set forth in Scripture yet.

Davidic Covenant

David the king was given a covenant by God as recorded in 1 Samuel 7: 8-16. This covenant has promises to David, Israel and Solomon. When God promised that “Thy house shall be established forever before thee He was referring to his family line lasting forever”. God also said “Thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee.” This means that though it might not be apparent to exist at all times it would be restored some day. Also God promised David that Thy throne shall be established forever. Once again although it might not be operative with an ongoing kingdom it would never pass away permanently. This is the earthly throne that Jesus will have when He returns to earth. This is an *unconditional* covenant and will be fulfilled regardless of the faithfulness of David’s descendents. Psalm 123:11 says that God will not turn back from what He as sworn to David.

Land Covenant (Palestinian)

This covenant is actually part of the Abrahamic Covenant. It refers to the land they will occupy at their final restoration. The two facets of it refer to the boundaries and productivity of the land. The promise that God made to Abraham was clear that he would possess by Abraham personally and his seed would possess it too. At the time of the giving of the boundaries (Gen 15) God laid out the future history of his progeny prior to their initial possession of the land. God sealed the covenant and gave him the borders. They were the river of Egypt in the south and the river Euphrates in the north. He never lived in all this property during his time on the planet. This *unconditional* covenant was then reconfirmed with Isaac. It is then reconfirmed again with Jacob. So in order for this covenant to be fulfilled Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will have to be resurrected to realize the promise and Israel will have to be restored to the land. This is developed in several Bible areas, Leviticus 26:40-45; Deuteronomy 30:5; Isaiah 27:12; 35:1-2; 65:21-24; Jeremiah 31:1-6 & 11-14; Ezra 20:42-44 & 28:25-26; 34:25-31; 36:8-15 & 28-38; Joel 2:18-27 & 3:18; Amos 9:13. So in the future Israel will possess the land and the land will greatly increase its productivity and be well watered.

Mosaic Covenant (The Old Covenant-Testament)

The Mosaic Covenant is a *conditional* covenant. God said to Moses on Sinai;

Exodus 19: 5-6 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

This covenant was given to Israel in three sections; 1) the commandments expressing the righteous will of God; 2) The judgments concerning the social life of Israel and 3) The ordinances governing the religious life of Israel. These three elements were essential to the others and together form the Mosaic Covenant. That is, there is unity

in the Mosaic Covenant's three parts. This is known as *The Law* in the New Testament. The ordinances gave a cover for sin in anticipation of the cross. The law was given to Israel not to the church. The Law of Moses has been rendered inoperative. (Rom 10:4) Since the law has been rendered inoperative so has the Sabbath. It was a sign seal and token of the Mosaic Covenant so it no longer applies. The believer in Christ has freedom from the Law of Moses.

New Covenant (The New Testament)

This is an *unconditional* covenant between God and the nation Israel. From Jeremiah 31:31 we know that God stated He would make a "New Covenant" with the house of Israel. God also said that He would make a "New Covenant" with Israel's descendents. Jer31:32. He also said that there would be an endless number of permanent descendents of Jacob and a rebuilding and permanent standing of Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 31:31-41). God made a lot of promises to the people of Israel including regeneration as in a new heart. He promised them forgiveness of their sins, indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a universal knowledge of Jehovah, personal knowledge of Himself (salvation) and that they would obey Him forever. He also promised them many national blessings and said that He would never depart from them. Many verses in Ezekiel refer to the specifics of the blessings He will give Israel in the Kingdom when it is established on earth. Some of them are: wild beasts will be eliminated from the land; Israel will enjoy complete security in the land and they would have a great abundance of food. The Kingdom will be like the Garden of Eden and God will never turn away the people of Israel. This covenant will cause Israel to be obedient. It is *unconditional* and does not mean that Israel has to perform in some manner for it to be effective. This covenant will be fulfilled literally for Israel in the future. The church is partaking of the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant. This covenant will nevertheless be fulfilled with the nation Israel in the future. (Rom11: 23-27). This covenant has been fulfilled in part with Christianity. Christ initiated the New Covenant at the Last Supper.

Luke 22: 20 And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

Now Christ initiated the New Covenant. It will not be completely fulfilled until the Kingdom is set up on the earth after the Great Tribulation is over. The New Covenant was made for the Jews but the Church in this present Age is reaping the benefits of the Covenant. The New Covenant replaced the Old Covenant.

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