

Week One: From Adam up to John

The first gospel to Adam – the sacrifice; Cain and Abel

1. Adam disobeyed God, bringing all of his seed under a curse
2. The first sign of this curse is seen when Adam and Eve knew shame, hiding behind fig leaves, and hiding from the voice of God
3. God called them out of the bushes
 - a. First, he draws them to acknowledge their guilt
 - b. Then he curses the serpent, and promises that the seed of the woman would crush his head (Gen. 3:15)
 - c. After he curses Adam and Eve, he clothes them with the skins of an animal, picturing the perfect covering of the righteousness of Christ. (Gen. 3:21)
 - d. We know that God instituted the sacrifice as a sign of this covenant with Adam, because Abel offered the required sacrifice at the required time in faith. (Gen. 4:3-4). The reason that Abel's sacrifice was accepted was faith (Heb. 11:4)
4. After the covenant that God made with Adam was broken and all men fell under the curse, God promised a seed who would come and break the power of Satan. This promise (known as the covenant of grace) was signified in sacrifices and appointed days from the very beginning. The promise was transmitted from father to child.
5. God put enmity between the seed (collective) of the woman and the seed (collective) of the serpent. Mankind then, from the earliest days was divided into two seeds, at war with one another. This was to be won when the representative seed (singular) crushed the head of the serpent. Gen. 4:16-24 gives the seed of the serpent. Gen. 5:3-32 the seed of the woman.

Noah and the Ark

1. In the days of Noah, these two seeds became intermingled (6:2), bringing great wickedness over all the earth.
2. But there was still one man left who found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was just like his father Adam, but God graciously chose him to carry on the godly seed – looking to Christ who was to come. (6:8)
3. The flood came, and Noah and his seed were protected by God in the ark. Peter compares this to our salvation (1 Pet. 3:21). Just as those who were IN the ark were lifted above the destruction of the wicked, so also those who are IN Christ are lifted up with him
4. We know that Ham was not truly the godly seed, but he was still counted as a covenant child and was included in the ark. When he rejected the covenant, his son bore his sin (Gen. 9:25)
5. Because of Noah's faith, and the sacrifice of faith, God blessed all of Noah's sons (which is the whole of mankind). He promised to never again destroy the earth with a flood. He would preserve mankind until the time of a redeemer came. The instructions concerning blood pointed to this time. Where did Noah learn to sacrifice, if not from his father, and his grandfather, from the time of Adam?

Abraham and circumcision

6. All of mankind, who had been given the promise, is engulfed in idolatry and wickedness. Not one remembers the covenant made with Adam and with Noah.
7. From this mass of idolaters, God chooses one man to renew his covenant with (See Joshua 24:2-3).
8. He makes a unilateral promise to Abraham in Gen. 12:1-9. There were no conditions for man to fulfill. Abraham believed this promise and acted accordingly.
9. Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness. The righteousness of the coming redeemer was put on his account (Rom.4). This happened before he was circumcised. (Gen. 15:6)
10. The promise was that Abraham's seed would inherit Canaan, but Abraham understood that it included the restoration of the world which lay under a curse, by the work of the seed promised to Adam (Rom. 4:13; John 8:56; Gal 3:8-9; Heb. 11:8-10). Through that work, God told Abraham, "I will be your God and the God of your descendants after you" (Gen. 17:7). This is the great covenant of grace, the promise of the blessing and presence of God.
11. As a sign of this promise, already applied to Abraham, God gave circumcision.

The two-fold meaning of circumcision

- First, righteousness of faith: That which is born of the flesh is flesh, but the promise to Abraham was that God would cut off all that was unclean (Justification) so that God could dwell in their midst, and they would be his people.
- Second, the circumcision of the heart (Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; Rom. 2:28-29). This is the Old Testament picture of the softening of the heart to hear and obey the voice of God.

In other words, what was promised Abraham is that he would be cleansed from his sin – justified truly by faith and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Moses and the Red Sea

- Israel (whom God had promised would be His people) was in severe bondage. God redeemed them from their bondage, separated them from the Egyptians in the Red Sea and made of them of nation (Ex. 19)
- In the Red Sea, God declared them to be His people and protected them from the armies of Pharaoh. Paul declared this a type of baptism (1 Cor. 10:1-2). Just as God made a difference between Israel and Egypt, and declared Israel to be His Son in the Red Sea, so also we, being united to Christ by His Holy Spirit in baptism, are declared to be His people and separated from the unbeliever.
- It is not the sign that unites us to Christ inwardly – that can only be done by faith (1 Cor. 10:6-13). Neither did the crossing of the Red Sea unite the people to God inwardly, but outwardly they were indeed the people of God and great blessing came to them because of it. Through them would come the Redeemer.

The dispersion and restoration: The promise of the New Covenant

- The outward ceremonies and commands of the law could never change a man's heart. They were written on stone
- Israel continued to break the covenant, for their hearts were uncircumcised. The reality had not yet come
- Therefore they were driven from the land that they had inherited. The unclean will never inherit the earth.
- But God did not forget his covenant. The seed of the woman was still to come, and he would crush the head of the serpent.
- So God repeated his promise that was signified and sealed by circumcision. God would purify them, give them a new heart and a new spirit, forgive their sins, pour out his spirit on them, sprinkle clean water on them so that they would be truly clean, and cleanse them from all of their impurities (Hosea 6:2; Joel 2:28; Mic. 7:18-20; Is. 1:16; 40 through the rest of the book; Jer. 31:31-34; 33:8; Ezek. 11:17-20; 36:25-28; 37:1-14; Zech. 13:1)
- God gave Moses the law to Israel, saying, "I will be a God to them, and they shall be my people". But the law can never change the heart. This is what circumcision showed. The promise to be a God to us and we his people can never come naturally through the flesh, for we are all unclean. God must cleanse us – but this is what he promised to do from the Garden of Eden

The continuity of the covenant of grace is seen in Revelation 21:1-4 (compare with Ezek. 37:27-28)

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

² And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

³ And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God.

⁴ And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”