

Chapter 25: The Covenants Between God and Man: What principles determine the way God relates to us?

A covenant is an unchangeable, divinely imposed legal agreement between God and man that stipulates the conditions of their relationship.

- Divinely imposed=man agrees but God dictates the terms
- Unchangeable=can be superseded, replaced—not changed.

A. The Covenant of Works (Adam and Eve in Eden) (p. 516) (Hos 6:7, Rom 5:12-21)

1. Essential parts of covenant present...
 - a. Clear definition of parties involved
 - b. Legally binding set of provisions that stipulate the conditions of their relationship (Gen 1:28, Gen 2:16-17)
 - c. Promises of blessings for obedience (implied in commandments to A&E; note also Rom 7:10, Lev 18:5)
 - d. The condition for obtaining those blessings: obedience to God's commands
2. Symbol of Covenant: not named, but probably the Tree of Life
3. Importance of speaking of the relationship between God and man in the garden as a *covenant* relationship:
 - a. A relationship did not occur automatically between Creator and creature
 - b. It was an expression of God's fatherly love for the man and woman.
 - c. Helps us see the dear parallels between this and subsequent covenants
4. Covenant of works still in force? Yes, but not in exactly the same way
 - a. Paul implies: perfect obedience → life (Rom 7:10, Rom 10:5)
 - b. Punishment for covenant is still in effect (Rom 6:23)
 - c. Christ completely obeyed the covenant of works for us (Rom 5:18-19)
 - d. In certain senses, the covenant of works does not remain in force
 - i. Not faced with specific command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil
 - ii. All have sinful nature and not able to fulfill provisions of the covenant of works on our own and receive its benefits
 - iii. For Christians, Christ has fulfilled the provisions of this covenant successfully once for all.
 - iv. For Christians to think of themselves as obligated to try earn God's favor by obedience → no hope of salvation (Gal 3:10-11)

B. The Covenant of Redemption (518) (sometimes people speak of this as a "covenant")

1. A covenant among the members of the Trinity to become a man, be our representative, obey the demands of the covenant of works on our behalf, and pay the penalty for sin, which we deserved.
 - a. Father: Give the Son a people whom he would redeem, send the Son, accept him as a representative of the redeemed, etc. (Joh 17:2-6, Joh 3:16, Heb 10:5)
 - b. Son: live as a man under the Mosaic Law, be perfectly obedient (even to death), etc. (Gal 4:4, Heb 10:7, Phi 2:8)
 - c. Holy Spirit: Fill and empower Christ to carry out his ministry on earth and apply the benefits of Christ's redemptive work (Mat 3:16, Luk 4:1, Joh 14:16-17)
2. "Covenant" reminds us that it was something voluntarily undertaken by God

C. The Covenant of Grace (519)

1. Essential Elements
 - a. Parties: God and the people whom he will redeem, Christ as mediator (Heb 9:15)
 - b. Condition
 - i. Beginning: faith in the work of Christ the redeemer (Rom 5:1)
 - ii. Continuing: obedience to Christ's commands (Jam 2:17)
 - c. Promise: eternal life with God (Rev 21:3)

- d. Signs
 - i. OT: circumcision, ceremonies
 - ii. NT: baptism, Lord's Supper
- 2. Various forms of the covenant (or these can be called different covenants)

(essential elements have remained the same, though the specific provisions of the covenant vary)

 - a. Covenant with Abraham (appx. 2000 BC)

note: parties, condition, promise, sign
Gen. 12:1-3; Gen. 15:5-6; 17:1-13

promises: land, great people, blessing.
above all: God would be their God, they would be his people
 - b. The Mosaic Covenant (appx. 1440 BC)
 - i. Ex. 24:3-8; 34:28; Deut 4:13; Num 10:33
 - ii. Many detailed laws, sacrifices, festivals
 - iii. But the law could not empower obedience
 - c. Covenant with David (approx. 1000 BC)
 - i. A continuation of the covenant with Abraham
 - ii. Jer. 33:19-22
 - d. God promised that someday there would be a new covenant
 - i. Jer. 31:31-33
 - e. The covenants with Abraham and David are never called "old" in the New Testament, only the covenant under Moses (2Co 3:14)
 - f. The essential elements of the "covenant of grace" are all there beginning with Abraham
 - i. Gal. 3:8, 29
 - g. At Christ's death, a new covenant was established, and we are members of that new covenant (Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:20; Heb. 8:6-13)
 - h. The sacrificial system of the Mosaic covenant foreshadowed the bearing of sin by Christ (Heb 9:14)
 - i. The new covenant in Christ is much more excellent than the old (Heb 8:6)
 - j. In the new covenant, there are far greater blessings
 - i. Jesus the Messiah has come
 - ii. He has lived, died, and risen among us, atoning once for all for our sins (Heb 9:24-28)
 - iii. He has revealed God most fully to us (Joh 1:14)
 - iv. The new covenant has abolished all the detailed laws about sacrifices, circumcision, dietary laws, festivals, that were part of the Mosaic Covenant (Heb. 10:3-4; Gal. 4:10-11; Gal. 5:1-2; Col. 2:16-17)
 - v. He has poured out the Holy Spirit on all his people in new covenant power (Act 1:8)
 - vi. He has written his laws on our hearts (Heb 8:10)
 - vii. This new covenant is the "eternal covenant" in Christ → we shall forever have fellowship with God, and he shall be our God, and we shall be his people (Heb 8:10; 13:20)

To order CD's e-mail Trent Poling ctpoling@msn.com or talk to Trent in the sound booth before or after class. Trent also has electronic copies of these outlines starting in about June, 2005, and the outlines are posted on the web site www.christianessentialsbc.com