

The Covenants - Part 1

I want during the next six weeks to consider the great Biblical Covenants. So much of what has happened in Scripture and has happened in our lives is grounded on some Bible Covenant or another.

I trust that this series will not only inform you, but will also inspire you to live your life with a greater sense of the care and grace of our loving God - who is the God of the Covenant!

1. *Some General Covenant Information:*

Definition: From the Hebrew '*berith*' - is translated "*will*", "*covenant*", and "*testament*". The term '*berith*' is obscure in its origins but most accept two common meanings: -

“to cut” or "*a cutting*" - a reference to the ritual cuttings that often accompanied covenant making.

“to bind” or "*fetter*" - a reference to the solemn, binding character of a covenant

The NT equivalent is the Greek term '*diatheke*' - literally 'last will and testament', a solemn, legal pronouncement.

Some Biblical Covenants are conditional, but most are **unconditional**. There is sense in which covenant is not about conditions but about commitment; it is a *relationship* wherein the covenanter commits to fulfill the promises and obligations of the covenant. A great example of this is the covenant of marriage (Proverbs 2:17; Malachi 2:14).

Covenants could be **sealed** with a sacrificial ritual; or by the giving of a gift (which was to be looked at and remembered - Genesis 21:30) or attested to by a monument such as planting a tree (Genesis 21:33) or a heap of stones (Genesis 31:52); and often it was also accompanied by a special covenant meal in which bread and wine were significant elements.

2. *The Adamic Covenant (Genesis 3:14-19) - the consequences of the Fall*

The Sin of Adam was a catastrophe. It had huge consequences for mankind and the whole of creation.

In the aftermath the Fall God meets with Adam and Eve and pronounces the conditions and circumstances that will now prevail. Most of these will continue to

be in force until the Second Coming of Jesus. (Romans 8:21).

Here is a quick summary of the conditions instituted in and through the Adamic Covenant: -

- ***The corruption and travail of nature*** - as illustrated in the cursing of the serpent used by Satan (Genesis 3:14, Romans 8:19-23)
- ***The Bondage of the human condition*** - you will work; you will submit; you will have pain and you will die! (Genesis 3:19, Ephesians 5:22, Job 14:1, Hebrews 9:27).
- ***A state of Separation from God*** - spiritual death (Isaiah 59:2). Adam and Eve are banished, Eden is lost and access to God is now limited and is only allowed under certain conditions. (*E.g. blood sacrifice*)
- ***A promise of a Redeemer is given*** (Genesis 3:15). In the midst of all of this loss and tragedy a promise of a deliverer is given. The first Adam failed, but the Second Adam will triumph!

This Covenant establishes the 'reason' for Redemption. These are the conditions and circumstances that made the Death of Jesus necessary.

He came to set us free from the oppression of Satan's grip - as He said to Moses at the burning bush ... *"I have heard ... I have seen ... I know ... and I am come down ... to deliver ...!"* (Exodus 3:7-8)