

Theology Matters

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Theology Institute



10. Covenant Theology – Part 1

“A new covenant demands new covenant people.” — Tom Schreiner

Big Idea: God gives revelation to His people for the saving purposes and faithfulness through the covenants

What is the covenant:

- **God Relates to His People by Covenants**
 - Genesis 6:18 "But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you."
 - Hebrews 8:10 "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."
- **Definition and Importance of "Covenant" in Scripture**
 - Genesis 17:2 "that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly."
 - Psalm 89:34 "I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips."

- **Covenants Reveal God's Purpose and Faithfulness**

- *Deuteronomy 7:9 "Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations".*
- *Lamentations 3:22-23 "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness".*

- **God's Covenants Secure Eternal Inheritance**

- Galatians 3:29 "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise".
- Ephesians 3:6 "This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel".

- **Covenantal Structure Unites the Whole Bible**

- *Hebrews 10:1 "For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near".*
- *Colossians 2:17 "These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ".*

- **God's Covenant Promises Require Faith**

- Hebrews 11:8-10 "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God."
 - Galatians 3:6-9 "just as Abraham 'believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness'? Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.' So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith."
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What are the covenants:

- **The Covenant with Adam: Covenant of Works**
 - Genesis 2:16-17: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'"
 - Hosea 6:7: "But like Adam they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me."
 - **Noahic Covenant: God's Commitment to Creation**
 - Genesis 9:8-17: "Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you... This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.'"
 - Isaiah 54:9: "This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke you."
 - **Abrahamic Covenant: God's Promise to Bless the Nations**
 - Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"
 - Genesis 15:5-6: "And he brought him outside and said, 'Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.' And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness."
 - **Mosaic Covenant: Law Given to God's People**
 - Exodus 19:5-6: "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."
 - Deuteronomy 5:2-3: "The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Not with our fathers did the LORD make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today."
 - **Davidic Covenant: God's Forever-King**
 - 2 Samuel 7:12-16: "When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom... Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."
 - Psalm 89:3-4: "You have said, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'"
 - **The Covenant of Redemption**
 - Ephesians 1:3-4: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him."
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- *2 Timothy 1:9: "who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,"*

- **The Covenant of Grace Foreshadowed after the Fall**

- *Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."*
- *Romans 5:18–19: "Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."*

- **Covenant Sign of Circumcision**

- *Genesis 17:9–14: "And God said to Abraham, 'As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations...' So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant."*
- *Romans 4:11: "He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well,"*

The Covenantal fulfillment:

- Christ Fulfills All Covenants
 - *Matthew 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."*
 - *Hebrews 9:15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.*
 - The Purpose of the Law—Leads us To Christ
 - *Galatians 3:23–24 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.*
 - *Romans 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*
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- Jesus is the True Seed of Abraham
 - Galatians 3:16 *Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ.*
 - Matthew 1:1 *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*
 - Jesus as the Second Adam
 - Romans 5:18–19 *Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness[b] leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*
 - 1 Corinthians 15:22 *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*
 - The Prophets Foretell a New Covenant
 - Jeremiah 31:31–34 *"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."*
 - Ezekiel 36:26–27 *Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the LORD; I have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it." Thus says the Lord God: This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them: to increase their people like a flock.*
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