Tuesday morning and evening class, thank you so very much for your kind words and generous gifts. They are deeply appreciated!

You’re the best!

COVENANTS IN THE PLAN OF GOD

“God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life”.
God loves you and has a wonderful plan—and you can be a part of that plan.

History is His-Story

Questions to think about…
- what is God’s plan?
- how does it affect me?
- how can I arrange my life so as to participate most fully in that plan?
Structure helps us make sense of the whole

We begin to see the answers to…

- why did God create us?
- the purpose of our lives?
- the purpose of suffering?
- why do we worship God?
- what should be most important to us?
- where should our priorities lie?

Discussion Questions…

- What would you say the overall plan of God entails? (succinct short phrases)
- How has God revealed this plan to mankind?
So what is God's overall plan?

- to create a universe and creatures in it with whom He can fellowship and to whom He can reveal His glory—knowing that we would reject Him

So what is God’s overall plan? (post-Fall)

- to reconcile the world back to Himself
- to eradicate sin
- to enable us to enter into relationship with Him

How has God revealed His plan to us?

- through the Bible
- primarily in the form of Covenants
What is a covenant?

- it is a promise
- a formal will
- a business agreement
- territorial deeds
- national treaties
- a formal agreement that defines relationships between two parties

The Purpose of God establishing covenants with man….

- God’s holy nature requires punishment for sin.
- Man’s fallen nature ensures that he will continually fall into sin
- Man would always be in danger of God’s wrath

God establishes covenants with man, promising him initially that He would not destroy the earth in the same way again—and then later through a series of covenants known as the redemptive covenants, promising man that an ultimate way of salvation from that ever-present sin would be provided.
The Purpose of God establishing covenants with man:

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Noahic covenant = preview

The Four Redemptive Covenants

- Abrahamic covenant
- Mosaic covenant
- Davidic covenant
- New covenant
Discussion Questions…

- How can understanding the plan of God affect the way you live your life? In what activities should we involve ourselves in light of God’s plan? What changes might we make to orient our lives around God’s priorities?

- What is an eternal perspective? How can we help develop that mindset in our own lives? How will our lives look different if we do? What are eternal rewards and how can we invest in eternity today?

The Abrahamic Covenant
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The Four Redemptive Covenants

- Abrahamic covenant
- Mosaic covenant
- Davidic covenant
- New covenant
The Abrahamic Covenant

- Gen. 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 22

Mankind inevitably falls into sin and God continually demonstrates that He is the only solution to that problem.

The Elements of the Abrahamic covenant

- God will bless Abraham
- Abraham will mediate God’s blessing to others (to all nations)
- He will also mediate God’s curse
- Abraham’s name will be great
- He will become a great nation
- God will give to him and to his descendants the land of Canaan
- Abraham will have innumerable descendants
- This covenant will be established with Abraham’s descendants
- God will be the God of Abraham and his descendants, and they will be His people
Unconditional or Grant covenant
An Unconditional Promise to Bless

The Abrahamic Covenant
gave God a base among men from which to launch His offensive against sin

Discussion Questions…
- In light of the Abrahamic covenant and Romans 1:16, why do you think the Gospel is to the Jew first and then to the Gentile?
- Read Romans 9:1-5 & Romans 11:1-26 and discuss the spiritual debt that Gentiles owe to Israel. Read Romans 15:25-27 and discuss what other kind of debt Gentiles owe to the Jews.
The Covenants of Promise

(God’s Commitment to Bless)

Blessing

Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1-3) = God promises Land, Seed, and Blessing

The Mosaic Covenant

Leviticus 26

Two primary types of treaties in the Ancient Near East

- grant covenant
- Suzerain-vassal treaty
Mosaic covenant

“the regulation of the life of a people under the reign of a king”

The contents of the Mosaic covenant...

- a contractual agreement between God and His redeemed people for how they were to receive His blessing in the land—and thus be a channel of blessing to the world
- privileges and duties of a covenant nation

The conditions:
- experiencing the promised blessings was dependent upon obedience

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( God’s Commitment to Bless)

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The Covenants of Promise
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Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1-3) = God blesses with Land, Seed, and Blessing

The Administrative/Housekeeping Covenants
(The Terms of Obedience)
(Means of Experiencing the Blessing)
Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 20-Deut. 33) = Israel's terms of obedience for experiencing the Abrahamic blessing in the land—in order to bless all other peoples

Discussion Questions…

- How did you understand the Gentile believer’s connection to the Mosaic Law before—and how is your understanding any different now?
- How would you explain to someone who argues that we are still under the Law, what freedom in Christ is all about?
God establishes covenants with man, promising him initially that He would not destroy the earth in the same way again—and then later through a series of covenants known as the redemptive covenants, promising man that an ultimate way of salvation from that ever-present sin would be provided.

Review

- Mankind is created and God blesses creation.
- Man falls into sin and deserves judgment
- Man wouldn’t survive if God gave us the judgment we deserved so He graciously enters into a covenant with man.
- He chooses one man and states that through this one man He is going to raise up a nation—and through that nation He is going to bring a savior who will deal with that sin problem once and for all.
- Knowing that man could never keep up his part of the bargain, God makes this covenant unconditional—so that it is incumbent upon God and God alone to bring this covenant to completion.
- It is a grant or a gift graciously given to man
- It is God’s unconditional promise to bless

Review

- In the Abrahamic covenant God made a promise to bless Abraham, his offspring, and ultimately the world through his offspring.
- That promise refers to blessings in this life as well as ultimate salvation.
- In the Mosaic covenant, God gave Israel the means by which they would be able to appropriate the blessings promised to Abraham.
- Those blessings for them were initially realized in the land in terms of prosperity and peace from their enemies, but also would ultimately include an earthly kingdom with Messiah as their king, and then also heaven.
What about the acts of obedience Abraham is asked to perform in relation to the covenant? Aren’t these conditions—thus making the Abrahamic covenant conditional?

1) In Genesis 17:1 God commanded Abraham, “Walk before me and be blameless, and I will establish my covenant between me and you.”

2) In Genesis 18:19 God states that He chose Abraham, “in order that He may command His children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.”
3) In Genesis 17 God describes circumcision as the sign of the covenant that Abraham and his descendants shall keep. And He says in 17:14, “But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

“On the other hand, Abraham’s obedience to God’s commandments does function as the means by which he experiences God’s blessing on a day to day basis. These commandments function as conditions for Abraham’s historical experience of divine blessing, for as he obeys God, God blesses him more and more. But these obligations do not condition the fundamental intention to bless Abraham. They condition the how and when of the blessing.”

Discussion Questions…

- How do “works” relate to God’s promise of salvation today? Does God commanding we do good works make my salvation conditional? What do my good works demonstrate?
Discussion Questions…

- How can we reconcile Paul’s statements in Rom 3:28 (and Eph. 2:8-9) that we are saved by faith alone—with James 2:24 which says we are justified by works and not by faith alone?

The Davidic covenant

2 Samuel 7

1 Chronicles 17

The Promise Covenant

Comprised of:

- The Abrahamic covenant
- The Davidic covenant
The Covenants of Promise
(God's Commitment to Bless)

Blessing
Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1-3) = God blesses with Land, Seed, and Blessing

The Administrative/Housekeeping Covenants
(The Terms of Obedience)

(Means of Experiencing the Blessing)
Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 20-Deut. 33) = Israel's terms of obedience for experiencing the Abrahamic blessing in the land—in order to bless all other peoples

Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:4-17) = A Kingdom forever and God will be a Father to the future Davidic Kings

New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34) = terms of obedience for all God's people under Messiah in order to bless all other peoples

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The New Covenant
Jer. 31:31-37
Ezek. 36:16-28

The key components of the New covenant

- A new heart indwelt by God’s Spirit
- Forgiveness and cleansing from sin
- The promise of the resurrection from the dead
- Material blessings

The Covenants of Promise
(God’s Commitment to Bless)

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Some questions that this story of salvation raises

- am I truly a member of God’s family?
- do I have the Holy Spirit residing within me?
- what are the evidences of that?

If I’m not sure, I must do everything I can to figure this out.

Then when that question is settled...

- how can I best involve myself in God’s unfolding plan?
- what are our God-given stewardships here and now?
- what does my life look like right now in terms of priorities?
- how do I use my time and what priorities does that reflect?
- what changes might I make to orient my life more around God’s priorities?
- what are God’s priorities?
- what implications does this all have for the purpose of my life/the purpose and mission of the church?
- what are eternal rewards and how can we invest in eternity today?
- how can we develop a more eternal perspective in how we view life?
A Roadmap…
- Brief description of covenant theology
- History of Satan attacking Israel
- History of allegorical methodology
- Origin of covenant theology
- Features of and problems with covenant theology
- Contrast with Dispensationalism

**COVENANT THEOLOGY**
Covenant theology is a system of interpreting the Scriptures on the basis of two covenants: the covenant of works and the covenant of grace.

It is the petition of the Spirit-indwelt revived nation of Israel that will trigger Christ’s return.
History of the Allegorical hermeneutical methodology

CHILIASM (def.) The belief in a thousand-year reign of Christ

...an ugly anti-Semitism began to grow and take root

- the blame for the crucifixion of Jesus being laid at the feet of the Jews
- the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D. being seen as God’s punishment and rejection of the Jews
- a misunderstanding of the context of the ‘in-house’ debate within Christianity over the co-existence of Jews and Gentiles within the body
- the persecution and rejection of those early Christians by the surviving Jewish community
HERMENEUTICAL FACTORS

TWO PROMINENT SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT
◆ Alexandrian
◆ Antiochene

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE QUESTION
Discussion Questions…

* In addition to what we have seen as Satan’s attacks on the nation of Israel throughout history, what are some examples of Satan’s influence and attacks today (i.e. in society, popular culture, education, politics, etc.). Where do you see Satan’s influence having the most effect?

THE ORIGINS OF COVENANT THEOLOGY

The covenant (or federal) theory arose sporadically and apparently independently late in the sixteenth century.
“Almost all the theology of the various ‘creeds of Christendom' date back to the Reformation, which went triumphantly to the end of Romans Five, and, so far as theological development or presentation of truth was concerned, stopped there.”

COVENANT THEOLOGY:
- denies the distinctiveness of the gospel of grace and the gospel of the kingdom.
- denies the distinction between Israel and the Church
- uses a double standard with regard to interpretation of Scripture
- places the believer under the law

WHAT GOD’S WORD ACTUALLY SAYS:
- God’s Word distinguishes between Israel and the church
- Scripture calls Israel the wife of God…but calls the church the Bride of Christ
- God’s Word says there will be seven years of tribulation following the Rapture of the church
- God’s Word promises Christ will rule from His throne for a literal 1,000 years
**What Replacement Theology Maintains:**

- the church began with Abraham in Genesis 12
- the church is merely a continuation of Old Testament Israel
- the church is true or “spiritual Israel”
- true Israel in the Old Testament was comprised of Abraham’s spiritual, not physical, descendants

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**The Basic Difference Between Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology Has to Do With How a Person Interprets the Bible**

- Issue #1: Should the Bible be understood in its plain, normal sense?
- Issue #2: Are Israel and the Church the same or are they different?