

Doctrine of the Importance of Keeping Covenant

Deuteronomy 29:9

*"...Keep the words of this covenant to do them,
that you may prosper in all that you do."*

1. The constitution of a congregation is a covenant as well as a legal document.
2. Like all human documents, a man has written this contract, but it is respected by God and is to be honored by those who agree to it, not in part but in whole in as far as possible.
3. The making of a church covenant reflects the heart of a covenant keeping God. God made a covenant with His people in the Old Testament, and provided a New Covenant after the death of Christ which was superior in content and character.
 - *Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:*
 - *Hebrews 8:8, 10 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:...For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:*
4. Bible scholars recognize that a biblical covenant has five parts. These five parts, expressed throughout the book of Deuteronomy, provide an excellent model for today.
 - True Transcendence Deuteronomy 1:1-5
 - Hierarchy Deuteronomy 1 :1-5
 - Ethics Deuteronomy 5-26
 - Sanctions Deuteronomy 27-30
 - Continuity Deuteronomy 31 - 34
 - ❖ True Transcendence. All covenants begin with a statement of Lordship. God is distinct, though not distant in three areas: creation, redemption, and revelation. Because God transcends His creation, He is Big and sovereign. Because He is distinct from His creation, He is Close and personal. It is the marvel of the Incarnation! Only the Christian God is big and close, personal yet transcendent, Distinct but not distant. What a marvelous Lord we serve.
 - ❖ Hierarchy. It can be argued that God has created three covenantal institutions: Family, State, and Church.

God desires a covenant-shaped society. A society of the spiritually committed should be based not on status but contract in order for personal and corporate prosperity. Each of these institutions has designated human representatives. Hierarchy exists by virtue of human representatives—whether it is the husband representing his family before God, or local and federal magistrates representing the will of the people before congress, or the elders or pastors of the church representing the people before God.

- Ethics. Nothing happens mechanically, manipulatively, or magically. Covenant keeping leads to blessing. Covenant breaking results in cursing. There exists a cause and effect relationship with God.
- Sanctions. There are rewards and punishments attached to the covenant; in other words, sanctions. Either good or bad.
- Continuity. There are blessings by keeping His commandments—up "...to a thousand generations..." (Deuteronomy 7: 9). The principle of heirship is included in the covenant. Faithfulness is the key response God is after.

Summary.

Keep the covenant and have dominion; break the covenant and be dominated. That goes for individuals, churches, and nations. Moses was right, "*...Keep the words of this covenant to do them, that you may prosper in all that you do*" (Deuteronomy 29: 9).