

Doctrine of Covenants

1. A contrast is made between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.
 - *Hebrews 8:3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. 4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: 5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. 6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.*
2. According to Scripture, God's relation to humanity is structured in covenants.
 - Adamic Covenant
 - Noahic Covenant
 - Abrahamic Covenant
 - Davidic Covenant
 - Old Covenant (Mosaic, or Sinaitic Covenant)
 - New Covenant

Special Note.

Dispensationalism arose in the nineteenth century as a new paradigm to challenge historic theology.

3. A covenant is an agreement between two or more parties based chiefly on a promise. The New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant because it has better promises.
4. Covenants exist throughout society.
 - Many jobs are based on a covenant between the employer and the employee.
 - Marriage is a covenant based on solemn promises made.
 - America's national government is based on a covenant between those who govern, and those who are governed.
5. There are promises involved in every covenant, and stipulations.
6. The covenants, in the Ancient World, containing promises and stipulations, were attended with vows, and oaths, that dramatized the reality of the promise.
7. This is important to understand because Christianity rests on faith, and trust in a promise. The promise is that all who believe in Jesus Christ, and receive Him as personal Saviour, shall have eternal life.

- *John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*
 - *John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*
 - *Acts 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*
8. God has given men His Word. Jesus is the Incarnation of God's Word.
- *John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
 - *John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*
9. There are two main covenants in Scripture under the umbrella of the Covenant of Redemption.

The Covenant of Redemption

This is an eternal covenant made between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, to save, from the sea of fallen humanity, an elect people. This Covenant of Redemption is an overarching covenant and includes the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace. This covenant is made within the triune Godhead. Creation is a Trinitarian work.

Like creation, regeneration is also a Trinitarian work. The Father plans what will happen. The Son executes the will of the Father. The Holy Spirit sustains what the Father has planned, and the Son has executed. This is the economic distinction, or a functional distinction within the Godhead. It is the Father who initiates the plan of salvation. It is the Son who goes to Calvary to die and accomplish redemption. It is the Holy Spirit who regenerates the soul that is to be saved. A redemption accomplished by Christ, is applied by the quickening of the Holy Spirit.

In the Covenant of Redemption, in the plan of salvation, there is no struggle between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There was a harmonious agreement from all eternity about human salvation. Jesus did not come reluctantly. He was pleased to fulfil the plan of the Father. Jesus wanted the will of the Father to be executed, even in Gethsemane.

- **Covenant of Works.** This covenant covers the relationship God had with Adam and Eve before the Fall. If they obeyed His commandment not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they would live. If they disobeyed, they, and their descendants, would die.

Genesis 2:16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Adam and Eve failed their probation, and so plunged themselves, and all of humanity into ruin.

- **Covenant of Grace.** This covenant refers to the relationship of God after the Fall. By eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve did not live up to the Covenant of Works. They fell from an exalted state of innocence into sin. Now, the state of salvation would be decided by the grace and mercy of God alone. Those whom God chooses to save shall be the heirs of salvation, and the object of divine mercy. Those whom God chooses not to save shall be the object of His divine justice and wrath. Behold the goodness and the severity of God!

Romans 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

In the Covenant of Grace, salvation is not merely a return to Paradise, and to the point where Adam and Eve fell. Salvation is a promotion to the state that Adam and Eve would have had, if they had been successful in keeping the Covenant of Works. Salvation is more glorious than simply returning humanity to the Garden of Eden. There will be no more probation.

10. The Covenant of Works did have grace, in it because God is not required by virtue of creation to promise His creatures anything. Whatever God does, He does on the basis of His grace and mercy.
11. It is man who is under obligation to God, and not God who is obligated to man. The Covenant of Work is founded in grace.
12. Nevertheless, the distinction between the Covenant of Works, and Covenant of Grace is important. The new Covenant of Grace is based upon a new promise. Adam and Eve will be redeemed by Another.
 - *Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*
13. The Bible clearly teaches that souls are saved by grace through the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary.
14. Jesus is introduced in Scripture as the Last Adam, who comes into the world, places Himself under the stipulation and obligation of the Covenant of Works, and does what the first Adam could not do.

- *1 Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*
- *John 8:46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?*

15. Jesus went back to where the First Adam was. He was tempted, like the First Adam. This is dramatized in the wilderness experience.

- *Matthew 4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.*

16. Unlike the first Adam, the Last Adam did not succumb to temptation. He did not sin. He was made a quickening spirit.

17. Every Christian is saved, not only by the death of Christ, but also by the life of Christ. It is because Jesus lived a life of perfect obedience, He fulfilled all the terms laid down in the original Covenant of Works. Jesus pleased the Father.

- *John 8:29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.*

18. There is a sense in which it can be said that the Christian is saved by works. We are saved not by our works, but by the works of Christ. He was tempted. He did not sin. He always did the will of the Father. Jesus went to Calvary. Jesus fulfilled the work of redemption. We are saved by His works of obedience and sacrifice.

19. This is important, because the Covenant of Grace does not nullify the Covenant of Works. Rather, it fulfills the Covenant of Works, so that, united together, they merge once more as the Covenant of Redemption.

20. The Old Testament is not about God's justice and wrath, while the New Testament is all about God's mercy and love. No. No. Justice and mercy met at Calvary, and kissed.

- *Psalms 85:10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

21. The clearest example of the justice of God, and the wrath of God, is found, not in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament, outside the city of Jerusalem, at Golgotha.

22. The justice of God at Calvary is also a clear example of the mercy of God, for His wrath was poured out on His own dear Son, and not upon the elect.