

Baptist Covenant Theology

Notes for the Laymen's Cup Podcasts

These notes represent the outlines we followed for the podcasts on BCT. The information in these notes are not original but have been developed from several sources. Here are some recommended resources that have been very helpful in understanding Baptist Covenant Theology and for putting these notes together:

Books

From Shadow to Substance, Samuel Renihan

The Covenant of Works, Richard Barcellos

The Divine Covenants, AW Pink

The Distinctiveness of Baptist Covenant Theology, Pascal Denault

The Kingdom of God, Jeffrey Johnson

Recovering a Covenantal Heritage, Richard Barcellos, ed.

Covenant Theology: A Reformed Baptist Primer, Douglas Van Dorn

Covenant Theology: A Reformed Baptist Perspective, Phillip D.R. Griffiths

Audio for Conference covering Covenant of Works and Covenant of Grace:

<http://www.covenantcommunitychurchofnewark.com/fellowship-of-ohio-reformed-baptists>

Brandon Adams' notes from Reformed Northwest podcasts on 1689 Federalism:

<https://www.evernote.com/l/ANB85bGQwH9PBliRVWUD3D2V51nOSs5UFrk>

There are also many websites/blogs devoted to 1689 Federalism that contain articles, debates, and resources to help you grow in your understanding of Baptist Covenant Theology. A great place to start is www.1689federalism.com.

No doubt there are many things unsaid, or even incorrectly said, in these podcasts on Baptist Covenant Theology. We are still learning and growing in our knowledge of the Scripture as it pertains to God's covenantal outworking of our redemption. We hope these resources will help you in your study of Baptist Covenant Theology, and that the podcasts put out by the Laymen's Cup will create in you a desire to study and know more about how God has worked through Jesus Christ for the redemption of sinners, of whom we are chief.

Why are we Baptists?

Part 1

Most direct answer: we do not baptize babies.

Well, why don't you baptize babies? Because of our understanding of the church—that it is made up of only those who have repented of their sins and trusted in Christ for salvation. In other words, we believe in “regenerate church membership.” Only those who have been regenerated are members of the church.

What is regeneration? Another word for “regeneration” is “rebirth.” The prefix “re-” means “again.” Remarry, refurbish, review, reproduce, refresh, reform.

Jesus mentioned this in His conversation with Nicodemus:

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| John 3:3 | Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. |
| John 3:4 | Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter his mother’s womb and be born?” |
| John 3:5-8 | Jesus answered, “Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” |
| John 3:13 | “No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. |
| John 3:14 | And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, |
| John 3:15 | that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.” |
| John 3:16 | For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. |
| John 3:17 | For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. |

John 3:18 Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

John 3:22 After this Jesus and His disciples went into the Judean countryside, and He remained there with them and was baptizing.

So, to become a member of the Kingdom of God one MUST be born again. We do not enter the kingdom through physical birth, but spiritual birth. Not through generation, but regeneration. Not based on parental faith, but personal faith in Jesus.

Eph. 2:1-3 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Eph. 2:4-6 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...

1 Pet. 1:22-23 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God...

John 1:12-13 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

1 Jn 5:1,4 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world—our faith.

To be regenerated is to be born again, which is expressed in a person's life by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation. Before regeneration we are spiritually dead and children of wrath. We were not God's children. No amount of good works or keeping the law can regenerate the heart. Only Christ offers a cure for our depravity and condemnation.

Regeneration results in:

[1] Being sealed with the Holy Spirit.

Eph. 1:13-14 In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.

[2] Adoption

Gal. 4:4-5 But when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

[3] Reconciliation

2 Cor. 5:17-18 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...

[4] Peace with God

Rom. 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[5] New life

Titus 3:3-4 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration...

So, here is a summary of all we have said:

No one is saved apart from faith in Jesus Christ. No one can enter the kingdom of God without believing on His name. God sovereignly enables sinners to believe by regenerating their hearts. Our hearts are dead. He gives life to our dead hearts. He takes away our heart of stone and gives us a heart of flesh. He renews our wills and by His power draws us to Jesus Christ.

2LBC 10.1 Yet He does all this in such a way that they come completely freely, since they are made willing by His grace.

We give evidence of this by responding to the gospel with repentance and faith. Therefore, only those who are regenerated are members of the Kingdom of God, which is the church.

Matt. 16:18-19 “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven...”

Col. 1:13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

“The Spirit under these figurative expressions declares, that the kingdom of Christ shall in every way be happy and blessed, or that the Church of God, *which means the same thing*, shall be blessed, when Christ shall begin to reign” John Calvin, Commentary on Amos 9:13

WCF 25.2 “The visible church...is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.”

1LBC 33 “Jesus Christ hath here on earth a [manifestation of His] spiritual kingdom, which is His Church, whom He hath purchased and redeemed to Himself as a peculiar inheritance; which Church is a company of visible saints, called and separated from the world by the word and Spirit of God, to the visible profession of faith of the gospel, being baptized into that faith, and joined to the Lord, and each other, by mutual agreement in the practical enjoyment of the ordinances commanded by Christ their head and king.

2LBC 26.3 “The purest churches under heaven are subject to mixture and error. Some have degenerated so much that they have ceased to be churches of Christ and have become synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, Christ always has had and will have in this world to the very end a kingdom of those who believe in Him and profess His name.”

So, let’s go back to the top. Why don’t we baptize babies? Because of our understanding of the church—that it is made up of only those who have repented of their sins and trusted in Christ for salvation. In other words, we believe in “regenerate church membership.” Only those who have been regenerated are members of the church.

Therefore, we hold that baptism is only for those who are members of Christ’s church through personal faith in Jesus. The church is not a mixed community of confessors and non-confessors, believers and non-believers. It is a kingdom of the elect, only those who have been regenerated by God’s grace and express that with repentance and faith.

WCF 25.1 The catholic or universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof...

2LBC 26.1 Adds this phrase after “which”: (with respect to the internal work of the Spirit and the truth of grace) MAY be called invisible...

The Baptists recognized that the church invisible is only the church because of the internal work of regeneration. In other words, the universal church consists of only those who are elect.

WCF 25.2 The visible Church, consists of all those throughout the world, that profess the true religion, TOGETHER WITH THEIR CHILDREN.

2LBC 26.2 All people throughout the world who profess the faith of the gospel and obedience to God through Christ in keeping with the gospel are and may be called visible saints...all local congregations ought to be made up of these.

The ordinance of baptism, therefore, belongs to the church and is to only be administered to those who are true members of the church of Jesus Christ, who profess faith in Jesus. But, that is not how a baby baptizer understands baptism.

WCF 28.1 Baptism is a sacrament of the NT, ordained by Jesus Christ, by which the person baptized is solemnly admitted into the visible church. Baptism is also for him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting in Christ, of regeneration, of forgiveness of sins, and of his surrender to God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life.

WCF 28.4 Not only those who personally profess faith in and obedience to Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents, are to be baptized.

WLC Q165: What is baptism?

Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament in which Christ has ordained washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit as a sign and seal of our being joined to Christ, of the remission of our sins through his blood, of rebirth by his Spirit, of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life; and it is the means of solemnly admitting those baptized into the visible church and of their making a public commitment that they belong completely and only to the Lord.

Q166: Who should be baptized?

Those who are NOT members of the visible church and so are not included in the covenant of promise should NOT be baptized until they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him. However, the infants of one or both parents who do profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him are by that relationship included in the covenant and should be baptized.

Directory for Worship

Chapter 56 – The Administration of Baptism

- 56.4 Words of instruction the minister is to give to the parents and congregation
- 56.4b Baptism is a seal of the Covenant of Grace, of our ingrafting into Christ, and of our union with Him, of remission of sins, regeneration, adoption, and life eternal.
- 56.4g That children by Baptism, are solemnly received into the bosom of the Visible Church, distinguished from the world, and them that are without, and united with believers; and that all who are baptized in the name of Christ, do renounce, and by their Baptism are bound to fight against the devil, the world and the flesh.
- 56.4h That they [children] are federally holy before Baptism, and therefore are they baptized
- 56.4j By virtue of being children of believing parents they are, because of God's covenant ordinance, made members of the Church, but this is not sufficient to make them continue members of the Church. When they have reached the age of discretion, they become subject to obligations of the covenant: faith, repentance and obedience. They then make public profession of their faith in Christ, or become covenant breakers, and subject to the discipline of the church.

Charles Hodge

“The difficulty on this subject is that baptism from its very nature involves a profession of faith; it is the way in which by the ordinance of Christ, He is to be confessed before men; but infants are incapable of making such a confession, therefore they are not the proper subjects of baptism. Or, to state the matter in another form, the sacraments belong to the members of the Church, but the Church is the company of believers; infants cannot exercise faith, therefore they are not members of the Church, and consequently ought not to be baptized.” Charles Hodge (paedo)

We would agree. But since he affirms baptizing babies, how does he resolve this dilemma?

“In order to justify the baptism of the infant, we must attain and authenticate such an idea of the church that it shall include the children of believing parents.”

“Those parents sin grievously against the souls of their children who neglect to consecrate them to God in the ordinance of baptism. Do let the little ones have their names written down in the Lamb's book of life, even if they afterwards choose to erase them. Being thus enrolled may be the means of their salvation...”

“They are members of the Church; they are professing Christians; they belong presumptively to the number of the elect. These promises are true of them in the same sense in which they are true of adult professing believers.”

Herman Bavinck

“...if the children of believers are to be regarded as Scripture teaches us to regard them, then, according to the divine institution of baptism, they have a legitimate claim to this sacrament in the same measure as, and even in a greater measure, than adults who make profession of faith...The likelihood that the baptized are true believers is even greater in the case of children than adults.”

John Murray

“There are certain principles which lie close to the argument for infant baptism and without which the ordinance of infant baptism would be meaningless...These principles are [1] that little children, even infants, are among Christ’s people and are members of His body; [2] that they are members of His kingdom and therefore have been regenerated; [3] that they belong to the church, in that they are received as belonging to Christ...”

Matthew Henry

“Infant baptism speaks an hereditary relation to God, that comes to us by descent.”

Pierre Marcel, *The Biblical Doctrine of Infant Baptism*

“Baptism given to little children is the witness and attestation of their salvation, the seal and confirmation of the covenant of grace which God contracts with them.” (p.213)

“Because of the promises of the covenant sealed by this baptism the parents and the church are strengthened in the faith which causes them to consider this baby as a child of God and a lamb in Christ’s fold. They know that he no longer belongs to the race of Adam, that he is placed under the direct protection of the Lord, and that God loves him and regards him with affection. They know that this child is the heir presumptive of salvation.” (p. 225)

Conclusion

So, here is one of our Baptist distinctives: we believe that baptism is only for those who are publicly profess faith in Jesus Christ and are thereby members of the Kingdom by believing in Jesus. In other words, they have become members of the church by their faith in Jesus and then are baptized.

Those who baptize babies disagree. They believe that the church is made up of believers and non-believers. So, baptism isn’t really connected to one’s profession of faith.

Where did these two opposing ideas come from? How we interpret the Bible. And the lens that we interpret the Bible is called “Covenant Theology.” This is just a system to explain how God works in history to save a people for His glory. There are a lot of systems that have been developed to help understand the story of the Bible, how it fits together and how we understand the work of God.

As Baptists, we believe that our view of Scripture as shaped by Covenant Theology eliminates the baptism of children. Our baby baptizing friends believe we are wrong. So, next time we will begin to talk about the details of Covenant Theology.

Why are we Baptists?

Part 2

Review: History – we trace our roots to the Particular Baptists of 17th Century England
Short answer – we don't baptize babies.

Why not? Because of our belief about the church, that only members of the church are those who are regenerate, and therefore are to participate in baptism. We hold to believer's baptism.

Q: Why?

A: Because of our understanding of covenant theology.

What is covenant theology?

Simple answer: it is a system of biblical interpretation.

To "interpret" means to understand the meaning of something. The Bible can be overwhelming to understand. So, for hundreds of years people have tried to develop ways or systems to help them grasp the meaning of the Bible.

Everyone has a way or a process by which they interpret the Bible, how they make sense of it. There are a lot of systems: dispensationalism, reformed dispensationalism, new covenant theology, progressive covenantalism, kingdom theology, replacement theology, new perspective on Paul, Federal Vision, Reconstructionism, Zionism, and others.

So, basic covenant theology is a way to understand the story of the Bible, particularly when it concerns who God is and how God has saved sinners. This is primarily understood by seeing and reading the Bible through the interpretive lens of covenants. Covenant theology is like a map you pull out to figure out where the Bible is going.

What unifies the Bible as one book is the theme of covenant. The God of the Bible is a covenant God who deals savingly with humanity through covenants. The Bible reveals that God made 7 covenants with man: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Levi, Moses, David and Christ. Understanding these covenants provides a way of understanding the story of the Bible, the nature of God, and the salvation that He brings to sinners.

So, that is the simple answer: it is a system of biblical interpretation. But, when you study CT, you discover that there isn't a UNIFORM view of CT. There are a lot of different nuances within the system of CT. For example, you have what might be called Westminster Covenant Theology (Mosaic: C of G legally administered, re-iteration of C of W, or republication of C of W), Wesleyan Covenant Theology, New Covenant Theology, Federal Vision, Progressive Covenantalism and Baptist Covenant theology (20th C or 1689). Some hold to 3 dominant covenant categories: Redemption, Works and Grace. Others see only two. Some say there isn't really a covenant of works, and others reject the idea of a covenant of redemption.

So, as you can see, it can get very confusing. As a result, there are tons of books written, arguments made, lines drawn and debates held trying to figure out who is truly reformed and covenantal. Suddenly, Christians judge one another and their handling of the Bible based on which system they hold.

Joke: A man was walking across a bridge one day, and saw a man standing on the edge, about to jump. He ran over and said: "Stop. Don't do it."

"Why shouldn't I?" he asked. "Well, there's so much to live for!"

"Like what?" "Are you religious?"

He said: "Yes." I said: "Me too. Are you Christian?"

"Yes." "Me too. Are you Catholic or Protestant?"

"Protestant." "Me too. Are you Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist or Baptist?"

"Baptist." "Wow. Me too. Are you Baptist Church of God or Baptist Church of the Lord?"

"Baptist Church of God." "Me too. Are you original Baptist Church of God, or are you Reformed Baptist Church of God?"

"Reformed Baptist Church of God." "Me too. Are you Reformed Baptist Church of God, Reformation of 1879, or Reformed Baptist Church of God, Reformation of 1915?"

"Reformed Baptist Church of God, Reformation of 1915."

He said: "Die, heretic scum," and pushed him off the bridge.

This joke is reminder that CT is not the only thing that matters. There are some friends of our that would be considered "cage stage." All they can see in every verse is CT. Every sermon or statement is filtered through the lens of CT. The Great Commission isn't about fishing for men, but a search and destroy mission—find Arminians or non-CT folks and demolish them. It is possible that some folks can become over enamored with CT. Or confessionalism. Or Calvinism.

That doesn't mean CT and these other things aren't important. But they are not ends in themselves, but a means to an end. They are interpretative tools to help us understand more fully the gospel. When these systems and tools create in us a greater love and devotion for Jesus, then they are serving their proper purpose. Like John the Baptist, they are not the Christ, but pointers to Christ.

But when our devotion to these tool exceed our devotion to Christ, we are in trouble. They have increased and Christ has decreased. So, CT only matters in the sense that it helps us to grow in a deeper knowledge and appreciation for Jesus and the gospel.

While CT is important, we need to remember that theology leads to doxology which leads to missiology.

It is important to remember that our Baptist fathers held to covenant theology. So, in order to understand why we are Baptist we need to understand covenant theology.

“The doctrine of the covenant lies at the root of all true theology. It has been said that he who well understands the distinction between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, is a master of divinity. I am persuaded that most of the mistakes which men make concerning the doctrines of Scripture are based on fundamental errors with regard to the covenants of law and grace.” Charles Spurgeon from his sermon entitled, “The Covenant”

“A perfect knowledge of the Gospel, therefore, involves necessarily, a correct comprehension of the covenants.” RCB Howell (1855)

Ligon Duncan mentioned in his seminar on CT a quote from Mark Dever, a Baptist, who said: “Covenant theology is the gospel.”

I. What is a covenant?

“A formal definition of relationship between two parties.” Douglas Van Dorn

“...a solemn promise or oath of God to man, each covenant’s content being determined by revelation concerning that covenant.” Fred Malone

“A covenant properly is a compact or agreement on certain terms mutually stipulated by two or more parties. As promises are the foundation and rise of it, as it is between God and man, so it comprises also of precepts, or laws of obedience, which are prescribed to man on his part to be observed.” John Owen

“A gracious arrangement between God and man.” See 1689 chapter 7.1

A covenant has promise, bond, or solemn oath at its root meaning. So, a divine covenant is simply a sovereign bond, promise, oath or pledge of God to man.

Parties, stipulations, conditions, promises, rewards are all a part of covenants.

[Two types of covenant theology we need to discuss: Basic and Baptist]

II. Basic CT

3 basic covenants:

[1] Redemption – the intra-trinitarian pretemporal agreement made before the world began in heaven among the Godhead to save elect sinners by grace alone.

- Sometimes called the everlasting or eternal covenant, or the covenant of peace (pactum salutis)

- Intra-Trinitarian = between members of the Godhead
- Pre-temporal = before time
- The chief and greatest of all God's covenants
- See 1689 chapter 8.1

Psalm 2:6-8 "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession.'"

Isaiah 42:5-7 "Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it: 'I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.'"

[a] The Father gives the elect to the Son

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out." John 6:37

"And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given Me but raise it up on the last day." John 6:39

"My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of My hand." John 10:29

When Jesus had spoken these words, He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your son that the Son may glorify You, since You have given Him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him." John 17:1-2

"I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours." John 17:9

"Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world." John 17:24

Here is the question: when where they (the elect) given to Christ?

"...even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world..." Ephesians 1:4

Couple more verses:

“For the Son of Man goes forth as it has been determined...” Luke 22:22

“...and I assign to you, as My Father assigned to Me, a kingdom...” Luke 22:29

“I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.” John 17:4

Q: When was it determined? When was it assigned? When was the work given to Him?

[b] The Son comes and secures salvation for His elect by His passive and active obedience

“If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of My own accord, but He sent Me.” John 8:42

“The works that the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about Me that the Father has sent Me.” John 5:36

“I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I shall lose none of all that He has given Me but raise them up at the last day.” John 6:38-39

Meredith Kline: Jesus was given...

[1] a commandment to obey

“No one takes My life from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from My Father.” John 10:18

[2] a righteousness to fulfill

But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Matthew 3:17

[3] a baptism to be suffered

“I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is My distress until it is accomplished!” Luke 12:50

[4] a work to finish

“I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.” John 17:4

The Bible tells us that with these works that Jesus performs, the Father is well pleased, for His works are perfect.

“And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Philippians 2:8

Q: Obedient to what? The covenant of redemption

[c] The Spirit is sent to apply the benefits of Christ to the elect

It is the Spirit’s job to make the world aware of its need for a Savior, to reveal the righteousness of Christ, and to point to the impending judgment for those who refuse it. It is the Spirit who gives life through the new birth, and it is the Spirit who guides the church and reveals to her the will of God. It is the Spirit who dwells in the people of God, applying Christ’s redemptive blessings to them in their progressive sanctification.

Summary

The Covenant of Redemption shows us that God planned to save sinners by grace alone, and that this plan was developed in the eternal counsel and decree of God before time began.

Two primary parties involved:

- (1) The Father speaks of work given to the Son
- (2) The Son executes the prominent role in the Covenant and its out-workings.

Two requirements:

- (1) The Father required the Son to assume human nature with its present infirmities, though without sin.

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law that we might receive adoption as sons.” Gal. 4:4-5

“For it is fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering...” Hebrews 2:10

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.” Hebrews 2:14

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” Hebrews 4:15

- (2) Christ was to place Himself under the law to pay the penalty for sin by His death and earn eternal life and justification for those whom the Father had chosen.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." John 10:11

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father..." Gal. 1:3-4

"...who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification." Romans 4:25

Covenant Promises

(1) The Father would anoint and assist the Son with the Holy Spirit

"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge..." Isaiah 11:1-2

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon Him..." Isaiah 42:1

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor..." Isaiah 61:1

"...you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power." Acts 10:38

(2) The Father would support the Son in His work

(3) The Father would deliver the Son from the power of death and place Him at His right hand upon His throne of glory

"I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices...for you will not abandon my soul to Sheol or let your holy one see corruption." Psalm 16:8-10

"Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth..." Phil. 2:9-10

(4) The Father would send the Holy Spirit to form and finish the work of building the church

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." John 14:26

“When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take what is mine and declare it to you.” John 16:13-14

Covenant Rewards

(1) The Father would draw and preserve the elect unto eternal glory

“All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out...And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given me...” John 6:37,39

“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.” John 6:44

(2) The Father would grace to Christ a numerous seed from every “tribe, language, people and nation” gathered from the ends of the earth.

“May His name endure forever, His fame continue as long as the sun! May people be blessed in Him, all nations call Him blessed!” Psalm 72:17

“And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom of priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.’” Revelation 5:9-10

What are the implications of this?

Why We Are Baptist

Part 3

Review:

Q: Why are we Baptist?

A: We don't baptize babies.

Q: Why don't we baptize babies?

A: Because of our view of the church – regenerate church membership.

Q: Why do we hold that view of the church?

A: Because of our understanding of Covenant Theology – there is the Old Covenant, and the New Covenant...works and grace...law and gospel. The New Covenant is actually NEW. It is different than the Old Covenant, and one of the ways it is different is in who is IN the New Covenant – only those who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, as expressed in repentance and faith. Therefore, only those who profess faith, believers, are to have the sign of baptism applies as a public profession of their faith in Christ.

That is a very simple overview. There is a lot more to it than that...it is actually quite complex. This is why we would encourage those listening to read some really good books on the subject of Baptist Covenant Theology. Recommendations?

Last week we dove into the Covenant of Redemption...thoughts?

This week we want to discuss the Covenant of Works.

Covenant theology is nothing more than an interpretive tool to make sense of the Bible. It is a lens through which we see who God is and how God has worked in redemptive history to save sinners. The Bible tells us that God is a covenant making God, who frames the story of salvation with various covenants that He establishes with men. Seven mentioned in the Bible...what are they?

Covenant theology speaks of 3 major covenants: redemption, works, and grace...

Covenant of Works

Is referred to by other names: life, creation, Adamic

The phrase "covenant of works" doesn't appear in the Bible; this is why many have rejected the idea that the Bible teaches a covenant of works (John Murray, John Piper). But, the CONCEPT exists in the Scriptures.

What is a covenant? "A formal relationship between two parties."

What is a divine covenant? "A divinely sanctioned relationship, initiated by God with man, where God promises to better man's condition."

- It comes from God to man
- Not a contract between equal business partners
- They are not up for negotiation
- They are imposed by God upon man. Why?

“...for the advancing and betterment of his state.” Nehemiah Coxe

So, Noah was better off for the covenant God made with him. So was Abraham, the Israelites and David. Because of the New Covenant, believers of all ages are much better off because of its promises to us.

Improvement is built into all the covenants that God makes with man, including the Covenant of Works. So, what is the C of W?

It is the divinely sanctioned relationship that God imposed upon Adam.

Let’s discuss it around 4 questions:

1. Who are the parties of this covenant?

- God and Adam
- **God** creates man, then God covenants with man.
- Adam wasn’t created IN covenant, but FOR covenant.
- Q: When God formed Adam out of the dust and breathed life into him, when he opened his eyes, where was he? [Most people will say the Garden of Eden]
- Genesis 2:7-8
- These verses point to a formal commencement of the covenant of works. Evidence:
- Elohim to Yahweh Elohim, which is the covenantal name of God
- Man was made first, then the Garden of Eden

- “But like Adam they have transgressed the covenant...” Hosea 6:7
- “The earth is polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty.” Isaiah 24:5-6

- **Adam** is created sinless, perfect, and able to obey God
- Adam is called a “Son of God” in the Bible, since God was responsible for bringing him into the world.
- “...the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.” Luke 3:38
- Adam stands as a unique figure in the human race; he was the only human being who had the power to perfectly obey God.
- He also is unique in that Adam represents the entire human race as our “federal head.” What does this mean?

- “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...” Romans 5:12
- “For as in Adam all die...” 1 Corinthians 15:22
- So, Adam acted as a public person, representing all humanity

2. What are the stipulations?

- In other words, what are the requirements or obligations of this covenant?
- Perfect obedience to God’s holy and pure law
- We need to make a distinction here between “creational law” and “positive law.”
- **Creational law** = law native to man created in God’s moral image; it is called, “natural or moral” law.
- This was written on Adam’s heart at creation. As a moral and righteous image bearer of God, he would have been created with this law written on his heart.
- This law was eventually codified at Sinai...the 10 Commandments
- It was also simplified by Jesus...2 Commandments
- **Positive law**...what is this? It is any law that is in addition to God’s creational or moral law.
- In Genesis 2 we find that God gave Adam a positive precept...what was it?
- “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...” Gen. 2:16-17
- In other words, by following creational law Adam would have never known NOT to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- The entire moral law is narrowed down to a small phrase...do not eat of that tree.
- This single command had the essence of the entire moral law in it. It was the condensing of the 10 commandments down to a single rule.
- Why does this matter? Because the MORAL law in Adam by creation was NOT the Covenant of Works UNTIL the positive command was added to it.
- Think about this: Adam, because he is a rational and moral creature, owes God obedience simply because he is created by God. Adam had a responsibility to obey God based on creation.
- But, does God have any obligation or responsibility to Adam?
- “The very act of creation brings the creature under obligation to the Creator, but it cannot bring the Creator into obligation to the creature.” AA Hodge
- So, the moment God put Adam in the garden and give him stipulations, God was making a covenant with him. Thus, God was relating to Adam through the framework of covenant.
- What did God expect from Adam in this covenant relationship?
- Perfect obedience and perpetual obedience.

3. What is the Penalty for disobedience?

- Death – “in the day you eat of it you shall surely die.” Literally, “dying you shall die.”
- To die = to separate
- Three aspects of death:
 - Physical = separation of the body and soul
 - Spiritual = separation of the soul from God
 - Eternal = separation of the soul from God’s presence for all eternity

4. What is the promise for obedience?

- Life...eternal life.
- The promise, which is the opposite of the threat, was a life BETTER than Adam was created with. Remember, covenants are made by God with man for improvement and betterment. So, whatever life Adam had in creation, it was LESS than it could be in covenant.
- Adam was created a mutable being. He had the ability to sin or not to sin. His condition was changeable. He was created sinless, perfect, in fellowship with God, but also changeable.
- Adam was NOT created in a condition or state that could be called “glory.” Why not? Because we know that he sinned and fell short of the glory of God.
- So, Adam was created in a state that could have been improved.
- If Adam had obeyed, then his reward would have been “unchangeable blessedness.” (Pink)
- How do we know this?
- The Penalty: if this was death, then the reward had to be life.
- Tree of Life: had Adam obeyed, he would have eaten from this tree and would have had life eternal.
- “Then the Lord God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also the tree of life and eat, and live forever...’; therefore, the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden” Genesis 3:22-23
- NT Testimony:
 - “If you would enter life, keep the commandments.” Matthew 19:17
 - “The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me.” Romans 7:10
 - If the law had been kept, it would have brought eternal life to Adam and all his descendants

That is a description of the Covenant of Works...

Mentioned in the confession: 4.2, 4.3; 6.1; 19.1; 7.1; 20.1

What happened? Adam ate from the tree and broke the covenant. What does this mean for us?

Conclusion – Three observations

[1] We are all born under the broken covenant of works.

- Therefore, we remain under the curse of that broken covenant. Every person is conceived and born under the broken covenant of works and exist under its original curse.

- In other words, the original covenant of works that the first man was under has not gone away. It is very much still in force. It still demands perfect and perpetual obedience and threatens death for any transgression.
- Humanity is now helpless, standing under the curse, deserving only condemnation. Man is in the kingdom of sin and darkness and owes God a debt he is incapable of paying. God will not reduce the bill...He still demands full payment, which is perfect righteousness. God always demands 100% effort, but because of what man has become, he is incapable of giving even 1%.
- "...Though the Lord be free from performing His condition, that is, from giving man eternal life, yet so is not man [free] from his part; no, though strength to obey be lost, it is by his own default, and the obligation to obedience still remains; so that Adam and his offspring are no more discharged of their duties, because they have no strength to obey them, than a debtor is acquitted of his bond, because he lacks the money to pay it." Edward Fisher, *Marrow of Divinity*, 39.
- The law shows no mercy...it can only pronounce judgment.
- "...all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law." Rom. 2:12
- "under the law" = under the law as a broken covenant of works; it doesn't necessarily mean he is under the law as a creature is to his Creator.
- Man is born "under the law" as both creature and covenant breaker. This means that every single person born into this world is born as a covenant breaker!
- So, a summary statement: man is born, lives and dies under the law as a broken covenant of works.
- **Born under the law**
- We "...were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind." Ephesians 2:3
- We are born under the just wrath of God as covenant breaker in Adam
- Every unsaved person is a covenant breaker...he is under law, not grace
- Adam's covenant violation is now attributed to us because Adam is our federal head, our covenant representative. We are born "in Adam."
- This is one of the reasons that we don't baptize our children. Why? Because they are not in Christ until they are taken out of Adam. They are born in Adam and must be re-born in Christ.
- One of the things that our paedobaptist friends like to accuse of us is denying our children the status of "covenant children." As Baptists we don't deny that our children are covenant children—from conception they are members of Adam's broken covenant!
- It is not until they are "in Christ" that they should receive the sign of the new covenant, which is baptism.
- **Lives under the law**
- To be "under the law" = to be under sin
- Both the guilt and filth of Adam's sin have been imputed to us because of this broken covenant.

- We are not under sin as a slave to sin, in bondage to sin.
- We live in a body of death, as spiritually dead men.
- “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” Romans 7:24
- **Dies under the law**
- If they die unforgiven, they die under the curse of an unfulfilled covenant of works and they remain under it for all eternity.
- They will pay for all their sins committed under this covenant as covenant breakers
- If Adam’s single sin deserved eternal death for him and his descendants, how much more wrath does a life-time of sin deserve?

[2] We need a Savior.

- And we have been given One. The Bible refers to Jesus as the second Adam.
- “The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.” 1 Cor. 15:45
- The covenant of works was made with a representative, a sinless image bearing son of God. It could only be fulfilled by a representative, a sinless image bearing Son of God.
- Adam is a type of Christ, which means that Jesus came like the 1st Adam as the covenant head of His race.
- Adam = human race; Christ = elect race
- Just as God entered a covenant with the 1st Adam, He entered a covenant with the 2nd Adam...the covenant of redemption.
- Christ suffered the curse of the law as a broken covenant of works.
- “For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, ‘Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law and do them.’ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for ‘the righteous shall live by faith.’ But the law is not of faith, rather, ‘The one who does them shall live by them.’ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:10-14
- The “curse” refers to Genesis 2.
- Paul quotes from Deuteronomy. So, the covenant with Moses is in some sense republished a covenant of works principle, which echoed the covenant in Eden.
- “You shall therefore keep My statutes and My rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the Lord God.” Leviticus 18:5
- Paul also mentions a redemption. Christ delivers us from the curse. What curse? The one mentioned in Genesis 2:15-17.
- “the curse of the law” – Jesus bore the agony and pain of God’s holy righteous wrath; all of that wrath, all of that curse found in this phrase Jesus endured in His body on the cross in our place.

- Christ also secured eternal life for us.
- What the 1st Adam failed to attain, Christ earned for us.
- The 1st Adam fell short of the glory of God; the 2nd Adam fulfilled the Covenant of Works and now brings many sons to glory (Heb 2:10)!
- In Christ we are now invited to partake of the tree of life:
- “To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.” Revelation 2:7
- Christ, now, returns us to the Garden. It is a greater paradise: no serpent, no death, no ability to sin.

[3] In Christ, we are blessed.

- By grace we are transferred from Adam and his broken covenant of works to Christ and His new covenant of grace.
- We are no longer under the law as a covenant of works, but rather, a rule of life.
- 3 Blessings
 - The law no longer **CONDEMNS** us as a covenant of works
 - It no longer says to us, “Sin and die.”
 - “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1
 - To be in Christ is to no longer be in Adam, and this means we are no longer under the broken covenant of works
 - The law can no longer condemn us. It looks upon us in Christ as having perfectly met its just and holy demands
 - Pilate, “I find no fault in Him.”
 - Law, “I find no fault in them who are in Him.”
 - The law still does convict, but it no longer condemns. Your flesh and the devil want to convince you that you are still under the covenant of works, and then condemn you. But in Christ the law no longer condemns.
 - The law no longer **COMMANDS** as a covenant of works.
 - It no longer says to us, “obey and you will live.” In Christ we are now in the New Covenant of Grace, which says, “Because you live, obey.”
 - “Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to Him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.” Romans 7:4
 - We are now married to Christ. The result? Fruit.
 - Ordinarily, marriages result/produce fruit.
 - The law no longer **AGITATES** us as a covenant of works
 - Agitate = trouble, disturb, stir up
 - By nature, the law agitates us

- “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.” Romans 8:7
- It agitates because natively we only have hostility towards God and His commands
- This changes for those who are in Christ, in the New Covenant
- He now writes it on our minds and hearts, giving us delight and joy in His law
- He gives the Holy Spirit, who enables us to comply with the law
- He sets before us His dying love as an example... “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

Why We Are Baptists

Part 4

Covenant Theology

The basic question: how does God save sinners?

Basic covenant theology speaks of 3 covenants: redemption, works and grace

There are 7 covenants mentioned in the Bible:

--Adam	--Levi
--Noah	--David
--Abraham	--Jesus
--Moses	

So, covenant theology traces God's plan of redemption through these divine covenants. In other words, the answer to the question – how does God save sinners? – is revealed in how God relates to man in covenants.

Our definition of covenant: "A divinely sanctioned relationship, initiated by God with man, where God promises to better man's condition."

Sherlock Holmes joke

The point is that covenant theology can be very complex, even though it is dealing with a simple issue (salvation). There are thousands of books written on CT, and it can be very confusing and mind numbing at times. So, our goal with these podcasts is not to cover every single issue of CT, but to hopefully provide a simple overview from a Baptist perspective...

If you were to just read straight through the Bible, you would notice that God kept making covenants with people, especially in the OT. You might then ask, "What does this mean? Why is God doing this? How do I wrap my head around all these covenants?"

Well, when you get to the NT, you would discover the answer to some of those questions. Before we talk about the Covenant of Grace, it is important to mention something that is called a "hermeneutical principle."

Q: What are hermeneutics?

[1] One primary interpretive rule is this: the finality and clarity of the New Testament.

"The NT is the final and clearest revelation of God to man, and men must not add to it by alleged further revelations. The NT is clearer than the OT because it finally and authoritatively interprets the OT types and shadows, not because the OT was unclear as a revelation of God." Fred Malone

[2] Another rule: the priority of the NT.

“The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed.” Augustine

“Because the ‘Old is in the New revealed,’ there must be a final dependence upon the NT revelation to determine how the OT is fulfilled in it.”

Progressive Revelation...God reveals Himself and His will not all at once, but in a progression. In other words, His plan of salvation is unfolded throughout the Bible until it is completely revealed in the NT with Jesus Christ.

WCF 1.9 and 1689: “The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture, it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.”

Both the OT and NT are equally the Word of God. But the NT gives us greater insight into the teachings of the OT and reveals the gospel more fully to us than does the Old. So, the greater weight should be placed on NT revelation, which speaks “more clearly.”

So, for example, let’s take the dietary laws of the OT – no pork. But we eat pork today as Christians. Why?

Another one: the Passover Meal. In the NT this now becomes the Lord’s Supper. And we know from the teaching of the NT that it has been changed. In the OT, children partook of the Passover, since everyone in the house was commanded to do so. But in the NT, we cannot find a command to include babies in the Lord’s Supper. In fact, we are told in 1 Corinthians 11 that participation includes the ability to examine oneself prior to coming to the table, lest he eat and drink unworthily and bring judgment on himself.

So, the NT is sufficient to regulate and explain what we see in the OT. This is another reason why we don’t baptize babies. The NT is clear on baptism – every example given is of a professing believer in Christ. There isn’t one example or command in the NT to baptize babies, but there is a clear command to baptize disciples. Only those who have heard the gospel and believed are to be baptized, according to the NT.

“It may be said at the outset that there is no explicit command in the Bible to baptize children, and there that is not a single instance in which we are plainly told that children were baptized...the NT contains no direct evidence for the practice of infant baptism in the days of the apostles.” Berkhof (*Systematic Theology*, p. 634)

“We do not have an overt and proven instance of infant baptism recorded in the New Testament...It is only too apparent that if we had an express command or even a proven case

with apostolic sanction, then the controversy would not have arisen; or at least it would be of a very different sort.” John Murray (*Christian Baptism*, p. 66, 69)

“In every case on record of [the apostles’] administering the rite, it was on condition of a profession of faith on the part of the recipient.” Charles Hodge

“...we who believe in infant baptism must confess that the lack of any specific example of infant baptism in the NT is a strong counterweight to our position.” Bryan Chapell

“It is true that there is no express command to baptize infants in the NT, no express record of the baptism of infants, and no passages so stringently implying it that we must infer from them that infants were baptized.” BB Warfield

So, if the NT is clear, why do some baptize babies? Listen to Warfield again:

“...the warrant for infant baptism is not to be sought in the NT, but in the OT.”

This is where Baptists differ from those who baptize babies – we read and interpret the Bible differently. We have a different hermeneutic.

“If infant baptism had been any appointment or ordinance of Jesus Christ, there would have been some precept, command, or example in the Scripture to warrant the same; but inasmuch as the Scripture is so wholly silent therein, there being not one syllable to be found in all the NT about any such practice, it may well be concluded to be no ordinance of Jesus Christ; for where the Scripture has no tongue, we ought to have no ear...” Henry Danvers (*A Treaty on Baptism*, 1674)

“It is my firm conviction that of all the truths revealed in the Holy Scriptures, none is clearer than the truth in regard to baptism...and that the truth is obscured solely because inquirers are not willing to let the Bible alone answer the question.”

George Muller

Now, why all this talk about hermeneutics? About the finality, clarity and priority of the NT? Because our understanding of divine covenants is shaped by the teaching of the NT.

Progressive revelation helps us understand the story of salvation that God planned before the foundation of the world. **What do we mean by progressive revelation?**

1689 7.2 “...it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace, wherein He freely offers unto sinners life and salvation through Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life, His Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.”

1689 7.3 “This covenant is revealed in the gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by further steps, until the full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament...”

This is a major Baptist distinctive. Baptists hold the position that God has progressively revealed His redemptive plan through divine covenants, but that these divine covenants were NOT how men were redeemed.

Illustration – puzzle game, where a panel is revealed showing you part of a picture and you have to guess what the whole picture is...that is how the covenants worked in the OT...they were the “further steps” that God used to fully reveal His salvation in Jesus Christ.

Let’s go back to Genesis for a minute. Last time we walked through the Covenant of Works and saw that Adam broke that covenant. As our federal head, when he fell we all fell. All of us are born under the broken covenant of works as covenant breakers. We are born under the curse of this broken covenant. The penalty is death. As we discussed last time, we need a Savior, someone who can fulfill this covenant and rescue us.

The gospel is the good news that God indeed has provided a Savior for us—His Son Jesus Christ. But, this good news doesn’t show up with Jesus shows up in history. God actually reveals it to us in the OT.

“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.” Genesis 3:15

This verse is called the protoevangelium, which means, “first gospel.” I used the KJV for a reason: notice the word “seed.” That is an important word in covenant theology. **What is meant by the “seed”?**

In this verse we have the promise of salvation. God promises that One is coming who will reverse the curse and take care of our enemy. The more you read into the OT, the more you begin to see how God reveals more and more of what this promise means. When you get to the NT, we begin to put all the pieces together to help us understand all these covenants and how they explain the way in which God saves sinners.

[1] “...remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” Ephesians 2:12

So, the OT covenants were “covenants of promise.” Promise of what? The coming of Christ, that was first promised in Genesis 3:15.

[2] “For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two

covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery...now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise..." Galatians 4:22-28

We are told that there are two covenants. What about the 7 covenants God makes with man? They can be grouped into two: old and new.

So, here is the next question: what is the Old Covenant? It is the covenant of works, and it can be summarized with these words, "Obey and live."

We see this clearly in the **Garden of Eden**.

But we also see it in the Covenant God made with **Abraham**. How does the NT describe this covenant?

"And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs." Acts 7:8

And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant." Genesis 17:9-14

- To be circumcised was to pledge full obedience to God.
- "I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law." Galatians 5:3
- Same formula...do this and live. Disobey and be cut off.

The same understanding applies to the Mosaic Covenant. Now, we will talk about this later, but God promised certain blessings to Abraham and the nation if they kept the covenant. Later, God makes a covenant with Moses that conditioned the enjoyment of those promises and blessings. So, the same formula seen in Eden appears again on Sinai: obey and be blessed; disobey and be cursed.

- "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..." Exodus 19:5
- "You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the Lord." Leviticus 18:5

- “You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment and the statutes and the rules that I command you today. And because you listen to these rules and keep and do them, the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant...” Deuteronomy 7:11-12a
- “See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and the curse if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way I am commanding you today...” Deut. 11:26-28
- “And if you forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that **you shall surely perish.**” Deut. 8:19 [Where have we heard those words before?]
- “Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.” Deuteronomy 27:26
- “These are the words of the covenant that the Lord commanded Moses to make with the people of Israel...the anger of the Lord and His jealousy will smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book will settle upon him, and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven.” Deut. 29:1, 20
- “Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters of stone...” 2 Cor. 3:7 [Paul refers to the Old Covenant, the Law, as a ministry of death. Why?]
- “What shall we say then? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, ‘You shall not covet.’ But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceiving me and through it killed me.” Romans 7:7-11
- Herman Witsius, “...we more especially remark, that, when the law was given from Mount Sinai or Horeb, there was a repetition of the covenant of works.” (Economy of the Covenants)
- Meredith Kline, “...the Sinaitic Covenant made inheritance to be by law, not by promise—not by faith, but by works.” (By Oath Consigned, p. 23)
- John Owen, “The old covenant...renewed the commands of the covenant of works, and that on their original terms. Sin if forbade, that is, all and every sin, in matter and manner, on the pain of death; and gave the promise of life to perfect, sinless obedience only...It [Mosaic Covenant] revived the sanction of the first covenant, in the curse or sentence of death which is denounced against all transgression.”

John Owen was a huge factor in the development of Baptist Covenant Theology. In fact, the majority opinion in the 17th C among paedos was that the Mosaic Covenant was indeed a republication or re-iteration of the covenant of works. That was the dominant view. The Baptists agreed...and they took Owen’s exegetical and hermeneutical tools and applied them to all the covenants. Therefore, they said the Old Covenant could not be divided or disconnected among the individual covenants. The Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic covenants combined to form what is called the Old Covenant, which was law, not grace; works, not faith.

- God also progressively reveals His redemptive plan through types and shadows.
- “Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.” Col. 2:16-17

[3] “And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’ Matthew 26:27-28

“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.” Hebrews 9:15

So, there are two covenants – old and new. Jesus’ words echo Jeremiah:

- “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 I made with their fathers...My covenant that they broke...” Jeremiah 31:31-32
- This new covenant is called the “Covenant of Grace” in Covenant Theology. It has some other names: Covenant of Salvation; Covenant of Peace (seals up reconciliation between God and man...before this only enmity); and the Covenant of Sabbath (7 covenants; 7 days of creation...rest)
- The Covenant of Grace is the outworking of the Covenant of Redemption and the fulfillment of the Covenant of Works.
- What this means is that in the New Covenant man relates differently to God—by faith, not by works.
- Not only is this covenant NEW (not renewed), but BETTER according to Hebrews.
- “...Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant (7:22)
- “...He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.” (8:6)
- “...better sacrifice...” (9:23)
- “...better country, that is, a heavenly one.” (11:16)
- “...a better resurrection” (11:35)
- “...and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.” (12:24)

So, what does better mean? Two options: in class or in nature. For example, we go to a restaurant and you order the steak, I get the fish. I taste your steak, you taste my fish, and I say, “You ordered the better meal.” They are both food, one is just better in class than the other.

But, what if you give your wife cubic zirconium and I give mine diamonds. The nature of the diamond is better than that of cubic zirconium, right?

So, look at Hebrews 1:1-4:

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels, as the name He inherited is more excellent than theirs.”

The writer is not saying that Jesus is in the same class as the angels, just better. He isn't a better kind of angel than all the others. He is better in nature – He is different than the angels.

So, the New Covenant isn't better because it is bigger. It is better because it is altogether different than the Old Covenant.

Why We Are Baptist – Part 6

The Covenant of Grace pt 2

Intro: A couple of comments before we get into it...

- We are not “seasoned” covenant theologians...we have much to learn.
- There is great diversity within CT...saw an interested Twitter exchange between 2 1689 guys who disagreed on some aspect of CT
- If you want to hear a GREAT discussion of 1689 Federalism, then check out the Reformed Northwest podcast...5 episodes on 1689 by Brandon Adams, who is the guy who supposedly coined the term “1689 Federalism.”

Last time: Basic hermeneutics...

- The finality, clarity, and priority of the NT when it comes to interpretation
- Progressive revelation...LBCF 7.3
- Example: Adam is made in God’s image. But in Luke 2 we are also told that he is a “son of God.” We get more information later, that helps us to understand more fully God’s Word to us.
- Another one: Hosea 6:7—covenant with Adam. The word “covenant” isn’t used in Gen 1-2, but we are told in later revelation that apparently Adam broke a covenant...

So, as Baptists we see clearly in the OT how God related to man through covenants. But we let the NT shape how we understand those covenants.

[1] They were covenants of promise (Eph. 2:12). We are told in Gen. 3:15, that God made a promise that someone would come and do for us what Adam could not.

[2] There are two covenants: old and new (Gal. 4:22-28); one results in death and the other in life.

[3] The new covenant is better than the old

- Hebrews 7:22 tells us that Jesus is “the guarantor of a better covenant.
- “...Christ obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant He mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.” Hebrews 8:6
- “...and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant...” Hebrews 12:24
- What does “better” mean? Two options: in class or in nature. For example, we go to a restaurant and you order the filet mignon, and I order the hamburger. Both are from a cow, right? But a filet is a better class of beef than ground hamburger.

- Well, what if you gave your wife a cubic zirconium ring, and I gave my wife a diamond ring. The nature of the diamond is better than that of cubic zirconium, right? They aren't even in the same class – they are all together different.
- Hebrews 1:3-4, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made **so much better** than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
- Here is the question: is Christ in the same class of angels, just a better angel? Or is He altogether different, not even in the same class? Better in nature, not class. So, when the author of Hebrews uses the word "better," that is what he is referring to – not better in class, but in nature and substance. In other words, the New Covenant isn't the same nature as the Old Covenant. It isn't the old covenant "renewed," but rather, it is altogether new.

[4] The old covenant would become obsolete and would vanish.

"In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away." Hebrews 8:13

Here is a Baptist distinctive, at least a 1689 Baptist – The covenant of grace is the New Covenant, and only the New Covenant. Only the New Covenant bestows regeneration and faith. Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant, which was established in His blood...

"...this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins."
Matthew 26:28

We believe, as Baptists, that the New Covenant is union with Christ. To be saved is to be united to Christ by faith; to be in Christ. Everyone is either in Adam, or in Christ.

Remember, covenants describe how God relates to man and how man responds to God. In the OT, the basis of the relationship was obedience to the law. We failed, and now find ourselves under the wrath of God. We are children of wrath. But, since Christ came and fulfilled the covenant of works by His obedience, we now relate to God by faith. By faith we have become children of God, reconciled by Christ. This is something that the covenants of promise could not do; but it is what they pointed to. **The OT anticipated the new covenant, which is the covenant of grace.**

- The post-fall covenants (Noah, Abraham, Moses, Levi, David) are not THE covenant of grace, but rather, echo Eden.

"And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.'" Gen. 9:1

- They are all, except Noah, connected by conditions. “Do this and live.” The covenant with Noah is unconditional...Genesis 8:8-17
- This doesn't mean that God's grace is non-existent; these are gracious covenants. But they are gracious, legal covenants. Blessed if you obey; cursed if you don't. Conditional.

So, in the OT the covenant of grace is anticipated. But in Jesus, the covenant of grace has arrived. It is promised in the OT, fulfilled in the NT. In the old, it is on the way; in the new, it has arrived in the person of Jesus Christ.

Anticipated in the Old (Much of the following is from Brandon Adam's notes)

Adam – Gen 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.”

- This is the first promise of the gospel which is unfolded in the OT
- How long did Adam live? 930 years...teaching all his descendants about this promise

Noah – how long after Adam died was Noah born? 126 years...which means that many people who were alive when Adam was walking around were alive when Noah was born. So, even though it had been 1,000 years since God first made the promise of salvation in Genesis 3, people still knew about it, still talked about it, still looked for it.

“When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son and called his name Noah, saying, ‘Out of the ground that the Lord has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.’” Genesis 5:28

- The Hebrew word *Noah* sounds like the Hebrew word for *rest*.
- After the flood, God makes a unilateral, unconditional covenant with Noah, his descendants, and every living creature – what was it?
- The purpose of this covenant was to guarantee that God would achieve His eternal purposes to save a particular people, and that the work of redemption would proceed until accomplished. It is a covenant of preservation; the earth is preserved for the sake of the promise.
- Symbol is a rainbow...a warrior's bow, held at rest.

Abraham – Noah died 2 years before Abraham was born, and we are told that he was a preacher of righteousness. So, knowledge of this promise existed in the culture.

We could spend 10 shows just on the covenant with Abraham, but here is a simple way to grasp what the Bible reveals about it: one covenant, two promises.

- Physical promise: that his seed will possess the land of Canaan
- Spiritual promise: all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him

“And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Genesis 12:2-3

The Physical Promise

2 Aspects:

- [1] Land
 - Certain boundaries
 - Would gradually drive out enemies

- [2] Descendants
 - Numerous as the “stars of heaven”
 - Nations of Kings

The physical promise was conditional upon Abraham’s obedience...

Gen 17:1-2 When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you and may multiply you greatly.”

Gen 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. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you...Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin **shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.**”

***So, here is the question: did God fulfill this physical aspect of the covenant? Yes, when He brought them out of Egypt into the land of Canaan...this leads us to Moses.

Moses – God calls him to lead His people out of bondage into the fulfillment of His physical promises to Abraham.

Ex 2:24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

Ex 6:2-8 God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. Say therefore to the people of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. **I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.** I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord.”

The physical promise was conditional upon the obedience of the people...

Ex 19:3-8 “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.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.” So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. **All the people answered together and said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do.”**

Deut 29:9-15 “**Therefore keep the words of this covenant and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do.** You are standing today, all of you, before the Lord your God...so that you may enter into the sworn covenant of the Lord your God, which the Lord your God is making with you today, that he may establish you today as his people, and that he may be your God, as **he promised you, and as he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.**”

In this covenant, Moses is the mediator. He delivered the law, and if there was a question or a situation, he would meet with God in the “Tent of Meeting,” and God would give him direction. Then he would return and stand before the people. So, he mediated between God and man.

This covenant was also a covenant of works for life and blessing in the Promised Land.

Deut 27:9-13 Then Moses and the Levitical priests said to all Israel, “You shall therefore obey the voice of the Lord your God, keeping his commandments and his statutes, which I command you today.” That day Moses charged the people, saying, “When you have crossed over the Jordan, these shall stand on **Mount Gerizim to bless** the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. And these shall stand on **Mount Ebal for the curse**: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.”

What follows in Deut 28-29 is a list of blessings and curses, based on their obedience.

Blessings

Deut 28:1

“And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God.”

- Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field
- The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you
- The Lord will establish you as a people holy to himself, as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in his ways
- The Lord will make you the head and not the tail, and you shall only go up and not down, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, being careful to do them, and if you do not turn aside from any of the words that I command you today, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.”

Curses

“But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.”

- Cursed shall you be in the city and cursed shall you be in the field. Cursed shall you be when you come in and cursed shall you be when you go out.
- The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. And you shall be a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. **And your dead body shall be food for all birds of the air and for the beasts of the earth, and there shall be no one to frighten them away.**
- “All these curses shall come upon you and pursue you and overtake you **till you are destroyed**, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that he commanded you.
- Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things, therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you...and he will put a yoke of iron on your neck **until he has destroyed you.**
- Whereas you were as numerous as the stars of heaven, you shall be left few in number, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God. **And as the Lord took delight in doing you good and multiplying you, so the Lord will take delight in bringing ruin upon you and destroying you.** And you shall be plucked off the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

Remember the “Golden Calf”? How did God respond when He saw that?

Deut 9:13 “...the Lord said to me, ‘I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stubborn people. Let me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven.’”

Well, why didn’t He destroy them?

Deut 9:25-29 “So I lay prostrate before the Lord for these forty days and forty nights, because the Lord had said he would destroy you. And I prayed to the Lord, ‘O Lord God, do not destroy your people and your heritage, whom you have redeemed through your greatness, whom you have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. **Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.** Do not regard the stubbornness of this people, or their wickedness or their sin, **lest the land from which you brought us say, ‘Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land that he promised them,** and because he hated them, he has brought them out to put them to death in the wilderness.’”

The reason God didn’t wipe them out is because the physical promise to Abraham had not yet been fulfilled... but it will be.

Josh 21:43-45 **Thus the Lord gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers.** And they took possession of it, and they settled there. And the Lord gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the Lord had given all their enemies into their hands. **Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.**

They were considered as numerous as the stars of heaven:

Deut 1:10 “The Lord your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are today as numerous as the stars of heaven.”

1 Kgs 4:20 Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea. They ate and drank and were happy.

Another promise is the gradual expansion of their territory...

Ex 23:30-33 “Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and possess the land. And I will set your border from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates, for I will give the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you. You shall make no covenant with them and their gods. They shall not dwell in

your land, lest they make you sin against me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.”

Deut 19:1-9 When the Lord your God cuts off the nations whose land the Lord your God is giving you, and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses, you shall set apart three cities [of refuge] for yourselves in the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess...and **if the Lord your God enlarges your territory, as he has sworn to your fathers, and gives you all the land that he promised to give to your fathers**— provided you are careful to keep all this commandment, which I command you today, by loving the Lord your God and by walking ever in his ways—then you shall add three other cities to these three...

Josh 20:7-8 So they set apart **Kedesh** in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, and **Shechem** in the hill country of Ephraim, and **Kiriath-arba** (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. And beyond the Jordan east of Jericho, they appointed **Bezer** in the wilderness on the tableland, from the tribe of Reuben, and **Ramoth** in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, and **Golan** in Bashan, from the tribe of Manasseh.

Part of the fulfillment is that their enemies are driven away from the land...

Deut 7:22 The Lord your God will clear away these nations before you **little by little**. You may not make an end of them at once, lest the wild beasts grow too numerous for you. But the Lord your God will give them over to you and throw them into great confusion, until they are destroyed.

This happens with the Judges, who defeat the enemies of Israel; it continues with the Kings, beginning with Saul. But it is David who finally drives out all their enemies.

2 Sam 7:1 Now when the king lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies...

At this point, God enters into a covenant with **David**.

“I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make you a great name...and I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them...and violent men shall afflict them no more. And I will give you rest from all your enemies...I will establish the throne of his [meaning his son Solomon] kingdom forever. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

Ps 132: 11-12 The Lord swore to David a sure oath from which He will not turn back: “One of

the sons of your body I will set on your throne. If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies that I shall teach them, their sons also forever shall sit on your throne.”

So, what God is saying is that when the land has been expanded, the enemies have been defeated, and the throne of David established, then He has fulfilled His physical promise to Abraham.

1 Kgs 4:20 Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea. They ate and drank and were happy. Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life...For he had dominion over all the region west of the Euphrates from Tiphshah to Gaza, over all the kings west of the Euphrates. And he had peace on all sides around him. And Judah and Israel lived in safety, from Dan even to Beersheba, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of Solomon.

Neh 9:7 You are the Lord, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham. You found his heart faithful before you and made with him the covenant to give to his offspring the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Girgashite. And **you have kept your promise, for you are righteous.**

But this covenant is also conditional...

1 Kgs 9 “...if you will walk before me, as David your father walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you, and keeping my statutes and my rules, then I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father...”

“But, if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given them, and the house that I have consecrated for myself will be cast out of my sight, and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples.”

“And this house will become a heap of ruins. Everyone passing by will be astonished and hiss, and they will say, ‘Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?’ Then they will say, ‘Because they abandoned the Lord their God...and laid hold of other gods and worshiped them and served them. Therefore, the Lord has brought all this disaster on them.’”

Remember Moses' prayer from earlier? "Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land that he promised them" They won't say that, because He has brought them in!

Now the physical promises to Abraham concerning a people and a land are completely fulfilled. If they want to stay in the land, they must obey Mosaic law. In the past, God's curse for disobedience was prevented from falling on the nation because the physical promise was not yet fulfilled. But now it is...and if they disobey, they will experience the full curse of God upon them. He promised them blessing and He promised them curses. He will keep His Word.

So, what happened? Solomon sinned. How?

As a result, God was going to tear the kingdom from him. This was the beginning of the end of Israel...

1 Kgs 11 "Now King Solomon loved many foreign women...from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the people of Israel, 'You shall not enter into marriage with them...for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.' Solomon clung to those he loved."

And his wives turned away his heart...after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God...for Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord...

And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel...therefore the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you...yet for the sake of David your father, I will not do it in your days but I will tear it out of the hand of your son.

However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen..."

What happens next is the "divided kingdom" – 10 tribes in the North called Israel, and 2 tribes in the South called Judah. It is important to remember that the promise to Abraham no longer protects Israel.

God sends preachers to the north...like Jeremiah.

Jer 7:32 Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when it will no more be called...the Valley of the Son...but the Valley of Slaughter...and the dead bodies of this people will be food for the birds of the air, and for the beasts of the earth, and **none will frighten them away.**

This last phrase reminds us of Genesis 15, when God made the covenant with Abraham. Remember how Abraham took a heifer, a female goat, and a ram and cut them in half? Well, there is this strange verse at the end of that account...

“And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, **Abram drove them away.**” Genesis 15:11

God is saying that destruction is coming upon Israel, and there is no one to protect them...since the physical promise of the Abrahamic Covenant was fulfilled.

They don't repent, so God sends Assyria to wipe out Israel in 722BC. This is the end of Israel. The OT prophets spoke of this:

Hos 1:4 “I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.”

Hos 1:6 “Call her name No Mercy, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. But I will have mercy on the house of Judah...When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. And the Lord said, “Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people and I am not your God.”

Hos 1:10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, “You are not my people,” it shall be said to them, “Children of the living God.” And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head.

Hos 2:23 And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, ‘You are my people’; and he shall say, ‘You are my God.’ [Q: *When will this happen?*]

Hos 3:5 Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness **in the latter days.**

So, Israel is going to be destroyed, and yet God seems to say that there will be a restoration of sorts. All that is left is Judah to the south.

1 Kgs 8:18 “Jeroboam (king of Judah) did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. Yet the Lord was not willing to destroy Judah, for the sake of David his servant, since he promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever.”

Notice how the story funnels down from 12 tribes to 1. Even though Judah had sinned, and is worthy of destruction, God hasn't fulfilled the spiritual promise yet...that One would come from

the family of Abraham and bless the nations. We learn that he is coming from the tribe of Judah. So, the nation is preserved because of God's promise to Abraham.

But they do go into Exile into Babylon for 70 years. Before that God sent preachers to share His word with the people.

Isa 7:14 Behold, the virgin **shall** conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isa 9:6-7 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder...of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom...

Isa 11 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

In that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea. He will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Isa 14:1 For the Lord will have compassion on Jacob and **will again choose Israel**, and will set them in their own land, and sojourners will join them and will attach themselves to the house of Jacob.

[This is a NEW choosing...it will be different than the first. How?]

Isa 19:25 In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the Lord of hosts has blessed, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance."

[In the future, God's people will include more than just one nation...the is a prophecy of the new covenant.]

Isa 42:1,6 Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I will give **you as a covenant** for the people...

Isa 49 The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name...

And now the Lord says... "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."

Any he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified." I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land...

[So, a servant will come, named Israel, and be a covenant to the people]

Isa 54 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 not to be angry with you and will not rebuke you. For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of people shall not be removed...

All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children.

[Like the days of Noah...this new covenant will be like that one: unconditional]

Jer 3:8 Judah saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet the treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore...

Jer 30:3 ...behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, says the Lord, and I will bring them back to the land that I gave to their fathers...

Jer 30:22 And you shall be my people, and I will be your God

Jer 30:24 In the latter days you will understand this.

Jer 31 "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."

- Jer 33 Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'
- Ezek 11 Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God: Though I removed them far off among the nations, and though I scattered them among the countries, yet...I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.' And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.
- Ezek 34:25 I will make with them a covenant of peace...And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them...and I the Lord will be their God.
- Ezek 36 Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name...I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness...and I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.
- Ezek 39 Then they shall know that I am the Lord their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations and then assembled them into their own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations anymore. And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord God.

So, what is going on with all this? The first promise to Abraham about his offspring according to the flesh inheriting the land of Canaan has been fulfilled. They are now beginning to experience the Old Covenant curse for their disobedience. Meanwhile, the second Abrahamic promise—in you all the nations will be blessed—is nearing fulfillment.

Israel has been cut off, divorced. They are no longer God's people. Judah has been spared, but only until Christ comes. Then they will also begin to suffer the curses.

But, God speaks of a new covenant that He will make with a new Israel. This new Israel will include Gentiles, and its kingdom will spread throughout the world. The covenant will be accomplished by one particular servant, named Israel, who will actually be given as a covenant to the people, which is the New Covenant. Those in this covenant will be given a new heart, be taught of the Lord inwardly, and have their sins forgiven.

All of this had been prophesied by Moses:

Deut 30 "...the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you. And the Lord your **God will circumcise your heart** and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul..."

John Calvin said this passage "properly refers to the New Covenant"

So, the OT ends with Malachi telling us that God is going to send his messenger to prepare the way for the One promised to come. "But who can endure the day of His coming, and who can stand when He appears?" The answer is no one – when Jesus arrives the promise to Judah is fulfilled and there is no more protection for them from the curse...no one to drive away the birds.

Matt 3:1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand..." But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children of Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the tree..."

[This refers to the end of the Old Covenant. In 70AD when Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, the Old Covenant officially ended, along with any special status Abraham's physical offspring had.]

Jesus has come – Isaiah's servant named Israel – who will make a new covenant with His people, by His blood ["This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood..."].

Heb 9:15 "...he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called my receive the promised eternal inheritance."

The New Covenant reflects the Noahic covenant in that it is unconditional.

Jesus is the spiritual fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, being the One offspring promised to be a blessing to the nations.

Jesus fulfilled the Mosaic covenant in that He didn't come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it.

Jesus fulfilled the Davidic covenant in His resurrection from the dead.

So, having fulfilled the promises and conditions of the Old Covenant, Jesus has established a new covenant, which is a better covenant with better promises mediated by a better mediator.

How do we know? Because at Pentecost, He poured out His Spirit in fulfillment of those "latter day" prophecies.

Acts 2 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God; and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

So, now, in the New Covenant, we become sons of Abraham through re-birth, not birth; through personal faith, not parental faith.

Gal 3:7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham...

Gal 3:13-14 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us...so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

Gal 3:27-29 ...as many of you were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

So, what we have is a NEW covenant...one of a different substance than the Old Covenant. This covenant is unconditional and unbreakable.

The sacrifices of the Old purified the flesh, but the sacrifice of Christ now purifies our consciences. In the Old, the external is circumcised, but in the New we experience a circumcision not made by hands, as the Lord inwardly circumcises our hearts.

In the New, our sins are forgiven, completely. The Old couldn't provide complete forgiveness. In the Old, there were many sacrifices for sins, but in the New there is one sacrifice for all time.

In the Old, the law was written on tablets of stone, but in the New it is written on our hearts. In the OT, the law written on tablets was kept in the Ark, which was kept in the Temple. The temple was the repository of God's law. But in the New, we are the temple of God. To have His law written on our hearts is about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, since God no longer dwells in a temple made with hands, but in His people.

In the Old, the covenant community was a right by generation; but in the New, we enter through regeneration, for by faith Jesus gives us the right to become children of God.

In the Old, the inheritance was the temporal land, but in the New our inheritance is eternal life and that "heavenly land."

The Old threatened us with curses; but in the New we only experience blessing, since Christ became a curse for us.

In the Old, you could be cut off from the covenant community for disobedience; but in the New, nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

In the Old, God divorced His people for their spiritual adultery and put them; but in the New, Jesus promises to never leave us or forsake us.

The Old couldn't provide rest; but the New is a covenant of rest.
7 days of creation = 7 covenants; the last one is about rest.

What is the 6th day? Saturday. And on the sixth day, Jesus was nailed to the cross and proclaimed, "It is finished." What was finished? All the work He was sent to do. Now, in Christ, we have rest.

And we testify to that reality with the signs of the New Covenant: believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper...