**October 2017**

**Covenants**

Foundation Scriptures

Hebrews 8: 6 – 13

* Better covenant with better promises.
* A new covenant with the house of Israel.
* No longer will the law be written on stone, but written in their hearts.

2 Corinthians 6: 16 18

* I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God and they shall be my people (that is an exceeding great and precious promise – 2 Peter 1: 4).
* He will be a Father to His children, not a judge. Jesus was judged and accepted the punishment for sin on our behalf.

Ephesians 2: 12

That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the ***covenants of promises***, having no hope (faith or confidence) and without God in this world” (*don’t forget verse 13 –* ***BUT NOW***).

Romans 9: 3 – 4 (NLT)

God made ‘***covenants***’ with Israel and gave them the law.

Covenant literally means to ‘cut’ – a pledge, agreement, alliance or contract. It is also referred to as a ‘testament’ or ‘will’.

A covenant is a formal binding agreement or promise between persons or groups. Covenants define man’s relationship with God. Through covenants, God discloses his purpose toward man.

The Bible is a book of covenants. God does not have relationship with man outside His covenants. It is a book of promises from God to man.

There are two types of covenants in Scripture:

* Unconditional covenant – I will do (God will do as He promises).
* Conditional covenant – If you will, I will (blessings are subject to obedience).

Eight covenants of God (two were made in blood)

* The Eden Covenant (conditional)
* The Adam Covenant
* The Noah Covenant
* The Abrahamic Covenant (blood)
* The Mosaic Covenant (covenant of law) (conditional)
* The Land Covenant (land promised to Israel)
* The David Covenant
* The New Covenant (blood)

2 Timothy 2: 15

Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

* Three groups of people in the earth – Jews, nations and Church of God
* Who is the recipient of the promise?
* All provisions of a covenant may not go into effect immediately.
  + Some straightaway.
  + Some in the near future.
  + Some in the prophetic future.

To understand covenant, we must go back to the beginning:

* God blessed man at the beginning but man broke relationship with God.
* God looked for a way to reinstate the blessing because he so longed to be back in fellowship with his man.
* Through Abraham, an everlasting covenant was established and fulfilled in Jesus. The blessing was back (Galatians 3: 13 -14).

**Edenic Covenant** (Conditional)

The first covenant that God made with mankind. Adam represented mankind and the terms of the covenant apply to all his descendants.

Genesis 1: 26 (Psalms 8: 6 - 8)

Man was to rule over God’s creation.

Seven provisions of the covenant

1. Be fruitful, multiply and replenish. The earth was created for and to be filled with mankind (Genesis 1: 28).
2. Subdue the earth. Make good use of its resources (Genesis 1: 28).
3. Have dominion (authority) over all living creatures (Genesis 1: 28 & Genesis 2: 19 - 20).
4. Plant based eating only. No blood of any kind was to be shed. Changed with Noah. To demand that people today abstain from meat and eat vegetarian would be a doctrine of devils (1 Timothy 4: 1 – 4).
5. Man was to tend the garden. Adam still has to work but not toil (Genesis 2: 15).
6. Man was forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. One law was at the heat of this covenant (Genesis 2. 17).
7. A penalty for disobedience – spiritual death (Genesis 2: 17).

* Adam failed and all mankind was accountable to God.
* We all fell short of the glory of God because man inherited ‘sin nature’.
* God was merciful and clothes them with animal skins. That required shedding of blood (Genesis 3: 21 & Hebrews 9: 22).
* God banished them from the garden out of mercy, for had they eaten from the tree of life, they would have lived forever in a ‘*spiritually fallen state’*, separated from God (Genesis 3: 23 – 24).
* But God had a plan – JESUS.

**Adamic Covenant** (Unconditional)

The impact of Adams sin had eternal consequences. Remember, the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.

Romans 5: 12

Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed unto all me, for that all have sinned.

Man’s separation from God did not catch the Father by surprise. He had a plan and purpose from the foundation of the world.

Ephesians 1: 3 – 5 & 11 (NLT)

Predestinated means to determine before.

God and Adam are involved in this covenant. Adam’s judgement is a judgement on all humanity.

Genesis 3: 14 – 19

Elements to this covenant:

* Curse upon the serpent
* There would be enmity (hostility/ hatred) between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman (Satan and Jesus).
  + John 15: 18 – 19
  + James 4: 4
  + 1 John 2: 15
  + 1 John 4: 4 – 6
  + Romans 16: 20
  + Romans 8: 7 - 8 (the carnal mind is hostile against God).
* Jesus was born of a virgin (Isaiah 7: 14). The seed was spiritual not natural. Hence the genealogy was traced through the woman, not man.
* Woman would have sorrow in childbirth.
* The ground was cursed.
* The body would return to dust.

Mankind is still for the most part under this covenant (born with sin nature, toil with a cursed earth, child birth pains and we all return to the dust after death).

**Noahic covenant** (Unconditional) 1056 years - 10 generations.

This covenant is between God and Noah. Noah like Adam is representative of the whole human race and because of the flood, humanity is not only descended from Adam, but also from Noah. Noah was 126 years old at Adams death.

Man had become extremely evil and God decided to wipe them out. Noah however, who walked with God, and was righteous in God’s eyes.

He made a covenant with Noah (Genesis 6: 5 - 13 & 18).

Genesis 8: 20 – 9: 17

* Man was to multiply and replenish the earth again.
* However, he had lost his authority over the earth.
  + John 12: 31 (prince of this world).
  + 2 Corinthians 4: 3 - 4 (god of this world).
  + Ephesians 2: 2 (prince of the power of the air).
  + Luke 4: 6 (Adam had handed his authority over to the devil).
* Still had authority over animals.
* Man became a meat and plant eater.
* Prohibited from eating the blood of animals.
* God required capital punishment.
* God declared that he would never again destroy the world with a flood.
* He confirmed that promise with a rainbow.
* This covenant is everlasting.

***Note:*** Noah’s sons became nations. Shem had a relationship with God. From Shem’s seed came Abraham and through Jacob the nation of Israel. Some theologians believe that Shem was in fact Melchizedek (priest of the most high God). Shem was still alive at the time of Abraham.

**Abrahamic Covenant** (Unconditional) 400 years between Noah and Abraham.

Romans 4: 1 – 5 & 13 – 16 (Abraham is the father of all who believe).

* Hope – means a confident expectation (not wishing for something).
* Both Abraham and Sarah had faith (Hebrews 11: 11). Faith demands believing.
* Abraham believed God – (Romans 4: 17 and Isaiah 46: 9 – 10).
* Their identity had to change – father and mother of many nations.
* Abraham was confident that God could.
* Considered not his own body nor Sarah– to look at, focus on, think about his own body. He didn’t waver. He wouldn’t talk about his natural disposition. He didn’t talk about how old he and Sarah were.
* He had heard from the Lord, that was it. He staggered not, but was strong in faith. Strength comes from meditating on what God had declared.
* The pull to walk by sight is very subtle.
* Mediate on the word of God instead of natural circumstances.
* He called himself what God called him. He didn’t wait till he saw evidence of it.
* We must call ourselves righteous, healed, prosperous. Not YOUR disease.

Looking at the natural body = despair.

Looking at the promises = growing strong in faith and giving glory to God.

It’s not feel, that you’ve received it, it’s not see that you’ve received it, its believe that you’ve received it.

Abraham believed beyond his natural senses. We walk by faith and not by sight.

Genesis 12: 1 – 4

* God calls Abram (high or exalted father).
* He was acting in faith on God’s future promise. 75 years old when he departed out of Haran with Lot. Faith and believing were in motion.

Genesis 15: 1- 6

* Look now toward heaven and tell the starts if you are able to number them. So shall your seed be.
* The heart of this covenant was “***believing***” in what God has said.
* It was established in blood (animal sacrifice).

Genesis 16: 2 & 15

* Man’s own effort to fulfil the promises of God always fail.
* Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born.
* He was not the promised seed by which all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

Genesis 17: 1 – 8

* 13 years later, God confirmed his covenant with Abram.
* Changed his name to Abraham (means – father of a multitude).
* Sign of the covenant was circumcision (blood).
* Sarai (*pronounced Sari*) name changed to Sarah (means – Princess).

The word at work to fulfill God’s plan

Both Abraham and Sarah had faith to believe what God had promised.

Romans 4: 18 – 22 (Abraham believed according to that which was spoken).

Isaiah 55: 11 (God’s word does not return void).

Hebrews 11: 11.

To impute is to add to your account.

The blessing would be through Isaac (Genesis 17: 19 - 21).

A lot happened in 12 months till the birth of Isaac.

* Abraham had no problems in his ability to father Ishmael – 86 years old (Genesis 16: 4).
* Things were different when he was 99 years old. He knew he couldn’t produce a child at a hundred years old.
* Sarah also had doubts in her head (Genesis 18: 11 -12).
* Faith is produced from the heart, not the head (Mark 11: 23).
* The covenant would be established with Isaac, not Ishmael.
* The name changes ***and*** the promise of God were working together. They were in agreement and as a result, Abraham became ***fully persuaded***.
* Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed.
* King Abimelech took Sarah – Genesis 20: 2 (a good looker at ninety and pregnant).
* Both their bodies were changing supernaturally due to faith in God’s word.

Genesis 22 (Abraham’s test)

* Tempt – test or tried (James 1: 13).
* A test approving of his faith.
* Take your only son and offer him up (give him to me).
* Faith pleases God (Hebrews 11: 6).
* He wanted Abraham to have an ever-higher place with him than before.
* We now have the boy, we can produce nations. Their effort. No faith.
* Real faith can be based ONLY on the Word of God.
* We will go and come back (Hebrews 11: 17). God’s covenant friend was willing to give his only son and believe for the resurrection. The promise was coming through Isaac. God will raise him from the dead. God now has a perfect right to give his only son for his friends seed and believe for the resurrection.
* Faith pleases God to the highest degree. All you’ve got left is what He told you. Trusting God honours him. Those that honour me, I will honour.

This is a faith covenant

He is our father of faith. We can have the same kind of faith (Galatians 3: 6 - 14).

Luke 13: 16 – healing covenant.

Luke 19: 9 – salvation covenant.

John 8: 56 – Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Jesus the seed of the covenant.

Bible described Abraham as a friend of God.

James 2: 23

2 Chronicles 20: 7

**Mosaic Covenant (Covenant of law)**

The Mosaic Covenant gave the law which was to govern their relationship to God – morally, socially and spiritually.

Why was the law of Moses given?

Galatians 3: 17 – 24 (NLT)

Genesis 15: 13 – 14

The law was given alongside the promise to show people their sins, not to reveal their holiness. *There was no* ***faith*** *operating under the law*. It was performance based only. Sacrifices and sin offerings could never please God (1 Samuel 15: 22 & Hebrews 10: 6 - 8). Faith through obedience pleases God (Hebrews 11: 6).

What occurred between Abraham and Moses?

* Promise passed to Isaac (Genesis 17: 21) who gave birth to Jacob from which came the twelve tribes of Israel (including Joseph).
* The priesthood came out of the Tribe of Levi.
* 64 years between death of Joseph and birth of Moses. The bondage in Egypt would have been about 144 years (64 + 80 – Moses age at exodus).
* Exactly 430 years from promise given to Abram at 75 years old to Exodus of Israel from Egypt (Exodus 12: 40 - 41).

Exodus 1: 6 – 9

New King of Egypt oppressed Israel because he feared them – “*The children of Israel are more and mightier than we*.”

* Ordered the midwives to kill sons and spare daughters.
* Satan wanted to destroy the seed of the promise.
* Compare with Herod (Matthew 2: 16) who ordered the death of all children two years old or younger.
* Moses born and divinely protected (350 years after the promise). His father and mother were from the tribe of Levi. Hence the Levitical priesthood came through Moses’ brother Aaron and his sons.

Exodus 2: 23 – 24

* God remembers his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
* God knew it was time to act.

God raised up a deliverer in Moses.

Romans 7:14 (NLT)

“So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin.”

The Mosaic Covenant was conditional (If you will, I will).

This covenant revealed the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man.

Exodus 19: 5 – 8 (1 Peter 2: 9)

* If you will obey.
* They shall be a kingdom of priests – ***not slaves in bondage***.
* They will be a holy nation.
* They will be a treasured possession.

Exodus 19: 8

And all the people responded together, **we will do** everything the Lord has commanded (self-righteous response).

* “Do” means - accomplish, bear, labour, perform, produce or work.
* “Bare” means – Bring forth, forgive take away, carry, magnify (V. 19:4).

**God’s grace extended to Israel**

The people of Israel refused to trust God and tested him:

1. Parting of the red sea (Exodus 13: 17 – 18 & 14: 10 - 31) Day 1.

***God’s response – deliverance.***

1. Bitter waters at Marah (Exodus 15: 22 - 27) Day 3.

***God’s response – water made good to drink.***

1. No food (Exodus 16) 1 month (Compare with Numbers 11–after the law).

***God’s response – quail and manna.***

1. No water at Meribah (Exodus 17) about 1.5 months.

***God’s response – water provided from a rock.***

On each occasion that Israel grumbled, murmured and complained, ***God responded with grace.*** Why? There was no law so its wasn’t counted as sin (Romans 5: 13).

God revealed Himself at Sinai (2 months after leaving Egypt) and offered a covenant which would require obedience - ***conditional*** (Exodus 18: 5).

* Their response was impetuous (because of their consistent unbelief in God’s power and unwillingness to trust Him).
* It was impetuously declared even before they heard the conditions of the covenant.
* The wording of their response was not wrong, but it was not grounded in faith.
* Their faith was in their own ability (pride and self-sufficiency). They were self-righteous.
* God placed Israel under the law (Exodus 20) until they learned their true condition. The law acted as a school master or guardian until the promise came – Jesus.

Israel was now judged on performance. The letter kills, but the spirit gives life.

Hebrews 3: 15 – 19

* Israel hardened their hearts and rebelled.
* Today when you hear His voice, don’t harden your heart
* They couldn’t enter into rest because of their unbelief.

The law wasn’t the problem. It was man’s inability to keep the requirements of the law because of the weakness of sinful nature (Romans 8: 3).

This made the law weak and useless because it never made anything perfect.

Hebrews 7: 18 – 19

***If our righteousness is based on works, it can be undone. Jesus is our righteousness.***

Christianity is about right believing first. Out of right believing comes right living, doing and behaving. ***Right behaviour alone has never produced a follower of Jesus Christ.***

The law demanded perfection (The law demands).

Grace removed imperfection (Grace supplies).

Jesus came to fulfil the law.

Matthew 5: 17 – 18

Romans 10: 4

John 15: 7 – no toiling or striving but abiding in Him.

The law still has a place today for those who are outside God’s covenant of Grace.

1 Timothy 1: 8 – 9.

**The Land Covenant**

This is an unconditional covenant and will be fulfilled completely.

Genesis 12: 5 -7

Genesis 15: 18 – I ***have*** given this land.

Genesis 17: 7 - 8 – all the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession.

Genesis 24: 7- the Lord swore unto Abraham.

Genesis 26: 2 - 3 – the promise to Isaac.

Genesis 28: 13 – 14 – promise affirmed to Jacob.

So what land has God given to Israel?

Joshua 1: 2 – 5

Everything from the Nile River in Egypt to Lebanon (south to north) and everything from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River (west to east).

That includes all the land modern Israel currently possesses, plus all the land of Palestine (West Bank and Gaza), plus some of Egypt and Syria, plus all of Jordan, plus some of Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

Israel currently possesses only a fraction of the land God has promised. We must pray for Israel and peace in Jerusalem (Psalm122: 6 – 9).

History

* In Joshua’s time, much of the land of Canaan was brought under Israelite control.
* At the time of King David and Solomon (400 years after Joshua), Israel controlled the largest part of the Promised Land to date.
* After Solomon’s reign, it was divided into two kingdoms -Israel to the north and Judah to the south.
* Both kingdoms sinned to such a degree that they were exiled into Babylonian captivity for 70 years.
* The temple was re-built and worship re-established in Jerusalem.
* Israel continued in their land until 70 AD when the Romans destroyed the temple and overtook Israel. Jesus warned his disciples of this.
* It wasn’t until 1948 that modern Israel was established following WWII.

There are blessing within the promise of land that are conditional (Deuteronomy 28). But the promise itself is unconditional and everlasting.

Deuteronomy 4: 40 (NLT)

***“If you obey all the decrees and commands I am giving you today, all will be well with you and your children. I am giving you these instructions so you will enjoy a long life in the land the Lord your God is giving you for all time.”***

Romans 11: 11 – 12 – God blessed the gentiles to make Israel jealous.

Romans 11: 17 – 18 – Not replacement theology. Church doesn’t replace Israel.

Romans 11: 25 – 31 – God has not finished with Israel. Pray for the nation.

**The Davidic Covenant (unconditional)**

The Davidic Covenant refers to God’s promise to David through Nathan the prophet.

2 Samuel 7: 8 - 10 – God re-affirms the promise of the land.

2 Samuel 7: 12 – 13 – David’s son Solomon will succeed his as king and built a temple.

2 Samuel 7: 13 – 16 – I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

Later summarized in 1 Chronicles 17: 11 – 14 & 2 Chronicles 6: 16 (NLT).

Another son of David would rule forever and build a lasting house. This is the Messiah, ***Jesus Christ***.

Isaiah 9: 6 – 7

Isaiah 11: 1 – 5 (NLT)

Luke 1: 31 – 33 & 69

Matthew 21: 9

Acts 2: 29 – 31 (NLT)

**The New Covenant (Unconditional)**

Matthew 26: 26 – 29

Jesus was declaring the new covenant.

His blood confirmed it between God and His people.

The new covenant is based on the sacrifice of Jesus, not the performance of man.

This covenant is eternal and cannot be broken because it is between God the Father and God the Son. The weak human element has been removed.

The old was inferior and weak and could not cleanse us from ***sin consciousness***. It was inferior because man was ***weak***(Hebrews 7: 18 – 19 & Galatians 4: 8 - 10).

Sin consciousness

Romans 8: 1 – 4 & 7

Hebrews 9: 9

Hebrews 10:1 - 3

Hebrews 10: 12 – 14 (one sacrifice)

2 Corinthians 3: 4 – 6 (not a covenant of written laws).

Old covenant = continual sacrifices and sin consciousness

New covenant = one sacrifice and freedom from sin consciousness.

That’s why the church must have a spiritual understanding of the Grace of God. Apart from grace, we will always perform for God.

Israel was brought into this new covenant

Hebrews 8: 6 - 13

This covenant is unconditional, requiring trust in God and right believing.

John 5: 24

John 6: 37

John 10: 27 - 30

Hebrews 13: 20 (eternal covenant)

1 John 2: 1 - 2

Colossians 1: 13

We have been delivered from the power darkness and translated into the kingdom of his dear son.

Galatians 3: 13

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

What are we redeemed from?

* Sickness and disease.
* Poverty and lack.
* Fear and oppression.
* Spiritual death (separation from God).

2 Corinthians 5: 21

For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

1 John 4: 15 - 16

A righteousness consciousness means that we ***know*** and ***believe*** the love that God has toward us. We put our trust in His love.