

A person in a dark dress and white shoes stands on a paved road in a desert landscape, holding a black umbrella. The word "COVENANTS" is written in large, white, textured letters across the top of the image. The background is a bright yellow sky over a desert with low-lying bushes.

COVENANTS

COVERED BY GOD'S PROMISE

"COVENANTS" WEEK 1 NOTES **NOVEMBER 13**

KEY THOUGHTS

- God is a God of covenants, which speaks highly of His desire for relationship. We can do contracts without relationship; but we can't do covenants that way.
- Throughout the Old Testament, we see multiple covenants God entered into with people:
 - Noah – the covenant to not again flood the earth
 - Abraham – the covenant to build a nation from him, and then to bless the world through that nation
 - Moses – the Law, which instructed them how to live in the promised land
 - David – to have one of his descendants be on the throne, and to one day bring One from the line of David who would rule eternally
- It's noteworthy that God, who was the offended party with Israel, was always the one to initiate these covenants.
- When we talk about the Old Covenant, we predominantly refer to the promises and relationship found through the promises to Abraham and Moses.
- We see in Deuteronomy 27-28 a summary of what covenants reveal to us about God:
 - Deut. 27:9 – God wants a people that are HIS people
 - Deut. 27:2 – God wants these people to have a safe land in which to live
 - Deut. 28:9 – God wants His people to live in a certain way
 - Deut. 28:11,15 – God rewards obedience and punishes rebellion
 - The book of Leviticus – God provided a continual sacrifice to remove the punishment of sin
- And yet questions arise from some of the intricacies of this Old Covenant. These typically come from the harshness of some of the punishments, as well as God's directives concerning the treatment of the people outside of Israel.
- How do we handle these questions?
 1. Our minds are thankfully not as perfectly right and merciful as God's.
 2. The cultures surrounding Israel (and including Israel prior to the Law) were immensely barbaric and violent. These were not "innocent" people.
 3. God was shaping a culture, and culture shaped people.

- 4. Our concept of justice has been largely shaped by the New Covenant. That's why we protest.
- **The beauty of the Old Covenant...**
- 1. It's a far better way to live.
- 2. God ADDED rewards for living as He directed. It wasn't simply the natural consequences that come when you do what is right. He ADDED material rewards.
- 3. The oppressed were valued. See Isaiah 58:5-7.
- 4. A bond was established with the Almighty ... our Father. We don't follow the Law of the Old Covenant; we follow the God of the Old Covenant, now under the promises of the New.
- 5. A pattern would be improved on.

SCRIPTURES

- Deuteronomy 27-28
- Isaiah 58:5-7

PRACTICAL & REFLECTION

- When you think of the Old Covenant (Testament), do you find yourself grateful for what had done or protesting some of the intricacies of the Law? Does today's treatment of the Old Covenant help you reconcile the Old and New?
- Do you recognize that many of our problems with the Old Covenant are there because we think more like New Covenant people?
- What are you thankful for in the Old Covenant? What can you do to more accurately see the beauty of what God had done with this Old Covenant?