

# Covenants Made Simple

A study of covenant theology and the biblical understanding of God's promises to his people.<sup>1</sup>

## The Importance of Covenant Theology

Covenant is the framework upon which the promises of God are joined together.

Eph 2:11-13

Lk 22:20

Heb 8:8-12 (Jer 31:31-34)

## Chapter 3: Covenant Conflict

- I. The curse has entered into the world due to the sin of Adam, as our federal head (representative).
- II. The Curses of the Covenant of Works become a reality but God allows life to continue.
- III. This cursed life in a fallen world is overshadowed by conflict and this conflict is most vividly expressed by a tension of war and victory.
- IV. The agents of this tension is presented as the 'seed' or 'offspring' of the evil one and the woman.
  - A. The word 'seed' is a collective term which incorporates a singular and plural concept. Context will usually demonstrate the emphasis.
  - B. The serpent was a real animal figure but used in a typological sense to point to the evil one = Satan himself = the enemy of Yahweh
  - C. The woman was a real human being, whom Adam called Eve, and is the mother of all humanity but is also a typological figure of all godly living humanity which culminates in the God-Man Jesus Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> Based upon Jonty Rhode's book: Covenants Made Simple (P&R Publishing, 2013).

V. The war begins to manifest itself between the godly seed of the woman and the ungodly seed of the evil one.

A. The character of the two communities of faith is seen in the life of Cain, Abel and Seth (Gen 4).

i. Cain represents the seed of the evil one.

ii. The line of the godly seed is represented in Seth.

B. The ultimate (divine) fulfillment of Gen 3:15 is accomplished in Jesus Christ as the singular offspring of the woman who crushes the head of Satan.

C. This does not mean that the seed of the evil one are as bad as they can be and have no hope.

VI. God established a covenant with Noah to create an environment where all humanity can live together, under common grace, towards the goal of accomplishing his plan of redemption in the building of his kingdom.

A. The Destruction of the seed of the evil one is pictured and realized in the flood of judgment.

B. God brings grace upon creation through the godly seed.

C. The Covenant of Noah is initiated by Noah's sacrifice which places this covenant in a religious category and connects it to the covenant of grace.

D. God's covenant with Noah promises provision and uniformity.

E. God's covenant with Noah promises prevention

F. God's covenant with Noah promises justice and order.

G. God's covenant with Noah reasserts the creation ordinance of family.

VII. Even though the curse of the covenant of works has brought about a conflict of war between the godly seed of Christ and the ungodly seed of the evil one, God has shown common grace to his creation so that his redemptive purposes may be accomplished in this world as he redeemed a people for himself and establishes his kingdom.

## Appendix

### A Critique of Radical Two Kingdom Theology (Doctrine)

#### I. Overview

- A. There are some in the reformed community who have understood the Noahic Covenant as presenting an establishment of a 'common kingdom' in which all aspects of 'ordinary' life, outside the church (sacred), is not something to be redeemed for the glory of Christ and his kingdom.
- B. They will use terminology like 'divinely-ordained common kingdom that is legitimate but not holy' (*Living in God's Two Kingdoms*, David VanDrunen, 26).
- C. They will claim that our world can be labeled as 'secular' and this is a legitimate category in which the gospel of Christ has no redeeming value. However, they will go on to encourage Christians to keep doing the 'ordinary' things of life to God's glory as that which are good and pleasing to him (*Living in God's Two Kingdoms*, David VanDrunen, 26).

#### II. Critique

- A. Two-Kingdom can be a confusing term because people throughout church history have used with different emphases.
- B. I believe that this doctrine misunderstands the purpose of the Noahic Covenant. It is true

that God established a common rule for his creation through the Noahic Covenant but the text does not give justification for distinguishing this rule as a separate kingdom of which the redeeming work of God has no connection.

- C. The story of Israel demonstrates that God is redeeming a people out of the midst of his creation for the purpose of being a light to his creation and his instrument of judgment upon creation.
- D. Scripture presents a direct connection between the rule of Christ in this world and the response of his creation (Ps 22:27-31; Col 1:15-29).
- E. There seems to be a connection between the rule of Christ over all creation and his headship in the church (Eph 1:22-23).
- F. Paul takes an 'ordinary' institution of family and states that when Christ's lordship is acknowledged by at least one parent then the children are considered holy (1 Cor 7:14). This means that redemption goes outside the realm of the church.
- G. There is something unique and redemptive about the coming of Christ which mandates his followers to bring the gospel to make disciples in all nations (Lk 22:27-30; Mt 28:18-20).

...Scripture speaks of only one kingdom of God. That kingdom is the historical program of God coming to overcome his enemies, to redeem his people, and to bring his lordship to bear on all areas of created reality. There is no "secular kingdom," no kingdom ruled only by natural law and not by Scripture. All people, all institutions, all spheres of human life have a responsibility to hear God's Word, to respond to it obediently, and to accept the renewal of God's grace. (John Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 97-98).