

COVENANT

The word “covenant” usually denotes the concept of a commitment between two parties. When David made a covenant with the elders of Israel they consented to it by anointing him to be their king (1 Chr 11:13). Such a covenant is between participant parties each having certain rights and obligations in performing their roles in keeping the agreement. When God makes a covenant the situation changes; it is no longer bilateral. God alone initiates and determines its makeup and then confirms it with mankind, not for approval but to avoid confusion. People are neither party to nor contributors to God-given covenants— they are recipients.

God made many covenants with mankind: those made with Noah (Gen 9:11), Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), Moses (Ex 19:5-6), and David (2 Sam 7:12-17) are the most prominent, while the New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34) is the most important. This article briefly reviews each covenant disclosing two basic features: 1) God cares for His creation on earth and 2) God created a way of forgiveness (salvation) for any sinner who will diligently seek Him. Of the five covenants just mentioned, three provide earthly blessings for all people, one exposes sin (and we are all sinners) and one forgives sin. As already mentioned, we have no input into any of these God-given covenants; we just have to accept (or reject) what God is offering.

In the covenant made with Noah, God promised to never destroy all flesh again, as He did in the flood. Thus, *“while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease”* (Gen 8:22). Based on this covenant alone we can be confident without contribution on our part that there will never be another global catastrophe until the Day of Judgment; then it will be by fire (2 Pe 3:7). The Noahic covenant shows God’s great care for us by preserving the world.

In the Abrahamic covenant, God revealed two other facets of care for us: first, when He founded Israel and next, when He promised to deal with us in the same manner that we deal with Israel: *“I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee”* (Gen 12:3). Jesus, a descendant of Abraham, fulfilled this covenant at birth (Matt 1:1). His life, death and resurrection then made it possible for anyone in the world who repents and believes the gospel to become heirs of God through the atoning blood of Christ; *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation”* (Rev 5:9). Thus, the Abrahamic covenant initiated the pathway for the entry of a savior into the world.

The Mosaic covenant stated that anyone who could fulfill the law given to Moses on Mount Sinai would become a peculiar treasure and a kingdom of priests unto God—they would be saved. Although the Israelites were overjoyed to work with God, they utterly failed. This failure did not surprise God but it proved to mankind the impossibility of obeying the law, even partially. While it may seem that God placed an unattainable goal in front of mankind, His purpose was not to cause people to earn approval by trying to live a good life but, rather, to know what sin is. Hence, the Mosaic covenant was never a moral guide, its sole purpose was to reveal sin to bring sinners to Jesus; *“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith”* (Gal 3:24).

The Davidic covenant provides another example of God’s care by establishing that Jesus would arise from David’s lineage to create an everlasting kingdom; not of this world but of the world to come. Believers, alive and asleep, will see Jesus coming in the clouds to snatch them away from this sin-cursed earth because they know that *“the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up”* and as a result they *“look for new heavens and a new earth”* (2 Pe 3:10, 13).

The New Covenant differs from the others just mentioned in that it provides a plan to reunite sinners to God through forgiveness. We see a foreshadowing of this covenant in the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve committed the first sin. There, God called to them and they willingly came out of hiding to confess their sin. Not only did they confess but God forgave them by shedding the blood of an animal and by covering them with robes of righteousness. It was also there that God first promised a savior who would shed His blood because animal blood does not assuage God’s wrath over sin: *“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins”* (Heb 10:4). Today, all who are awakened to their sin can use this same covenant promise to confess their particular sin to Jesus (who resides in the hearts of believers) and to hear the word of reconciliation proclaimed to them, *“Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee”* (Matt 9:2). The New Covenant guarantees that the blood of Jesus will unite all people to God if they *“have washed their robes (of righteousness), and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”* (Rev 7:14).

God truly cares for the entire world so everyone can fully trust that He will sustain life in all its forms until Jesus comes again. More importantly, He promises to receive us into heaven if we prayerfully seek out the New Covenant blessings where all sins can be forgiven by the sprinkling of Jesus’ blood (Heb 12:24).

God’s Peace,

Charles Korhonen

Church Schedule

Sunday School and Adult Bible Study @10:00 a.m.

Bible Study Wednesday @7:00 p.m.

Church Cleaning Lampinen Team

January Speakers

Jan. 3	Ken Storm	11:00 a.m. Holy Communion
Jan. 10	Jesse Matson	11:00 a.m.
Jan. 17	Ken Storm	11:00 a.m.
Jan. 24	Nathan Ruonavaara	11:00 a.m. Potluck Dinner
Jan. 31	Herb Jarvi	11:00 a.m.

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