

The Adamic Covenant
Genesis 2:15-17; 3:14-19; Romans 5:12-21
Sermon Prepared for WellSpring Church
June 26, 2011

1. Introduction

a. Engage

- i. How would you describe the structure of the Bible?
- ii. How would you describe the way God deals with man?
- iii. Have you ever thought about the purpose of Genesis?
 1. To Introduce the recently redeemed Israelites to the God who redeems
 2. To lay a foundation for the giving of the law that will be the basis for the Sinai covenant

b. Review—The New Covenant

c. Preview

- i. The Importance of Covenant in the Bible
- ii. Shows the Holiness and perfection of God in the demands
- iii. Defines What Love to God looks like
- iv. Shows the sovereignty and the Grace of God
- v. Gives human beings a rationale for understanding how we have dignity, meaning and purpose in the world.
- vi. Covenants in the Bible
 1. Adam
 2. Noah
 3. Abraham
 4. Sinai
 5. David
 6. New
- vii. The two major divisions of Scripture are referred to in relation to Covenant.
- viii. We will be applying Covenants to our understanding of
 1. Our personal relationship with God
 2. Our relationship to one another as a Church
 3. Our relationship to one another within our families

d. Big Idea:

2. The First Questions is, What is a Covenant in the Bible?

a. Fundamental Structure of God's dealing with man.

b. Some definitions

- i. "a relationship between persons begun by the sovereign determination of the greater party, in which the greater commits himself to the lesser in the context of mutual loyalty, and in which mutual obligations serve as illustrations of loyalty." (Michael Williams, "Far as the Curse is Found")
- ii. Robert Rollock (1597) "the covenant of God is a promise under some certain condition."

- iii. Michael Horton: “a covenant is a relationship of ‘oaths and bonds’ and involves mutual, though not necessarily equal, commitments.”
 - iv. and there are others
 - c. Historical/Cultural Context. God providentially superintended the development of cultures and civilizations to give his people a framework for interpreting their the relationship of God to Creature
 - d. Let’s Look quickly at the Hittite Suzerainty Covenant
 - i. When: Second Millennium B.C. (Meaning 2000→1000 B.C.)
 - ii. Why: To establish treaties of loyalty, protection and kingdom building.
 - iii. What
 - 1. Preamble—Identifies the Covenant maker
 - 2. Historical Narrative/Prologue
 - 3. Stipulations/Conditions
 - 4. Witnesses (generally the gods)
 - 5. Sanctions: blessings and curses
 - 6. Deposit of copies of the Covenant. (Genrally with the gods)
 - 7. Oaths of Obedience (almost never an oath by the Suzerain—but by the vassal)
3. Creation Week Revisited (Genesis 1-2)
- a. All accomplished within 6 days—Now our purpose here is not to defend the six day creation—but rather to affirm it as necessary for knowing
 - b. All Good This description given 6x
 - c. The creator/creation distinction established
 - i. The Bible’s God is not the god of polytheism—He stand alone, above, and unique
 - ii. The Bible’s God is not the god of the Deist
 - iii. The Bible’s God is not the god of pantheism
 - iv. The Bible is not the god of theistic evolution
 - 1. Man with the image of God
 - 2. Man as King over creation. Steward and Caretaker—when did this happen?
 - 3. Man with the capacity for eternal life
 - 4. Man a capacity to commune with God. Communication from the very beginning. No caveman grunts.
 - d. Man introduced (1:27-31; 2:15-17)
 - i. Created
 - ii. Stamped with the Image of God
 - iii. Given sexual identity and differentiation
 - iv. Given Work to do:
 - 1. Fruitfulness

2. Dominion

- v. Given what we can call a covenantal framework for relationship with God.
- e. Can we see this as a Covenant with Adam? I think so, look
 - i. Preamble (and historical narrative) Creation!
 - ii. Statement of Obligations Work and Prohibition
 - iii. The Contracting Party-God and the mediator of the Covenant-- Adam
 - iv. Declaration of Blessings and Curses The threat of death explicitly and by contrast an implicit promise of life.
 - v. The testimony of Hosea 6:7 "Like Adam, they have broken the covenant." McKay writes: "The implication of the verse is clearly that Adam was party to a covenant in Eden, with the Lord obviously being the other party."

4. The Failure (3:1-7)

- a. Holy Couple—Pure and capable of making free decisions
- b. Serpent
- c. Temptation
 - i. "The tree represents the dependence of man upon God as vassal to king and as a son to a father. The Lord reserves for himself the royal prerogative to decide, the creator God alone knows good and evil, he alone is autonomous. Relative to God, mankind must, in order to be happy, constantly approve his dependence as vassal and renounce all conspiracy against his suzerain; relative to the mirage of a tyrant autonomy of the prodigal son."
 - ii. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents ingratitude and rebellion against God's provision, the absurd pretention to abolish dependence and disastrous misuse of the privilege of being freely accountable to God. It represents our deviation into death and the absurd." (Henri Blocher, "In The Beginning")
- d. Rebellion
- e. Guilt
- f. Response of God (3:14-24)

5. A Note on Why we have all of this information:

- a. The first audience for the Book of Genesis is the post Exodus generation of Israelites.
- b. What was the purpose of this writing—at this time? God is introducing himself to his covenant people and telling them who he is. "He also reveals much of Israel's prehistory to the wilderness community. God's declaration of himself, the story of his early dealings with humanity from the Garden of Eden up to the call of Abraham, and the Patriarchal stories tell Israel how and why Yahweh has redeemed her from slavery and into covenant relationship." (43)

- c. Note that Genesis leaves out a lot of information. There is
 - i. no history of any people or culture other than the descendants of Abraham.
 - ii. There is nothing about dinosaurs
 - iii. Much biographical information of the ante-diluvium generations is missing.
 - d. "...Genesis is not mere telling of primeval history. Rather it draws attention to the fact that the book is best understood as a redemptive-historical way of looking at the past as a series of interrelated events." (43)
 - e. The history of Israel begins with the calling of Abram—but before that there is a history of the ancestors of Abram beginning with Noah and his sons and then the rebellion of Babel. But still, Noah makes no sense unless we know two more fundamental pieces of information:
 - i. Where did man come from and
 - ii. Where did sin come from?
 - f. So then we have the history of creation in Gen 1-2 and the advent of the fallen world in Gen. 3
 - g. And in Exodus we have the beginnings of the outworking of God's promise to his people
6. The importance for us today: (Romans 5:12-21)
- a. Entrance of sin. One of the great questions in our life and world is the question of evil and suffering. Why? Here is why.
 - b. The Entrance of Death. We might also ask, why death? (Holy Boyko...)
 - c. The Entrance of the Gospel promise—Gen. 3:15
 - d. The Entrance of a redeemer and a solution for sin and death, our representative head. We must understand salvation in terms of substitution. We need a substitute.
 - e. To understand the use of Christ as our substitute we need to see Adam as a Federal Representative.
 - i. Perhaps it is helpful to Use another well-known story to illustrate what we are saying, I Sam. 17:8-11
 - ii. Adam is both "common parent of mankind" and also "federal head and representative of all mankind." "The whole human race was placed on prohibition or trial in Eden. Adam acted not for himself alone, but he transacted for all who were to spring from him. Unless this basic fact be definitely apprehended, much of what ought to be relatively clear to us will be shrouded in impenetrable mystery. Yea, we go further, and affirm that, until the federal headship of Adam and God's covenant with him in that office be actually perceived, we are without the key to God's dealings with the human race, we are unable to...appreciate...the fundamental principles upon which the atonement of Christ proceeded." (A.W. Pink The Divine Covenants" 29

- iii. Note here that we have the establishment of the Historicity of Adam and the opening chapters of Genesis
 - 1. See also Romans 16:20
 - 2. I Cor. 15:22
 - 3. I Tim. 2:13-14
- iv. Death reigned from Adam to Moses—Adam brought sin and death into the world as our representative.
- v. The guilt of Adam’s sin is imputed to all humanity
- f. The Joy of having now a new federal representative
 - i. Adam and the fall is not the end of the story.
 - ii. There a second Adam. This Adam succeeded where the first Adam failed.
- g. The Gift of God’s Grace
 - i. Condemnation is for Adam’s sin, one sin, not our own multiple sins
 - ii. The gift of redemption to each one who will believe
 - iii. The gift of meaning, meaning of being able to live as a human is meant to live.
 - 1. F. A. Schaeffer: Humanity without redemption is less than fully human. (“Finished Work of Christ”)
 - 2. There are really two humanities, two human races
 - a. The human race that stands in the place of Adam and is condemned, and
 - b. The human race that stands as the seed of Christ, which he has purchased with his blood. This is redeemed and restored humanity.
 - 3. “In the flow of history, man is brought face to face with that for which he has been made—face to face in a loving relationship to the God who is there.” (F. A. Schaeffer, “Genesis in Space and Time” 71
 - iv. This should call three responses from us
 - 1. Sadness of the unsaved—You stand condemned
 - 2. Compassion for the lost—Pray for and speak to the lost
 - 3. A desire to love God properly “To love God is to obey. “The purpose of man is to stand in love as a creature before the creator.”