

1. **Introduction**: Continuing the discussion on covenants at the point we stopped.
2. **Redemptive History**: As presented in Genesis through Revelation, Redemptive History is organized in terms of promise and covenant, or as Paul declares “the covenants of promise” (Ephesians 2:12).
 - Time and again in the OT, through covenants and covenant renewals, God restated His promise of a Savior. As time passed, He supplied increasing detail and structure as He prepared the way for the promised Savior.
 - We will consider three of the covenants: (1.) The promise to Abraham. (2.) The Sinai Covenant through Moses. (3.) Our Lord Jesus Christ’s New Covenant.
3. **The Promise to and Covenant with Abraham**: God called Abram (later called Abraham) while he was in Haran where his father, Terah, had settled after leaving Ur of the Chaldeans. Terah and Haran, Abram’s brother died before Abram left Haran.
 - Abraham’s call by God is considered a pivotal point in redemptive history. The first eleven chapters of Genesis focus mostly on the dreadful consequences of sin.
 - In the NT, God’s promise to Abraham is regarded as continuing without time limits, a promise that extends indefinitely into the future.
 - Indeed, Christ’s incarnation is viewed as the vital step in the outworking of the Abrahamic promise to be a blessing to all people (Luke 1:68-73, Romans 4).
 - Abraham asked God how he could know God’s promise would come to pass. God’s answer was to make a covenant with Abraham.
 - The covenant was ratified by the visible demonstration of a smoking fire pot with a blazing torch passing between cut halves of sacrificial animals (Genesis 15:17).
 - The blazing torch seems to symbolize God’s presence. The covenant with Abraham was unilateral, only God stipulated His obligation. Abraham had no obligations. He was not required to do anything during ratification. Abraham received God’s grace.
4. **Sinai Covenant**: After freeing the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery, God led them to Mt. Sinai (Mt. Horeb). They were at Sinai about a year.
 - In preparation for giving of the Law, God said, ***“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”*** (Exodus 19:5-6a).
 - The covenant to be established was bilateral in that both parties had obligations. God defined the stipulations for both parties to the covenant.
 - God stipulated the Hebrews would be His treasured possession among all peoples, and the Hebrews were to obey God’s voice and keep His covenant and promised to do so.
 - God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and other parts of the Sinai-covenant law (exodus 20-23). The law defines the people’s covenant responsibility.

- Moses gave the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules of their covenant relationship with the LORD (Exodus 24:3b). They voluntarily committed to obey all that God commands. *“Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD”* Exodus 24:7).
5. **Exodus 24:6-8:** *And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. ⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.” ⁸ And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.”*
- Throwing sacrificial blood on the people was unusual.
 - Sacrificial blood cleansed from sin. All the people were to be cleansed & consecrated for their new role as God’s people, hence throwing blood of sacrifice on them.
 - If the covenant was disobeyed, Israel would not lose its covenant relationship with God, but there would be consequences. The covenant established rules for living. The people said, *“All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.”*
 - As the people of God, they were obligated to live according to the rules established by the covenant or suffer penalties for not doing so.
 - The words Moses wrote were the words that defined the covenant between God and the Hebrews. The book of the covenant was read during the ratification ceremony.
6. **Sinai Covenant Ratification:** An elaborate ratification ceremony of sacrifices was held for the covenant (Exodus 24:4-8). Young men of Israel (not priests) offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen (24:5).
- As seen in Exodus 24:5-8, the sacrificial blood was not handled in the usual way. The words, *“Behold the blood of the covenant”* seem to lie behind Jesus’ NT words, *“This cup is the new covenant in my blood”* (1 Corinthians 11:25).
 - The Sinai covenant established a covenant relationship between God and the people of Israel and their descendants. Subsequent OT events revolved around God’s choice of Israel to be His people. Covenant blessings depended on keeping the covenant.
 - Israel failed to keep their part of the covenant. That pointed out their need for grace.
 - The Law is perfect, given by a holy God, but it has no power to give people new life.
 - People are unable to obey the law perfectly (Galatians 3:21).
7. **The Moral Law:** God’s moral law has always been in effect. It was in effect when Adam and Eve violated it, they (and we through them) suffered the consequences.
- For benefit of the Hebrews, God’s moral law was spelled out in the Sinai Covenant. God’s moral law reflects His holy character and has always been in effect for His moral creatures (angels and humans) and remains in effect for Christians today.

- (1.) God’s moral law is a mirror reflecting both God’s perfect righteousness and our own sinfulness and shortcomings. No matter how hard we strive to fulfill the law’s requirements, we can’t fully do so. We must depend on God’s mercy and grace.
 - (2.) The law restrains evil. The law cannot change the spiritual heart, but it can to some extent inhibit lawlessness by its threats of judgment, especially if backed by a civil code that is enforced by administering present punishment for proven offenses (Deuteronomy 13:6-11; 19:16-21).
 - (3.) The law provides a positive function for the regenerate by guiding them into the good works God prepared for them (Ephesians 2:10).
8. **The New Covenant**: God’s purpose in His covenantal dealings with people is to gather and sanctify a covenant people *“from every nation from all tribes and peoples and languages”* (Revelation 7:9).
- In the New Jerusalem, God’s covenant relationship with His people will find its fullest expression, *“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God himself will be with them as their God”* (Revelation 21:3).
 - Jesus Christ is *“the mediator of a new covenant”* (Hebrews 12:24).
 - The entire salvation process is covenantal. A believer’s life in Christ is covenantal. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are covenant ordinances.
 - Christ introduced the new covenant with the phrase, *“This cup is the new covenant in my blood”* (1Corinthians 11:25).
 - Scripture says life is in the blood. Therefore, the living Christ is Himself the New Covenant which is sealed in His blood.
 - The New Covenant is new but not disconnected from the preceding covenants.
 - Indeed, the New Covenant is the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. But there are significant new developments. Even its ratification is different.
 - Rather than the customary ratification by the blood of bulls or other animals, it is ratified by the blood of the crucified Jesus.
 - Perfect obedience to the Sinai Law to earn righteousness is impossible. Divine intervention is necessary to make possible a “righteousness apart from the Law.”
 - The New Covenant provides a way to attain righteousness before God, apart from the law, through Jesus’ life and death. Jesus earned righteousness on our behalf by living a perfectly obedient life under the Law. He died to pay the penalty due our sins.
 - To many Jews, the new path to righteousness appeared to violate all they knew from a long interaction with the LORD. It seemed to involve breaking the Sinai covenant.
 - The Law was the focus of Judaism for centuries, but under the New Covenant, it is not the Law but Christ who is the central focus.

- Animal sacrifice that had been at the heart of Temple worship had served its purpose and is therefore displaced and replaced by the once for all time sacrifice by Christ.
9. **Hebrews 10:4:** *“it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”*
- The New Covenant deals with that issue. Jesus Christ is the New Covenant. “In Christ” we find salvation. All people who have salvation (past, present, and future) have it through Christ. Because of Christ, God says, *“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”* (Hebrews 10:17b)
 - Jesus lived His incarnate life on earth in perfect obedience to the law. His death paid the penalty due for our sins as required by the law. He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to prepare the way for believers.
 - The Father justifies those who through faith believe in Him, the Holy Spirit enables sanctification, and at mortal death, the Holy Spirit glorifies believers (makes them righteous and holy as God is righteous and holy).
 - Under the New Covenant, the path to salvation is thus through regeneration (made spiritually alive), and justification (declared legally righteous by the Father).
 - Next comes sanctification (being made progressively more holy through the work of the Holy Spirit).
 - Last comes glorification (the completion of sanctification by eliminating our sin nature). Regenerated, justified, sanctified, and glorified so that we can live in God’s presence for evermore.
 - These are the wonderful promises of the New Covenant in Christ’s blood.