

Introduction:

- This is three in a series of messages on Covenant.
 - Our first one was about why covenant seems foggy to us in the west. I.e. Visibility.
 - Last week we started exploring covenant looking at terms basic to understanding etc. The focus was this point: Covenant creates a bonding for life. We determined that there are two major covenants found in the Word: One, the Old Covenant cut with Abraham and the New Covenant cut with Christ.
 - We briefly looked at God's covenant with Abraham.
- A key scripture to our study is: *"The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant."* (Psalm 25:14, ESV)
- Tonight I want to start with recognizing covenant and covenant terms. When you are able to recognize covenant and covenant terms the Bible comes alive with fresh significant revelation.

I. Recognizing Covenant

- A. Covenant Language is all through the Bible. We have become so familiar with it that we are not alerted to it or we take it for granted. I.e. The old illustration, "Momma why do you cut the turkey in half to bake it? That is what grandma did. Grandma, why did you cut the turkey in half? Because it wouldn't fit in the oven, otherwise. Familiarity with covenant will cause us to lose the "why?" of covenant. I am talking about recognizing covenant.
1. Language is what makes a people group able to communicate with one another. It also serves as a barrier when that language is not understood. I.e. Tower of Babel.
 - a) As long as we speak the same language we can communicate. Unless, you are speaking something in my language that I do not understand. I.e. Trigonometry.
 - b) If we do not speak the same language or understand what is meant by the language, we have a barrier.
 2. Therefore if we speak the same language and we understand the terms, communication is taking place and we are communicating. If we do not understand the terms of covenant then we will not receive benefits of what is being supplied. Nor will we be able to interact with our covenant partner, God.
- B. Recognizing covenant terms. What are the words that are used to communicate covenant in the Bible?
1. Covenant, oath, swear, sacrifice, blood, priest, law, blessings and curses, mercy, loving kindness, faithful, inheritance, generations, exchange.
 2. Like I said last week when I used terms related to football anyone who knows football would realize I am talking football. I.E. You may recognize the terms

associate them to football but never understand the game. You may recognize the terms associated with covenant, but not understand how to operate in it.

3. What I want you to do as you read the scripture is to recognize when the writer is using covenant terms. When he does he is speaking from a covenant perspective.
4. Many of these terms actually describe the process of 'cutting' covenant. Therefore when the NT writers uses them we have to be sharp to catch and not just read over them. IE. Eph 1 and 2. Briefly look for covenant terms in this passage. Also Heb 6-10.

II. Understanding what covenant means. The Blood Covenant Garlow, pp. 25.

- A. Covenant means to 'cut' to bind together in obligation. Not with ink but with blood.
 1. It is a very encompassing agreement between two parties that is carefully outlined and agreed to.
 2. It is an agreement between two parties that bind them together with specific obligations.
 3. A covenant was for life and the generations to follow.
 4. Entered into on the basis of strengths and weakness that complement one another.
 5. "A tangible expression of love and trust."
 6. A relationship based on blood being shed to enact the seriousness of covenant.
 7. There is no such thing as a casual covenant. This covenant is based on 'hesed' love, (kindness or loving kindness) **which is the active pursuit of wanting to bless ones covenant partner.****** Here is an 'hesed' filled OT passage! *"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."* (Lamentations 3:22-24, ESV)
- B. Understanding terms.
 1. When looking for terms that identify a covenant partner look for these terms and phrases:
 - a) In, with, together with, joined to. They are most often spoken, sometimes implied.
 - b) IE. Eph 2:4-10
 2. Ceremonial words: words related to the cutting or ceremony of covenant.
 - a) blessings, curses, oath, vows, swearing, treaty, testament.
 - b) Ie. see Dt 28
 - c) "One of the blessings inherent in the covenant relationship is that we are partners with the powerful and fearsome Almighty God!
 3. Remembering...remember.

- a) In the west this is the mental exercise of recalling. Hear is something I learned:
- b) But the word in Heb means: "to do the past event" and not just think about it. It meant to recreate the past event bringing it into the present moment by re-enacting. I.e. Similar to a couple renewing wedding vows on their anniversary.

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III. Stages of Covenant

- A. Covenant involves ceremony. And ceremony marks the occasion and causes the agreements to be remembered and have validity. I.e. graduation, baptism, etc.
 - 1. A study of anthropology reveals that most histories of ancient people groups reflect covenant in some form or another that is practiced. I.e. right of passage for young boys, Hebrew: bar mitzvah/bat mitzvah "son of commandment"
 - 2. Through cutting covenant, God demonstrates His love for all people and His desire to have fellowship with them. (that statement is so powerful if you understand covenant.)
 - 3. Covenant was a language that all ancients understood.
- B. Stages of cutting covenant/Elements of covenant ceremony.
 - 1. Representative - every covenant was cut between two individuals or through their representative. Representative had to be of same line as main party.
 - a) When using a representative, it can be said that all of the people he represents are "In him."
 - b) This individual serves as the guarantee of the covenant promises.
 - 2. Terms - specific responsibilities are laid out in full view of each tribe. The representatives work out the terms/agree to terms set out, etc.
 - a) They are written out or documented.
 - b) All for the purpose of remembrance. I.e. the Ten Commandments.
 - 3. Blood Sacrifice - each covenant required the sacrifice of an animal or the shedding of blood. Thus - 'to cut the covenant.' You don't make covenant you cut covenant.
 - a) "The blood symbolized an entering into a type of death to self and passing through to a new life of union together with a new covenant partner." Garlow. p.33.
 - b) Since covenant means to cut, it only stands to reason that there would be shedding of blood in the process of cutting covenant.
 - 4. Walk of death - covenant partners face each other and walk between the sacrifice pieces. They walk in a figure eight, thus signifying infinity. I.e. Catholic church honor the 13 stations of the cross. 13 events from Jesus being condemned to being laid in the tomb.
 - 5. Mark on the body -
 - a) Covenant partners cut themselves in their wrist and shake hands called the striking of the hands. The wound would leave a mark.

- b) When you greeted one another you raised your hand and showed your mark. Is. 49:16 God says, "*I have engraved you on the palm of my hands.*" Ie. the nails.
 - c) Jesus to Thomas, "Put your finger in my hand and your hand into my side." Touch the marks Thomas. God now bares a mark for all eternity.
- 6. Oaths and vows. These are different from the terms. Oaths and vows say we are agreeing to the terms.
 - a) Vows are made to keep the terms/outline of the covenant agreement.
 - b) Blessings for keeping covenant are spoken as well as curses for breaking the oath.
 - c) A God/god was called upon to back it up, to oversee it.
- 7. A meal is shared - covenant meal or celebration.
- 8. Memorials are established. Memorials help us to remember.
 - a) Noah - rainbow.
 - b) Moses had the mountain of cursing (Ebal) and the mountain of blessing (Gerazim).
 - c) Joshua - had men bring stones from the river when they crossed over.
- 9. Powerful exchanges:
 - a) Robe - identity
 - b) Belts, swords, weapons - strength, enemies.
 - c) Names -
 - (1) Abram to AbraHam - puts God's name in the middle of Abrahams new name. Same with Sarah. God becomes know as 'God of Abraham.'
 - d) Exchange of oldest male child. This was the ultimate part of covenant!
 - (1) Gen 22:1-2 Take now your son, Isaac.
 - (2) Jesus was God's son given.

IV. Learning from the Adamic Covenant

- A. God's first covenant in scripture is with Adam...man. It is exciting in that God is binding himself to man and it is painful knowing that man broke it.
 - 1. Why covenant with Adam? There can only be one answer—love.
 - 2. God created a person with free will who would choose to love God back. Gutsy move on Gods part to create a creature with free will. But that creature would be able to choose to love God.
- B. Adam Covenant. In light of covenant language and the elements of covenant, let's break this down. Remember we are learning things that apply to all covenants which will lead us to the New Covenant. We are seeking information that will become revelation to us. Thus revealing the New Covenant and its host of benefits for us.
- C. Elements of the Adam Covenant

1. Representatives- God and Adam. Adam represented the whole human race. Romans 5:12 states that sin came into the world through one man. His decision affected the entire human race as our representative. Death came to all because of his choice.
 2. Terms *"Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. ...""* (Genesis 1:28, NLT)
 - a) Eat what seed bearing plants you want, and take care of the garden.
 - b) Last term: eat what seed bearing plant you want but do not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of that tree you will die. Heb. - die - one definition is to die by penalty of death. These words are words of warning from God.
 3. Memorials - two trees were planted in the garden
 - a) Tree of life - was reminder of eternal life.
 - b) Tree of knowledge - was reminder of the conditional covenant.
 4. Blood sacrifice -
 - a) Appears right after the sinning of Adam and Eve. God kills an animal (I believe a lamb) to cover the shame of Adam. The first blood that was shed was from the hand of God and it was covenant blood.
 - b) Rev 13:8 references a sacrifice hidden away. The lamb slain from the foundation of the world.
- D. The Deception -
1. In Genesis God is introduced as Elohim. It speaks of Him as ruler, Judge, Creator, Sovereign.
 2. He is also revealed by another name in Gen. 2 - Yahweh, the personal covenant name meaning Friend, Lover, Comforter, Father.
 3. Watch what Satan does in the tempting of Eve: He hides the covenant name/ nature of God. Gen 3:1-3 Satan omits the covenant name of God and just calls Him Elohim. "He convinced her to ignore the covenant nature of a loving God at the beginning of the conversation, appealing to just His rulership and sovereignty." Jim Garlow. He knew the power of covenant and tried to hide it. When she responds she omits the covenant name Yahweh in her answer.
 4. Satan is still continuing to hide covenant from the people of God.

Conclusion:

- Covenant is creating a bonding together of life. It is not a contract. It is far stronger.
- It is found all through the Bible we just have to learn to recognize it.