

*Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.*

*Series: Covenant: God's Way of Relationship*



*A Teaching Sermon: "The Covenant of Creation, Part Three"*

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*Dr. Mary Craig*

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A covenant is a bond in blood sovereignly administered. A covenant is characterized by a bond, a binding oath, signs and seals, cutting, a bond in blood, life and death, provisions, and in the case of God's divine covenants, it is unilateral. God's multiple bonds with His people unite into a single relationship. Details may vary, but the covenants of God are one. By structure and by theme, God's covenants are one.

Each successive covenant builds on the previous relationship, continuing the basic emphasis already established. In the progression of the covenant of grace we can find a unity in historical experience as God deals with His people.

The framework of covenant is "I will be Your God and you will be My people." God is with us.

Last week we began looking at the Covenant of Creation. By the word of His mouth God created all that is. He declared it good. He created humanity, male and female, in His own likeness and image. He established a unique relationship between Himself and what He created. He also spoke to man and determined man's role and responsibilities. He also established unilaterally and sovereignly a life-and-death bond.

The covenant of creation is so-called because of the general aspect of the broad responsibilities of humanity to the Creator and then the focal point of the specific responsibility of man arising from the probation or testing command instituted by God.

The general aspects of this covenant are found in Genesis 1.26-28, Genesis 2.1-3, which we spoke of in previous sermons, and in Genesis 2.15-18, which we shall read shortly.

God provided creational orderings and holds humanity accountable for obeying the ordinances embedded in creation's structure. These orderings are considered inviolable and inherent in the structure of the world as God ordained it. They included the Sabbath, Marriage, and Labor.

## **The Covenant of Favor**

While some consider the covenant of Genesis the covenant of creation, others term it the covenant of God's favor, asserting that Genesis 1 institutes the kingdom of God and Genesis 2 establishes this covenant. In Genesis 2 God is called Yahweh, the God of covenant faithfulness.

What these theologians stress is the fact that God is owed obedience, loyalty, and worship on the basis of the Creator/creature relationship alone. God made humans such that they could respond to Him, live with Him in relationship. Without a covenant, God would be the Obligor and man the Obligee. But with the promise of life upon obedience and death upon disobedience, God

obliged Himself to keep a promise and man had a claim upon God to keep a promise. The claims and obligations were spelled out.

Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die.” And the LORD God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” Genesis 2:15-18.

Notice that the specific command given to Adam comes before Eve. God initiated this covenant, but God’s promise elevated man to the rank of covenant partner. Humans owe everything they are and have to God. The term “favor” is chosen because **Adam was to consciously choose for the favor given him by God** if he and his posterity were to abide forever in that favor. Grace, however, also implies favor but carries with it the forgiveness of guilt. Jesus Christ in the covenant of grace continually chose for God’s favor even when that favor had completely forsaken Him. Jesus reconciled and redeemed what Adam had ruined.

God wanted a conscious obedience, a conscious acceptance of the covenant. Before God initiated this covenant, Adam did what was good because nothing else came to mind. **The test-command brought conflict and an opportunity to choose consciously for obedience for the sake of obedience alone. Adam was unique: Would he accept in joyful trust all that the Creator orders for life? Would he trust the wisdom of God?**

The forbidden fruit was good for food and probably looked yummy, but Adam was not to eat. The idea was to learn that “good” is what God commands and says is “good,” and “evil” is what God commands and says is “evil.” Adam was to judge with righteous judgment, i.e., on the basis of God’s Word and not out of his own mind and reasoning. By distinguishing for himself between good and evil, he was become like “one of Us, knowing...” “This particular prohibition must be seen as the focal point of man’s testing... The raw word of God in itself must become the basis of man’s action.” (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, page 81, 84)

The revelation of God’s favor climaxes in the tree of life, eternal dominion in God’s Kingdom. After Adam ate the forbidden fruit and plunged humanity into the estate of sin and misery, the way to the tree of life had to be closed by God so that Adam would not eat and live in his fallen estate forever. **It was grace for God to block the tree of life from Adam.**

God wants to bless humanity and live in fellowship with human beings. God wants us to live in conscious communion with Him in the covenant. When Adam consciously disobeyed, failing to choose for God and His favor by subjecting his will to God’s will, fellowship with God was broken, and that means eternal death.

### **The Covenant of Works**

In talking about the same covenant, some call it the covenant of works to distinguish it from the covenant of grace. The Creator God owes nothing to the creature. All blessing and/or reward from God comes only by way of condescension on God’s part (by favor or grace) and by way of a sovereignly administrated covenant.

We are not to deny our creaturehood and the fact that we are dependent upon God as the Source of all life and blessing. (John 15.5) We do not determine our destiny. God does. Jesus understood this when tempted by the devil (Matthew 4). We have no inalienable claim to God’s blessing and rewards. Job 35.7; Luke 17.10. **(So likewise you, when you have done all those**

things, which you are commanded, say, “We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.”)

God’s covenant dealings with humanity are both sovereign and gracious, imposed by His will alone (Isaiah 40.13-17). They benefit us, not the Creator (Acts 17.25). God obligates Himself and is bound by nothing but His own holy Word. We do not demand from God, putting a fist in His face. It is God’s good pleasure to give gifts. We must understand, that even if we gave God perfect, personal, perpetual obedience, we would only be fulfilling a debt already owed.

**In what is termed the covenant of works, God promises Adam and his posterity life upon condition of perfect, personal, perpetual obedience (only what Adam owed God anyway as creature).** In this covenant, the term “works” is used to show that Adam faced the alternative of obedience and life or disobedience and death. Obedient works were the condition laid down for the granting of God’s gracious gift of life. It is termed “covenant of works” because of Paul’s statement in Romans 11.6: if we are saved by grace “**then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.**”

### **The Covenant of Life**

A few others call this same original covenant the covenant of life because had Adam obeyed, he would have received life for himself and his posterity.

A side note: This covenant was made with Adam. When Eve ate the forbidden fruit she did not die because she was not the Federal Head of the human race. Nothing happened until Adam ate. Eve was deceived. Adam made a conscious choice to disobey the voice of God, choose to obey another wisdom and word, and basically go his own way out of his own reasoning and mind. He was terribly wrong! Christ is the Wisdom of God. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. God is God only wise. Adam chose another wisdom. **This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly [earthy], sensual, demonic...But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. James 3:15, 17**

**Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:12, 18, 19)**

But who is this Covenant God whose wisdom was rejected by Adam? And if we are totally unable to make our way back to the Father, how will this come about? **Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17b)** Jesus Christ is the Federal Head of a new humanity. **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new—new in quality, fresh, new in form. (2 Corinthians 5:17)**

Blessing Christ, the Wisdom of God, the Promised One, who heals, saves, and delivers,

*Mary Craig*

Mary Craig, D. Min.

**“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”**  
**Revelation 21:7**

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