

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

Series: Covenant: God's Way of Relationship



A Teaching Sermon: "The Covenant of Grace Begins in Genesis"

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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.

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, 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 Creation is also known as the Covenant of Life and as the Covenant of Favor inasmuch as God is owed perfect, personal, perpetual obedience, loyalty, and worship on the basis of the Creator/creature relationship alone. Adam had the ability to respond in a God-pleasing way. To him was 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 in Genesis 2:15-18.

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.

Now we move to the **Covenant of Grace** which commences with Adam.

As we get into the covenant of grace, we must remember that God doesn't consult anyone to see if he/she likes the idea and the terms. The covenant of grace is not a covenantal agreement between God and man but between the Persons of the Godhead. Some call it “The Covenant of Redemption.” God the Father agreed to give His Son (John 3; Matthew 25.34; Rev. 13.8, e.g.). God the Son, Jesus Christ, agreed to give His life a ransom for many (John 10.17, 18). God the Holy Spirit agreed to apply all that Jesus accomplished in the work of redemption to those chosen by the Father and given to Jesus as His inheritance. (Romans 8). All conditions of the covenant of grace are fulfilled by the work of God. Jesus does a work for us and the Holy Spirit does a work in us. God even supplies the faith necessary (Ephesians 2.8, 1.17, Hebrews 12, e.g.). Life depends upon God alone from beginning to end. God alone saves.

The Covenant of Commencement: Adam

We now begin to see the unfolding of the revelation of redemption in God's plan. It begins in the midst of judgment, as it is through judgment that deliverance comes.

We must remember that God owed Adam nothing after he had revolted against the Creator's will and aligned himself with Satan. We need to remember this, as today most think God owes them a living, health, prosperity, and happiness. The wages of sin is death, and every time there is sin, there is a little death. By sin we forfeit our claim to life and blessing and we participate in rebellion against our Creator and thus deserve death.

So the LORD God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” To the woman He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.” Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.” Genesis 3:14-19 NKJV

In Genesis 3.14-19 we see God binding Himself by oath. God initiates enmity between Satan and the woman. God addresses the serpent first. The instrument used by Satan to deceive will now crawl on its belly in the dust. Sadly, the animal world will also feel the effects of Adam's fall into sin. As a tool of Satan, the serpent must crawl and bear in himself the symbolic reminder of ultimate defeat.

God then perpetuates a continuing warfare by divine initiative. There will be enmity between Satan and the woman, between Satan's seed and the woman's seed. The woman was the first to be seduced and deceived. She shall be set at enmity against Satan. Redemption will not be accomplished apart from the woman (1 Timothy 2.15 – she shall be saved in the Childbearing). Womankind will play a significant role in the cosmic struggle to ensue. As Satan works evil to

perpetuate the worship of the goddess and idolatry through the Queen of Heaven, a counterfeit Holy Spirit, so also God will have the Christ born under the law, born of a woman.

Growing out of the enmity between Satan and the woman will come the battle of the seeds. Cain originates from “the evil one” (1 John 3.12). He is the seed of Satan. “I have gotten me a manchild from the LORD.” Seth, on the other hand, was appointed by God. Seth and Abel are in the line of the righteous.

By natural birth, Eve, the mother of all living, brings forth a depraved seed. By grace, however, God establishes enmity within the heart of particular descendants of the woman, i.e., the elect ones who are in fact the Body of Christ, the Elect One. (See also John 8.44) The seed of Satan opposes God and His purposes. Thus womankind struggles with Satan; woman’s seed struggles with Satan’s seed; and “he” struggles with Satan.

“He” is the One destined to crush or bruise Satan’s head. It is masculine singular in Hebrew. This One is Jesus the Christ, and as the Body of Christ, believers also will bruise or crush Satan under their feet (Romans 16.20). Satan will crush or bruise the heel of the seed of the woman. Each attacks with the purpose to destroy, Satan subversively and Christ openly and mortally. Thus in the covenant, God binds Himself to pursue His enemies to their destruction. Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of darkness. (See Psalm 110, Joshua 10.22-25, Colossians 2.14, 15, and Hebrews 2.14 also.) **The deliverance of God’s people comes through the destruction of God’s enemies.**

Satan’s seed dwells among humanity as anti-Christ. We may not know who they are and are to let Jesus judge what is dead and what is living, but we can say that God’s purposes will be realized only through the destruction of those “vessels of wrath fitted for destruction” which God endures with longsuffering. (Romans 9.22) Satan receives no blessing, only the curse.

The woman receives both curse and blessing. She will have children. This is not merely reproductive fertility, but the provision of a seed to enter into conflict with satanic seed. Yet God will multiply the woman’s sorrow in reference to conception, i.e., “the woman is cursed particularly by all the various sorrows associated with her bringing children into the world.” (O. Palmer Robertson, The Christ of the Covenants, page 103)

The woman is also cursed with excessive determination to dominate, possess, and control her husband. Her husband ruling over her is also part of the curse. As she perpetually tries to possess her husband, he will respond by dominating excessively. Thus we have a curse of marital imbalance. The counterpart to this curse is in Song of Solomon 7.11: “I am my Beloved’s and His desire is for me.” Another translation says, “I (am) for my beloved, and unto me is his desire.”

Now God turns to Adam. Though an ingrate and self-willed rebel, Adam finds God to be gracious. He also receives both curse and blessing. The blessing is that man will eat bread. God will provide what is essential for maintaining life even though Adam deserves death and brings death upon all his posterity. Later, Jesus references the consistency of God’s common grace in Matthew 5.45.

This sustenance provision, however, will be marred by the need for excessive labor. Adam also is relegated to the grave, dust to dust. The earth’s dust will rule him, though he had been created to rule the earth.

Thus we see in Genesis 3 God addressing the creation ordinances of a Sabbath rest, marriage, and labor. There will be no rest apart from Christ. There will be no blessing in marriage and the family apart from Christ. And there will be excessive labor without being yoked to Christ. In the Last Adam/Second Man, God will fulfill the Covenant of Creation. Nevertheless, the Covenant of Grace has commenced. Though in his nature man will align with Satan and thus have a sin nature, nevertheless in some God will put that enmity against Satan. These are the elect ones, the seed of Christ, and these will emerge victorious to crush Satan under their feet. These will bring the glory of God to cover the earth and rule with dominion, not domination, and in harmony and order with God's laws and ways. These will say, "henceforth to do Thy will, O God." And these will have holiness as their heart's desire. And God will have His desire in this: "I will be your God and you will be My people." God with us.

Giving glory to the One True and Living God,

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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