

The Covenants of Promise

How Church, Children and Culture are Transformed by Covenant Faithfulness

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Ephesians 2:12–22 NRSV - Remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ . . . that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace . . . So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.

A picture of the concept of the “covenant” is the “promise kept” in marriage. The Covenant Lord is a God of promises. Promises imply relationship and responsibility. The Covenant” is foundationally the union of love within the Triune God. The Trinitarian God has been revealing Himself throughout history. God’s covenant character is revealed in the pattern of promise and obligation in the unfolding story of redemption. The “eternal covenant” (Heb. 13:20) manifests the nature of the Covenant Lord (Yahweh). This one redemptive Oath guiding cosmic history (Eph. 3:10-11) has been administered through the biblical “covenants of promise” (Eph. 2:12): Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and supremely and finally declared in the New Covenant and fulfilled through the One Mediator, Jesus.

- 1) Church/Rites - We must Share in the Signs & Seals of The Covenant which dramatically affects the Assembly for Worship. These are the worship-actions, visible oaths which structure liturgy and by which we are to live (baptism & communion). 1 Cor 10:16–17 - “Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.” Implication: Covenant Renewal Worship.
- 2) Children/Relatives - We must See that Children are included in The Covenant. In every administration of the covenants of promise, the central promise is that He will be “God to you and your descendants” (Gen. 17:7, Dt. 7:9, 30:6, 1Chr. 16:15, Ps. 103:17, 105:8). This is essential since redemption includes the fallen sons of Adam and daughters of Eve. Just as in Israel we are “no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God” (Eph. 2:19). And just as with Noah, Abraham and Moses, this includes our children Implication: Covenantal Baptism and Communion.
- 3) Culture/Reign - We must Seek the Promise of Inheritance of The Covenant. All biblical covenants include a sense of dominion and a virtually explicit promise of the kingdom transformation of the world, culminating in the new covenant era. God purposed to bestow the lost inheritance of Adam on His new humanity (in Christ, the last Adam). Through Christ the covenant purpose is to “create in himself one new humanity” (Eph. 2:15). Implication: Covenant Hopefulness in History.

Covenant (Administration)	1) Rites	2) Relatives	3) Reign
Creation/Adamic	Tree of Life	1Cor. 15:22 “As in Adam all die”	1Cor. 15:25 “For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet”
Noahic	Rainbow	Gen. 7:1/Heb. 11:7 “Salvation of his household”	Gen. 9:1 “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth”
Abrahamic	Circumcision Sacrifices/Meals	Gen. 17:9-13 “You and your descendants after you”	Rom. 4:13 “The promise to Abraham or to his descendants to be heir of the world”
Mosaic	Passover Meal	Ex. 12:24 “For you and your children forever”	Ps. 66:4 “All the earth will worship You, And will sing praises to You”
Davidic	Scepter/Throne	Ps. 89:3-4 “I will establish your seed forever, and build up your throne to all generations”	Ps. 102:13–15 “You will arise and have compassion on Zion...So the nations will fear the name of the LORD”
New Covenant	Baptism (entrance) Lord’s Supper (continuance)	Acts 2:39 “The promise is for you and your children” 1Cor. 10:17 “We all partake of that one bread” 1Cor. 12:13 “We were all baptized into one body. . . and made to drink of one Spirit”	Eph. 6:2-3 “The first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

