

Covenant People – Bible Study Notes

Introduction

Today we will begin to look at the Covenant. A covenant is a treaty, it is a legally binding agreement, it is the strongest kind of agreement known to man. It can only be broken by death.

In our study in the next few sessions we will be looking to remind you that you have a covenant. That you have an eternal bond with an everlasting God. There is an everlasting covenant that binds you to God.

For some, the purpose of this will be to show you that the invitation to follow Jesus is not an invitation to a club or a religion, it is an invitation to into a love relationship, secured by an unbreakable treaty, an unbreakable covenant. It is an unbreakable relationship with the God who is love. Your bond with God is not flimsy. You are not ordinary people; you are covenant people!

The assault on the covenant

One of the things the enemy hates the most about you is the everlasting bond you have with God. Most of the attacks on you are really about this bond you have. He is the 'accuser of the brethren' and his job is to accuse you before God so that you can be discredited before God. Where he is unable to discredit you before God, then he will get you to forget your covenant because so much of the goodness of God to us is through this tight, unbreakable bond that we have with God in Christ Jesus. So, if he can break that bond or at least get you to forget it or lose confidence in that covenant, then he will be able to wreak havoc in your life.



In Daniel 11, the prophet Daniel writes about a king from the North who invaded the territories of the people of God. If you read the story, you will see that this Northern king was against the covenant. So, he does something which I think is very easy to fall for, even today, if we are not well-versed in our covenant with God. Let's read this from the Message translation:

Daniel 11: 29-32 “One year later he will mount a fresh invasion of the south. But the second invasion won't compare to the first. When the Roman ships arrive, he will turn tail and go back home. But as he passes through the country, he will be filled with anger at the holy covenant. He will take up with all those who betray the holy covenant, favouring them. The bodyguards surrounding him will march in and desecrate the Sanctuary and citadel. They'll throw out the daily worship and set up in its place the obscene sacrifice. The king of the north will play up to those who betray the holy covenant, corrupting them even further with his seductive talk, but those who stay courageously loyal to their God will take a strong stand.

Notice that the kings favoured those who forgot the covenant. Those who betrayed the covenant they had with God. This is one of the age-old dilemmas of walking with God. It sometimes feels like those without a relationship with God are more favoured than those who have a relationship with God. The Psalmist said in Psalm 73:3 that he envied the arrogant or the wicked for their prosperity.

Daniel says that this king was against the covenant, so he found some people who turned their backs on the covenant, he favoured them only so that he could destroy the sanctuary and replace it with obscene sacrifice. Scholars believe that this prophecy was fulfilled when a Greek ruler called Antiochus deceived many Jews with all kinds of promises but

ultimately what he sought to do was to replace the God of Abraham with Zeus, his Greek God.

The strategy of the enemy in our lives today is no different. He seeks to frustrate you, attack your day to day life, then he offers options outside of the promises of God for you. He promises favours and possibilities outside of your covenant. He convinces you to hold onto that unforgiveness even though the promise of God is that vengeance belongs to God. The enemy flatters you by giving you the promise of peace and satisfaction outside of forgiveness. But the real plan is to invade your secret place, the place of the covenant communion, the plan is to fill that space with something else!

However, the last line of Daniel 11:32 says that those who know their God shall do exploits! They will successfully resist the enemy. Today, I believe that despite the plan of the enemy, the efforts to conform you into the patterns of this world, you are those who know their God. You will do exploits! You will not cave in, in the face of opposition, because you know your God! You will not give up and compromise on your faith because you know your God!

This is why we are looking at this matter of the covenant. It is because the thing that God wants to do in your life requires you to believe in the promises of God so much that you cannot be swayed by every wind of doctrine. So, take these things to heart. Remember the covenant! You are not normal. You are a covenant person!

Covenant people

Let's see what the scripture says about us:

Ephesians 2:12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from 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.

Christ is the central figure of this covenant. When a covenant is cut, a representative from every side in the covenant needs to be present. We did not have the qualification to offer God anything, so God became man, took our place, so that now in Christ, we who were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ!

We do not need to be people without hope, we do not need to be people who do not sleep or people who are fearful, because we have a God who has given us some really wild promises and these promises are covenant based. We have been brought near to an invisible all-powerful God on the basis of a covenant that He will not break!

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Covenant, the end of all argument

Hebrews 6:16

¹⁶People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. ¹⁷Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. ¹⁸God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly

encouraged. ¹⁹We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, ²⁰where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

God entered into a covenant with you, through Jesus because he wanted to end all arguments. Have you ever had an argument with God about what He said? Especially in the face of a disappointment, we often argue with God, we wonder if the promise of God was what we thought it to be. We wonder if God changed His mind. God foresaw that we would face those times in our lives, so He decided to enter into a covenant to put an end to every argument!

Listen, there is nothing more that God can do to prove to you that He keeps His promise. God gave us His covenant, to end all argument about His willingness to keep His promise. You see, when you understand the covenant, you will take the promises of God very seriously. Many of us don't give the Word of God the weight He deserves because we don't understand how serious God is about keeping His promises. Unfortunately, that means that we will be tossed around by every wind of doctrine. It particularly means that we become those believers who stand as long as we understand what's going on. Real faith is standing when you understand and standing when you don't! Real faith is standing in every season. It's called steadfastness and the covenant gives you the ability to do that.

Genesis 15:7-20

I'd like us to study Genesis 15:7-20. It is an account of God swearing by Himself to keep His promise to Abraham. But in this covenant ceremony, not only does God give us a type and shadow of the covenant that He is going put in place through Jesus, He also shows us how covenant people should expect to walk through life.

As Daniel said in Daniel 11, those who know their God, will do exploits. I believe that if you bear these things that we're about to look at in mind, you will do exploits.

Then He said to him, “I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.” And he said, “Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it?” So, He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And, also, the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward, they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying:

“To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates – the Kenites, the Kenezzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Gergashites and the Jebusites.”

The answer to all your ‘how shall I know’ questions is a covenant. In the description of events above, God gives us instruction on how we walk through seasons of uncertainty as a covenant person.

Look to Jesus

All the animals requested are types and shadows of Jesus. If your answer in this season doesn't go all the way back to Jesus, keep looking until you find out how His death and His resurrection features in your story. Solutions to any problem that do not include Jesus are half-baked because according to heaven, Jesus is the answer to all your uncertainties. All other ground is sinking sand. Salvation is found in no one else.

Understand that you will go through trials

The **smoking pot** was picture of their trials in Egypt. It is a picture of the trials that you will go through as a covenant partner with God. It's a picture of the fact that just like the children of Israel, there will be seasons when you will be trapped in Egypt and unable to see the way out. The smoke in the pot is a picture of the things in our lives that cloud our judgement about what to do next. It's a bit like where we are right now: it seems like there is no end to this virus, we don't know when we can go back to school, go back to business etc. Things are hazy right now - don't act like something strange is going on! These are perfect times to remember that you have a covenant!

It is an understanding of the depth of your relationship with God, the quality of the promises of God, that will sustain you through trials. We have too many believers who quit and cave in when the going gets tough. We have too many Christians who shout out the promises of God in public but murmur in their tents when they face trials. Life will try you. Society will try you. But the scripture says they will not take God by surprise! God Himself says in the scripture that these seasons will come! So, let's not act like something strange is going on when we are in a trial! (Read 1 Peter 4:12, James 1:2)

God will always bring direction in your trial

The smoking furnace was not the only thing there. There was a **burning lamp**, which speaks of direction. Psalm 119:105 says, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.' Covenant people need to understand that even though you will find yourself in trial often, you will never be without direction. You will never be without guidance. That's what God is saying to us here.

Sometimes we get so caught up with the trial that we miss the guidance to triumph. The lamp is a picture of direction in the Word. You might not see your way out yet, but you have a lamp. Believe that. God is guiding you step by step. Take that step to love, to give, it's contrary to what the smoke around you is suggesting but that lamp, that word of God is guidance in this season. Don't listen to the news more than you listen to the Word.

Keep your relationship with the Holy Spirit alive

Here is another thing to note: the lamp was burning. Covenant people should always have their lamps burning! We will lose our way in this world; we will lose our way in the trials we go through when our lamps are not burning. The fire, as we see in Acts 2, is a type of the Holy Spirit. How is the fire in your lamp? Are you trimming out anything that is dimming your light? The Holy Spirit is your live connection to the privileges of the covenant, He is the executor of the promises of God in your life, you cannot be without Him.

Jesus is the basis of this assurance



If we go back to Genesis 15 we see that all of this took place in the midst of the pieces. As covenant people we cannot forget that we come by the broken pieces of the body of Jesus. We come by the blood of Jesus. Jesus qualified us. This promise is covenant based.

Conclusion

God wants us to give special attention to His promises. He wants us to build our lives on the promises of God. But He doesn't want you wavering, He doesn't want you unsure. He wants you to know that anything you build on the foundation of His promises is secure. Any hopes you have with the Word as your foundation are secure.

In response, it is wise of us to review the promises of God for the season we find ourselves in. Those promises were given because the Giver intended to fulfil every word!