

COVENANT: THE MAP OF GOD'S WORD
Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church
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2. THE COVENANT MAP OF HUMAN HISTORY

Introduction: Covenants older than the “old covenant” (Sinai) (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

- Two with Adam, one before the Fall and one after
- Two with Noah, one before the Flood and one after

A. Adam and Christ: Covenant of Works and Covenant of Grace

1) The Beginning: The Lord Calls Adam into a Covenant of Works

a) Adam and Eve, humanity, created for covenant and called into covenant

- The covenant with Noah “repeats” the commission to Adam and Eve (Gen. 9:1-17; 1:27-28)
- Covenant features in Eden (Genesis 1:26-2)
 - Lord’s initiative
 - Exclusive loyalty
 - Obligations
 - Consequences
- Hosea 6:7

The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience. (Westminster Confession of Faith 7.2)

b) Created in God’s image in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness (Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:24)¹

c) The Covenant violated, and the “curse consequences” for ruined servants (Genesis 3)

2) A New Beginning: The Lord Launches a Covenant of Grace through the Woman’s Offspring (Genesis 3:15)

Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in him,

¹ See *Heidelberg Catechism* 6: “God created them good in his own image, that is, in **true righteousness** and **holiness**, so that they might truly **know** God their creator, **love** him with all their heart, and **live with** him in eternal happiness for his praise and glory.” *Westminster Shorter Catechism* 10: God created man male and female, after his own image, in **knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion** over the creatures.

that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life his Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe. (WCF 7.3)

- a) Genesis 3:15 shows **both parties to the covenant**, Lord and Servant.
 - b) Representative headship
 - c) Christ, the woman's offspring (Galatians 4:4-6; Revelation 12:1-5, 9-11; Romans 16:20)
 - d) Two Adams, Two Covenants (Romans 5:12-19)
- B. Noah: Covenant of Forbearance in a Still-Fallen World, opening a "window" in time" for God's redemptive plan (Genesis 6-9; 2 Peter 3)
1. A "Covenant of Grace" Rescue from God's Wrath (Gen. 6:18)
Genealogies and Lamech's hope (Genesis 5:28–29)
 2. A Covenant of Forbearance, delaying God's Wrath (Gen. 9)
 - a) Includes Noah, his offspring, and *all living things*
 - b) Not forgiveness, but forbearance
 - c) Common grace (Matthew 5:44-45)
 - d) To manage sin's consequences and maintain life in a sin-stained world
 - e) To hold open a "window in history" for the outworking of redemption by the woman's offspring, supporting the covenant of grace
 - f) *Unilaterally* guaranteed by the Lord's promise (his warrior bow in the clouds aimed away from sinful humanity) (Genesis 9:9-17; contrast Psalm 7:10)

Take-Aways

These four covenants, covering creation to consummation, answer universal questions:

- Are there absolute standards of right and wrong, or do we all get to set our own rules?
- Why is there so much suffering and death in the world?
- If there is a God who is all-powerful and just, why doesn't he punish cruel oppressors and rescue their helpless victims?
- Why do good things sometimes happen to bad people?
- Why is there beauty, love, and integrity—and sometimes even relief from injustice and disease?
- Will things ever change? If so, "How Long, O Lord?"