

Covenant

In the previous section we looked at 4 key components: God is my reference point; God's Word is my authority; God's glory is my purpose; and God's presence is his promise. These 4 components comprise a grid or framework, which shapes our worldview. Looking at life through this lens also shapes our relationship with God and others. And we learn what it means to live covenantally.

The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.
[Psalm 25:14](#)

Harrison Perkins writes: "Covenant theology, quite simply, concerns our relationship with God, making it about our understanding of ultimate matters. Among the creatures who inhabit the physical realm, we humans alone have walked with the Lord, had opportunity to pray to him, and enjoy his intimate fellowship, prompting us to marvel with David, as he wrote in [Psalm 8:3–4](#), "What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?" All the more, [Psalm 25:14](#) teaches us how those who fear the Lord and have his friendship know what it means to be *in covenant* with him. We are the creatures made for communion with God, and covenants are the way that God facilitates that communion with us."¹

What is a covenant? Most simply, covenant is a formal relationship, a binding promise, an agreement between 2 parties that has conditions and promises.

A covenant with God is a bond in blood that is sovereignly administered. Susan Hunt says, "Covenant is the King of glory's binding promise that he will be our God, and we will be his people. It is the sovereignly initiated arrangement by which God keeps his promise, and fallen sinners are restored to relationship with the God of heaven and earth."

Covenant describes how God relates to his people. Covenant is a thread woven throughout the Scriptures. And it commences before the beginning of time and space.

Before the Beginning: Ephesians 1.

Let's start with [Ephesians 1.3-14](#). As we read, notice God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit and their work in salvation.

*³ Blessed be the **God and Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

*⁷ In **him** (Jesus) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and*

¹ Perkins, H. (2024). [Reformed Covenant Theology: A Systematic Introduction](#) (p. 1). Lexham Academic.

insight⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

*¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised **Holy Spirit**,¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

Did you notice the work of our triune God?

God the Father purposed our salvation. He is the Planner, the Source, and the Sender in salvation. According to this passage, what has God the Father done?

- V3, He has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.
- V4, He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.
- V4-5, In love⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ,
- V5, He did all this according to the purpose of his will.

God the Son accomplished our salvation. He is the Means of salvation, the Sent One, and the Achiever of salvation.

- V7, In **him** (Jesus) we have redemption through his blood.
- V7, In Jesus we have the forgiveness of our trespasses.

God the Holy Spirit applies our salvation. To begin book three of the *Institutes*, John Calvin affirms, the “Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ effectually unites us to himself.” The Holy Spirit is the vital bonding Agent, the glue of the gospel, securing sinners immediately and permanently to Christ Jesus.²

- V13, Implied is the Holy Spirit’s role in illuminating Scripture so we can hear the truth of the gospel.
- V13, We were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.
- V14, The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance.
- John 3.5, The Holy Spirit is the *Producer* of the new birth in Christ.

We see in Ephesians 1 that the triune God is a covenantal being. He is a personal, relational God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit exist in perfect unity and harmony with one another. They are equal in being, but diverse in function. They are in perfect relationship with one another.

So, why do we start here, before time and space?

We need to know that the Trinity was in perfect agreement regarding their plan and purpose before there ever was time and space. God, who sees the end from the beginning, had purposed

² Garner, David. *The Holy Spirit: Agent of Salvation*. The Gospel Coalition.

Plan A. God, who is immutable (unchanging), would not change his plan according to the whims of humanity or creation. Plan A is the plan. This is before “In the beginning...”

And what is our Triune God’s perfect plan? That **God would dwell with His people.**

The Triune God has always known who He has chosen to be His people; he has always known how He will accomplish redemption and forgiveness; and finally, he has always known how He will apply it to His children for all eternity. To the praise of his glorious grace!!!! (2x mentioned in our passage)³

If you hear nothing else this session – walk out of this room knowing that before time and space you were the recipient of the great rescue mission! He has not withheld the very best from you because He has given Himself for you!⁴

Colossians 1:13-14, He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

And then, God enters time and space. Let’s look at the Creation story in Genesis 1 and 2.

Creation: Genesis 1-2

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. (Gen 1.1-3)

26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

*27 So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.*

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Gen 1.26-28)

Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” (Gen 2.18)

Did you notice the number of times the phrase, “And God said,” was used?

Do you see the absolute power of God in that he speaks, and everything is created?

- God spoke the heavens and the earth into being.

³ Harrick, Kristie. [Session #2 – Covenant and Church.](#)

⁴ Harrick, Kristie. [Session #2 – Covenant and Church.](#)

- God made man first, out of the dust of the ground, then he created the woman from the man's rib. Notice the creation order-man, then woman.
- God created man to rule and have dominion over the earth, to work and keep the Garden, and to name every living creature. He created woman to be man's helper. They were to be fruitful and multiply.
- Man and woman were commanded to work.

Notice in these passages that there is a particular design to man and woman that is different from all other living beings:⁵

- Mankind is created in the image of God – we are to reflect Him in His attributes, in his moral qualities-his goodness, justice, love, mercy, truthfulness, wisdom, and so on.
- Mankind is created to glorify God by reflecting Him.
 - [Isaiah 43:6-7](#), *I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, ⁷ everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.*
- Mankind is created to live in relationship with God.
 - We see this relationship as God walks in the garden with Adam and the woman and speaks with them.
 - In order to maintain this perfect relationship with God there are conditions of obedience that God sets forth.
 - God told both the man and the woman to: Have dominion over all the earth. Be fruitful and multiply.
 - Do not eat of the tree of good and evil!

[Genesis 2:15-17](#), *The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ 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.”*
 - This is the **Covenant of Works**. The **Covenant of Works** is a conditional covenant. It “was a covenant that God made with Adam, offering reward based on Adam's perfect obedience. In this covenant, God appointed Adam as the representative of all humanity, meaning that Adam's success or failure determined whether all humanity would receive reward or condemnation. Christians know that Adam failed, fell into sin, and so plunged the rest of us into sin with him.”⁶
 - If the conditions set forth in these verses are met – then the blessing of perfect union with God continues.

⁵ Harrick, Kristie. [Session #2 – Covenant and Church](#).

⁶ Perkins, H. (2024). [Reformed Covenant Theology: A Systematic Introduction](#) (p. 7). Lexham Academic.

The Fall. Genesis 3

Genesis 3:1-6 *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.*

Satan is crafty indeed. To whom did he speak? The woman. But what is God’s created order? Man, then woman.

Paul alludes to [Genesis 2](#) in [1 Timothy 2.13](#), *For Adam was formed first, then Eve*. God taught Adam and the world something by forming the man *first*. The original, primary responsibility fell to Adam to be head, and for Eve to be his helper, not the other way around. Whereas *God’s order* in creation was the focus of [1 Timothy 2.13](#), now *the serpent’s order* that led to the fall contrasts with God’s. God created Adam first, as head, then his wife, as helper; the serpent subverted God’s order. Satan undermined God’s created order by going to the woman and not the man.⁷

So, God laid down an order in creation, and Satan subverted that order, and it led to the fall. And in it, both man and woman are at fault. As Ray Ortlund ([Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood](#), 107) writes, “Eve usurped Adam’s headship and led the way into sin. And Adam, who (it seems) had stood by passively, allowing the deception to process without decisive intervention — Adam, for his part, abandoned his post as head. Eve was deceived; Adam forsook his responsibility.”⁸

Next we see that Satan distorts the word of God, “*Did God say?*” and then he lies about God’s Word, “*You will not surely die.*” Satan’s cunning words deceived the woman into doubting God’s goodness and caused her to accept the lie that God must be withholding something from her that she should have had. Namely, she would be like God, if only she ate the fruit of the forbidden tree. No longer was God’s Word her authority but additionally, God was not her reference point. Instead of living for God’s glory, she was living to satisfy her own desires—the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life.

Adam and Eve’s mistake was to believe the lie of Satan over the truth of God and to think that they could determine truth for themselves. To decide truth apart from God is saying, “I won’t accept God’s rules. I’ll make my own.” This is the “way of Cain” ([Genesis 4.16](#)), which is

⁷ Mathis, David. (June 26, 2020). Why Did Satan Target Eve? How Man and Woman Fell out of Order. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/why-did-satan-target-eve>.

⁸ Mathis, David. (June 26, 2020). Why Did Satan Target Eve? How Man and Woman Fell out of Order. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/why-did-satan-target-eve>.

characterized by pride, independence, and autonomy. This self-focus, this self-rule is the beginning of idolatry. When we don't like what God says, we make our own rules. We create gods in our own image, which are nothing less than idols ([Romans 1:22-23](#)).

[Genesis 1.6](#), *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.*

Adam and Eve ate of the fruit. They ate the fruit. They disobeyed God's direct command. They acted on their own accord. They broke the covenant.

Why is that significant?

Adam is representative of the human race. Adam chose to sin, and with sin came death. Now every human acts according to his sin nature. Every thought, word, and deed is tainted by sin. Adam's sin led to the condemnation of all men. [Romans 5.18-19](#), *Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.* All of us are considered guilty because Adam was our representative, and every person is in Adam until they come to the knowledge of Christ.

Adam and Eve were the first covenant breakers. BUT GOD. God is the consistent, unchanging Covenant Keeper. He acts according to his nature and plan in contrast to Adam and Eve and the "way of Cain."

Redemption

Mankind needed rescue from punishment, and that's exactly what God provided after the Covenant of Works was broken. After the catastrophic fall of Adam and Eve, God reveals a glimpse of His covenant promise when he addresses the serpent, Satan.

[Genesis 3.15](#), *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*"

In speaking to the serpent, God reveals his first gospel, his first good news, his *protoevangelium*, that foreshadows his covenant promise.

[Listen again. Genesis 3:15](#), *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*"

What is God saying in this first gospel?

- There will be enmity--mutual hatred and ill will--between the woman and her offspring and the serpent.
- But there is a coming offspring who will deal the death blow to the serpent's head.

- There is hope and a future because God will allow for life to continue and there will be an offspring.

Don't miss this - God did not destroy Adam and the Woman. He revealed the Covenant Promise made before the foundation of the earth. And what is that good news?

- He would still be their God.
- They would be His people.
- He would dwell among them.
- God came. God called. God clothed. This is the **Covenant of Grace** made before the foundation of the earth.

Susan Hunt writes of this in her book, Heirs of the Covenant, page 25.

“God was not obliged to do anything. He could have turned from the creature and the creation. The good news is, instead He intervened. He **came** to the Garden. He **called** to the man, and He **clothed** Adam and the woman in garments of skin. Here is the essence of the Covenant – God came, He called. He clothed. God came to us while we were dead in our trespasses and sins ([Ephesians 2:1-2](#)). He calls us into relationship with Himself ([Acts 2:38-39](#)). And He covers our guilt with the perfect righteousness of Christ so we can once again live in His presence ([Isaiah 61:10](#)) – glorious, sovereign grace from the beginning to the end.”

Man broke the conditions of the covenant. But God still provides the blessings promised because **He** is the one who is the greater Adam who will keep all the conditions. Therefore, the promises are applied to all those who believe and take refuge in the covenant keeper.⁹

Quick side note: Two other items you see here that will come up more later in discussion of Biblical Womanhood but I want you to see it:

- God affirms male headship and re-establishes authority when he goes to Adam first as the one responsible for the sin in the garden.
- Adam demonstrated his faith in God's promise of an offspring by naming his wife “Eve” which means life-giver.¹⁰

From Karen Hodges and Susan Hunt, Transformed: Life-taker to Life-giver, p. 16.

“When the first man and woman sinned against God, they deserved the death sentence but received the gospel promise of Life through a Redeemer. And grace upon grace this Life would come through woman ([Genesis 3.15](#)). In response, Adam gave his wife a new name that sounds like the Hebrew word for life-giver--Eve (Genesis 3.20).”

The Covenant Unfolds throughout All Scripture

⁹ Harrick, Kristie. [Session #2 – Covenant and Church](#).

¹⁰ Harrick, Kristie. [Session #2 – Covenant and Church](#).

There is this one single thread through the whole of scripture with Christ at the center! God's promise is His presence. He will dwell with His people!¹¹

The covenant thread is:

- Historical. All of history from eternity past to eternity future is about God's working to redeem a people for himself.
- Personal. At a point of time and space, you and I became a part of it.
- Global. The Kingdom of God is made up of people from every tongue, tribe, and nation.
- Local. You and I enter into covenantal relationship with our local body of believers.

Through the whole of scripture you will see this promise declared through various scriptures and through the various covenants with conditions and promises. And, each covenant is revealing more and more of THE Covenant of Grace.¹²

The scarlet thread of covenant throughout the Scriptures shows that God will be our God, we will be His people, and He will dwell with us:

Genesis 17:7, *And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.*

Exodus 6:7, *I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*

Leviticus 26:11-12, *I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. ¹² And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.*

Deuteronomy 29:10, 12-13, *"You are standing today, all of you, before the Lord your God: the heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel...¹² so that you may enter into the sworn covenant of the Lord your God, which the Lord your God is making with you today, ¹³ that he may establish you today as his people, and that he may be your God, as he promised you, and as he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.*

Jeremiah 24:7, *I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.*

Jeremiah 31:33 and Hebrews 8:10, *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people...*

¹¹ Harrick, Kristie. [Session #2 – Covenant and Church](#).

¹² Harrick, Kristie. [Session #2 – Covenant and Church](#).

Ezekiel 36:25-28, I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. ²⁸ You shall dwelt in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Zechariah 8:7-8, Thus says the Lord of hosts: Behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country, ⁸ and I will bring them to dwelt in the midst of Jerusalem. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness.”

Matthew 1:23, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel”

John 1:14, And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

2 Corinthians 6:16, What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

“I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.

Revelation 21:1-3, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwelt with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

Consummation

The end times will be when the consummation, the bringing to completion, of all things takes place. Because Adam and Eve broke the covenant and sinned, all of humanity and creation was cursed (**Genesis 3:16-19**). Since that time both God’s people and creation have been longing and groaning for redemption and restoration (**Romans 8.20-23**).

But Christ’s return will take care of all this. Jesus will return to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. He will bring justice, peace, fulfillment, contentment, and victory. God’s people will be resurrected and reign with him. They will be free not only from the penalty and power of sin, but from the very presence of sin. Creation will also experience redemption and renewal (**Matt 19:28; Lk 22:30**). Christ will remove the consequences of sin, judge sin, and make all things new (**Rom 8:19; 2 Pet 3:13**). At the consummation, God will say to his people, “I will be their God, and they will be my people.” (**Rev 21:1-5**).

From Jonty Rhodes, [*Covenants Made Simple*](#), p. 176

“This is your future if you’re a Christian. You cannot spoil heaven: God is more powerful than your sin, and he will one day destroy it forever. That day won’t come until you die or Jesus returns, but, when he does come back and bring in the final chapter of covenant history, we will be at the beginning of another story far greater than anything we’ve yet imagined. And the wonderful news is that even then things won’t be “perfect” in the sense of static, finished, and complete, God is so immense that there will always be greater wonders to explore, always new riches to experience. The end is just the beginning. No wonder the Bible closes with a simple prayer: ‘Come, Lord Jesus!...Amen (Revelation 22.20-21).’”