

## GOD'S COVENANT

In our last study we considered the Baptist Confession of Faith's statement on *The Fall of Man: Sin and its Punishment*. Our next study looks at the remedy with which God's mercy and love confronted the Fall. It is built upon the Covenant into which God entered with His people.

A covenant is a promise, a guarantee, a binding agreement, a contract. Long, hard, meticulous thought goes into making a covenant. For example, the greatest covenant that a relationship between a man and woman can enter into is the covenant of marriage. It is not simply a legally binding contract, ... but, more importantly, for it to survive it is a uniting of the heart, soul and mind. ... The Bible says the two shall become one.

The Covenant of God, - *like God*, - is eternal. The eternal God drew up the Covenant in eternity. Usually, - in our understanding of the word, - at least two parties are there to draw up such an agreement ... but that couldn't have happened in eternity. In eternity God was the sole/only Party present to draw up the Covenant, with the salvation of His people as its priority.

Did He draw up that contract/covenant based on how He could look down through the long tunnel into time and see how we were going to react when we were confronted by the Gospel of Saving Grace? Is that how He worked it out ... He saw we were either going to choose Him or reject Him?

Did He know how we were going to respond to the Gospel? When God figured it out how we were going to 'choose' did He then draw up the plan of His covenant around whether we would accept Him or reject Him? ... Is that how He worked it out ... who He would draw this Covenant up for? ... As I heard a Deaconess in another denomination once describe it in her Easter 'sermon', - "God took an awful chance that anyone would decide for Him at all!"

... And indeed, so He did ... based upon that type of thinking; but consider this:

1. If God had to build His plan upon our plans (whether we would accept Him or not) well then it can be said that we can take some of the credit for our salvation since we chose Him before He chose us ... and God would never have been able to have saved us if we hadn't given Him the go-ahead.
2. Since the Bible says we were all born dead to God, it's a nonsense to think that we, - dead in trespasses and sins, - made ourselves to become alive in order to believe in Christ and be saved. Salvation is not of man, but is all of God!

Some folk would say, "Ah, he's on his favourite subject again!" Yes, he is ... but not to prove points or to win an argument, but simply because this doctrine has the greatest effect on my life and upon anyone who says they know and love the Saviour ... that because of the Covenant of God I, - through the eternal grace of God *alone*, - would - from eternity - be covenanted by God to be made alive in Christ and be born into His family. This is the only form of salvation that has God *totally* at its origin and saves the sinner for all eternity.

Down through the history of the Church many faithful men of God, Confessions of Faith, Catechisms, and Councils of the Church have sought to carefully and Biblically present this great truth. It is a fantastic study throughout Church History and Historical Theology and Systematic Theology ... but we are not in a lecture hall this evening; nevertheless we will take time to consider the simple yet magnificent truths that chapter seven of our Basis of Faith presents.

### **THE DISTANCE SIN CREATED**

- \* In order to fix something you need to honestly face the problem. Man's inherent problem is the ingrained problem of sin. All the crises, dilemmas and difficulties that humanity gets itself into and must face are because of that little three-letter word.
- \* *Sin* is at the heart of everything that troubles humanity.
- \* It causes wars and strife ... thus the disharmony in the world.
- \* It causes greed ... which also extends to affect our environment.

- \* It causes pride and foolish independence that denies God.
- \* Sin formed the gulf between God and His creation.
- \* The gulf is unfathomable and ‘uncrossable’ ... from our side.
- \* Sin cannot be dealt with by anything is in or of man for **the distance sin created** is eternal in its height, depth, length and breadth.
- \* It is truly important to understand how great this distance is and how far we have actually fallen.
  - \* If you don’t believe you have fallen all that badly you won’t take this subject particularly seriously.
  - \* And of course, it is not politically correct to put ourselves down to such a degree these days ... but nevertheless, if we are going to be faithful to God’s Word we have got to see it as He says it! [Jn. 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.](#)
- \* *Condemned already!* That is how serious sin is and how God sees it ... the person without Christ is already living under the condemnation and wrath of God!
- \* It’s worse than a nuclear threat ... or waiting for an asteroid to hit our planet. This is how the sinner is already living ... under the eternal condemnation of a holy, righteous and wrathful God.
- \* We cannot emphasise enough **the distance sin created** ... but the Bible also says, [Rom. 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.](#)

### **THE DELIVERANCE GOD APPOINTED**

- \* Man was born under a **curse** ([Rom. 3:10 there is none righteous, no not one](#)), God’s answer to man’s **curse** was to make a **covenant**.
- \* Why did God let the world fall under a curse in the first place? Was He powerless to do anything about it? Could He not have stopped Adam and Eve sinning?
  - \* He was *not* powerless and He *could* have stopped Adam and Eve sinning but then He would have had nothing better than two robots for company!

- \* He made both of them freely responsible adults capable of doing that which was in their own hearts.
- \* However, when our first parents demonstrated sin God, - Who does not look lightly on disobedience of any kind, - expelled them from the garden, under the curse of death.
- \* For some reason, - which is still a secret to Himself, - that was how He planned it, for even before the sin He had already planned the Saviour's blood to be shed for sinners.
- \* **The deliverance God appointed** was in the covenant of grace.
- \* As the Confession says, "God freely offers life and salvation by Jesus Christ to sinners." The Gospel call is made to everyone!
- \* But for the Gospel call to be made effectual ... it is believed and accepted. Can the sincerity of a preacher make it to be accepted and effectual, ... or the prayer of a mother or father?
- \* God requires the unbeliever to believe in Him in order to be saved, [Eph. 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.](#) Grace is a gift of God, and when God gives grace He also gives saving faith. This is a work totally and completely of God.
- \* The sinner will only ask for this covenant gift of grace and faith when God shows the sinner their absolute need.
  - \* It's not a preacher or evangelist who can *make* someone to be saved, - it is solely the work of God the Holy Spirit.
- \* ... As the Baptist Confession says, He "promises to give His Holy Spirit to all those who are elected unto eternal life, in order that they may be made willing and able to believe." [Phil. 2:13 it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Eph. 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.](#)
- \* Such a mighty salvation God planned; regardless of **the distance sin created God appointed deliverance** ... and ...

## THE COVENANT CONFIRMS IT

- \* The basis of the Covenant is the love of God that was evidenced in Christ. You see, it is so important to recognise Christ as central to it all. A man-made gospel is totally inadequate and irrelevant for it saves nobody!
- \* God's eternal covenant is built unshakably and uncompromisingly upon the saving work of Christ on the cross. ... What about all those who have never heard His Name? ... It doesn't matter how you and I try and work it out; the truth of the matter is that the covenant God put into place does not change with the times, the society or the people, - it is only through Christ that the sinner (regardless of circumstances or anything else) can be saved.
- \* He searches for them: He finds them in the grave clothes of Romanism, Islam, Buddhism and all the various religions; He finds them in the dead religiosity of Protestantism and churchianity. He seeks them out in the spiritual tombs of modern philosophy and secularism. As a consequence of Him going out and finding them He brings them in and brings them home.
- \* Do you know when Christ will come back again? He will return to the earth when every last one of His people is gathered in.
- \* There is nothing slapdash about God's salvation, nothing left to chance or man's 'humming and hamming'.
- \* God's covenant is based upon *God's eternal decree*. It was founded in His mind in the eternal recesses of Glory.
- \* When He set His mind to save you in eternity nothing would or could get in the way of Him saving you.
- \* Yes, you opposed it and hindered it ... and others would have helped to pull you in your opposition. You didn't have to learn how to reject God, - it came naturally ... but the God of the covenant, in His Sovereign grace and mercy, loved you with a compelling everlasting love and brought you unto Himself. The Confession, "The salvation of the elect is based upon a covenant of redemption that was transacted in eternity between the Father and the Son; and it is solely through the grace conveyed by this covenant that all the descendants of fallen Adam who have been saved have obtained life and a blessed immortality".

## Conclusion

- \* Titus 3:3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.
- \* And so it is **good and profitable** to consider these things: **God's covenant** ... for the salvation of His people. He alone spanned **the distance sin created**, He **appointed** the only **deliverance** from sin, and He **confirmed the covenant** through the atoning sacrifice of His own sinless Son on the cross of Calvary.
- \* This is the hope of all those who know and love Him as Saviour ... to His honour and for His glory alone!