

The Covenant of Grace

Lesson 2: The Covenant of Redemption

Intro

- Is there such a thing as the covenant of redemption (Pactum Salutis)? What does the Bible say?
 - Ps 89: 3-4, 19, 27, 28; God the Father speaking of a covenant with Christ. *Colquhoun*: “The covenant of royalty made with David was a type of the covenant of grace made with Messiah.”
 - Zec 6:13
 - Scripture uses language of subordination of Christ to the Father (Jn 20:17; 1 Cor 11:3; Isa 42:1; Mal 3:1)
 - The Bible speaks of divine oaths and seals (Ps 89:3, 35; Ps 110:4; Heb 7:28)
- How does the covenant of redemption relate to the covenant of grace?
 - The covenant of grace is the covenant of redemption accomplished and applied.

I. The Parties Contracting in the Covenant of Redemption

- A. No Parties - No Covenant — *Colquhoun*: “there must, in the nature of the thing, be parties contracting...One may, indeed, purpose or decree with himself without another party; but he cannot stipulate or so much as promise anything without another. The covenant of redeeming grace, which is an eternal covenant, a covenant that never began to be made, could not be established but between parties; and those parties, before creation began, could exist nowhere but in the eternal, the ever-blessed Godhead.”
- B. The Parties and their Role
 1. God The Father - the party contracting on the part of heaven.
 - a) The party “who, in the covenant, sustains the honor of the infinite majesty and authority of the glorious Godhead” (*Colquhoun*).
 - b) How are we to consider him in the covenant of redemption?
 - (1) As a God of manifold and infinite wisdom - *Colquhoun*: “In permitting mankind to fall into sin, that only evil in which there is no good, so that, by the redemption of sinners, He might bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil, and might render the deepest misery the occasion of the highest happiness to His elect, and that in subservience to the most astonishing displays of the glory of every divine perfection, He manifested the most unfathomable depths, the most unsearchable treasures, of wisdom and knowledge in having devised a plan according to which sin might be punished and yet the sinner pardoned; justice might be satisfied and yet the offender saved; holiness glorified and yet the believing sinner admitted to intimate communion with the High and Holy One; truth magnified, and yet the penalty of the broken law remitted to the transgressor — a plan according to which mercy and truth might meet together, righteousness and peace might kiss each other, truth might spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven (Psalm 85:10-11)” (Eph 3:9-11; Rom 11:33).
 - (2) As a God who is infinitely displeased with the sins of mankind (Gen 6:5; Psa 14:2-3).
 - (3) As a God who purposed from eternity past to display in redemption his grace and mercy.
 - (a) The Father formed the purpose of grace toward his elect. Humanly speaking, he is **the author and the initiator of the covenant of grace**. (2 Ti 1:9)
 - (b) The cause of this grace was the Father himself (WCF 3:2; Rom. 9:11, 13, 16, 18).

- (4) As a God who is infinitely and immutably just - *Colquhoun*: "If a throne of grace is to be erected, it must not be on the ruins of the honor of divine justice."
2. God the Son — the party contracting on the part of man
- a) How are we to consider him in the covenant of redemption?
- (1) As the second person of the Trinity
- (a) *Colquhoun*: "as a Person of all possible excellence, of all divine perfection, having in and from Himself wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and faithfulness, sufficient, and more than sufficient, for the infinitely arduous work of the redemption of sinners." (Psa 89:19; Zec 13:7; Isa 9:6)
- (b) An eternal covenant requires eternal parties (Isa 55:3). *Colquhoun*: "How could a covenant of eternity be primarily made with creatures of time, creatures of a day, creatures but of yesterday, except in such a Representative as existed from eternity?"
- (2) As our sovereign and rightful proprietor (Rom 9:23; Psa 100:3; HC Q&A1: ... That I am not my own, but belong...to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.)
- (3) As the head and representative of the elect (Eph. 1:3-4; Psa 89:3-4)
- (a) The second Adam (Rom 5:12-19)
- (b) The only way to produce the covenant of grace. *Colquhoun*: "It is evident from the sacred records that this...treaty was designed chiefly [to]... display...the glory of redeeming grace... But if the covenant were made... with the sinner himself as the principal party...according to the doctrine of Scripture, it would be a proper covenant of works; and between such a contract and Adam's covenant of works there could be no material difference but in degree." (Rom 4:16; Eph 2:8-9; Rom 4:4)
3. The elect — the party contracted for in the covenant.
- a) How are we to consider them in the covenant of redemption?
- (1) As sinners, lost and undone by breaching the covenant of works (Matt 15:24).
- (2) As altogether unable to recover themselves (Rom 5:6)
- (3) As the objects of God's electing, redeeming, and everlasting love. *Colquhoun*: "The Father loved them (John 17:23), and gave them to the Son (verse 6); the Son loved them (Ephesians 5:2) and, accepting the gift, represented them in the covenant as a father does his children. 'His name shall be called...the everlasting Father' (Isaiah 9:6)"
4. What about the Holy Spirit?
- a) 1 Jn 5:6b — "And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth."
- b) *Colquhoun*: "The ever blessed Trinity, moved by infinitely free love and transcendent mercy, advised the amazing scheme of man's redemption; and each of the divine Persons was to get himself a glorious name by sustaining a distinct, a peculiar office in the accomplishment of the covenant... But, though the eternal Spirit was deeply concerned in the making of that divine covenant, yet God the Father entered into it in a peculiar manner with His only begotten Son."

II. The Making of the Covenant of Redemption

- A. *Colquhoun*: "although that wonderful covenant was, in the eternal and mysterious counsel of the ever-blessed Trinity, and by one eternal act of the Divine will, made all at once, yet since we, because of the narrowness and darkness of our understanding, cannot form any apprehensions of it but, as it were, in parcels; we are allowed to conceive a certain order in the making of it, and to consider first one part and then another."
- B. We can, thus, identify the following steps in the making of the covenant:

1. The infinite Father wills and proposes the glorious plan of redemption in which the two natures, divine and human, would be united in the fullness of time in the person of the Son.
2. The infinite Son consents willfully and readily to the Father's plan immediately being constituted mediator between God and men (Heb 10:5, 7)
3. The Father then chooses the Son to be the federal Head and Representative of those whom he should select unto salvation (Eph 1:22)
4. The Son agrees to this proposal, in which he becomes the second or the last Adam.
5. The Father elects all those of mankind chosen to constitute the church, giving them to the Son, and the Son accepting them (Jn 17:6).
6. The Covenant of Grace, with all of its promises and conditions, is then ratified. *Colquhoun*: "the eternal Father thereupon proposed to Him, as the last Adam, the covenant of grace for their salvation in the whole tenor, conditions, and promises of it...And Christ...most willingly accepted the promises proposed to Him and consented to fulfill the conditions upon which they had been proposed."

III. Applications

- A. Support for the Trinity - being by nature an eternal covenant and, thus, only existing in the Godhead, this covenant "therefore necessarily supposes a plurality of persons in the adorable Godhead" (*Colquhoun*)
- B. Better understanding of the Trinity
 1. The covenant of redemption clarifies the apparent subordination of equals. *Myers*: "The doctrine of Pactum Salutis is not an attempt to explain unexplainable, but it emerges from Scripture helping to explain what would otherwise be inexplicable."
 2. Provides an actual biblical window into the inner workings of the Trinity.
- C. Our increased awareness of the magnitude of sin - such a covenant was necessary to destroy our rebellion against God.
- D. Renewed appreciation of God the Father.
- E. Growing appreciation of the Son (Phil 2:5-8).
- F. The "hidden" importance of the Spirit.