

101 DSC Class 7 – The Providence of God (cont.)

More on Covenants:

Gen 15 - Covenant of faith with Abraham

- OT Review:
 - Covenant of faith (land and a people)
 - God takes vow & sign (cut in blood of carcass)
- NT parallel (New Covenant in Christ)
 - We have faith in Jesus as Lord (Rom 4:9) – heaven and a people (kingdom)
 - God fulfills vow to save us (savior) & sign is cross (cut in blood)

Gen 17 – a covenant of works

- New covenant (vv. 1 & 10), separate but related to the covenant God made in Gen 15, with new set of covenantal components (new vow, sign, etc.).
 - God has similar vow but this time includes details of the offspring & land, and includes a conditional promise to be their God in covenantal relationship with them if they keep the covenant, and renames them (vv.5, 7-8, 15-16)
 - These specifics come this time with stipulations & conditions (vv. 1 & 14)
 - Because of these stipulations, this time Abraham takes the sign (cutting away the flesh of offspring).
- IN NO WAY is this a requirement for Gen 15 to be fulfilled. God sealed that in His vow and His sign that it will come true or He ceases to be God (see last lecture)
- Gen 17 is a human response (covenant of works) that follows and plays out what God is doing as He fulfills His covenant (of faith) in Gen 15.
 - Gen 17 sign: circumcision (symbolizes the curse for disobedience=being cut off from the seed of Abraham; and the blessing of having sinful nature removed)
 - If you aren't marked you are removed
 - The association of the seed of Abraham cutting the covenant in blood (the foreskin) is as intentional as it is metaphorical. It marks a people (seed lineage), and cutting away of the flesh defines the people of God
 - The “seed” is being tracked to Christ, who Paul notes is THE SEED of Abraham, and who cuts away all the old self/flesh – new birth (old self died, new creation in Christ) – Gal 3:16
 - See Jer 31:31-34 & Ezek 36:26.
 - See also Paul on Spirit putting to death the flesh – i.e. the true circumcision as he puts it in Phil 3:2-3.

The New Covenant in Christ

- Gal 3 – Christ fulfills the covenant of faith begun with Abraham
 - From this seed (Christ), Abraham becomes the father of many nations as Jew & Gentile are in Christ. Gal 3:28
 - Circumcision is no longer necessary for Gentile converts (the law has been fulfilled in Christ, and we are united in covenant of faith) Col 3:11
 - Furthermore, the everlasting covenant of circumcision was also conditional in that it marked a faithful people. If not faithful, the covenant ceases. “Everlasting” is stipulated with obedience. Israel’s disobedience is why this old covenant ceases, and a new covenant (unlike the one made with their forefathers – Jer 31:32) comes in Christ. The OT law makes us aware of sin/disobedience and drives us towards faith and grace

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- A 30 year mortgage is no longer valid if I default after 5 years. The time is conditional to the stipulations being met

Looking at the covenant of works in Gen 17 (circumcision) as a response to the covenant of faith in Gen 15 (God's vow), we can at least note the importance of living a life of obedience in response to God's grace. His grace is part of His sovereign work, the fulfillment of His promises, but it demands a response on our part in the New Covenant as well (i.e. to follow Christ...the seed of Abraham). What acts of obedience is God calling on your life right now? Are you faithful in your response?

Given Paul's words in Gal 3 (that all who have faith in Christ are sons of Abraham), and in Phil 3 (that we who have this faith in Christ are the true circumcision), who then do you think Paul has in mind in Gal 6:15-16 when he references "the Israel of God"? (Hint: look at Rom 9:1-6)

Assignments:

-Read Col 2:9-14, John 3:1-21, 1 Cor 11-12