

Overview of Biblical Covenants¹

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What is a covenant?

God reveals himself throughout the Scriptures as a covenant-making God: “I will establish my covenant with you” (Gen. 6:18). A covenant is primarily a legal arrangement between two parties, usually established (or ratified) with an oath and defined by the divinely sanctioned commitments involved. There are only two ways in which a covenant may be treated by the parties—observation and violation. The covenant itself dictates blessings or curses contingent upon this outcome. Thus, covenants function as instruments of God’s kingly rule, determining his relationship both with man in general, and with his particular people.² Thus, covenants are not always redemptive, nor are they always gracious. All men therefore relate to God via covenants.

The objection that this is a “legalistic” way of viewing God is unfounded and misunderstands the fundamental nature of a covenant, which is flexible enough to express both pure justice and perfect love—both Law and Gospel. It does not lessen a father’s love for a son if this is expressed by the father’s unconditional *pledge* to tenderly care for him, come what may. Nor is the love between man and wife lessened because it is sealed with an irrevocable covenant. Rather, both loving relations are thus strengthened and confirmed.

In the following pages we will seek to establish a series of key distinctions. First, there are three major covenants in the Scriptures as determined by the parties involved: 1) The Creator’s covenant with man; 2) The Father’s covenant with the Son; 3) The Lord’s covenant with His Church. Second, these covenants are informed either by the basic principle of works or grace. Third, we must properly distinguish between the various administrations of the Lord’s gracious covenant with his church throughout the history of redemption.³

1 These brief sketches first appeared as a series of sidebars in *Modern Reformation* magazine (July/August 2000).

2. God covenants with man in general in the Creation Covenant and in the covenant of common grace (Gen 1-3, 9), while he covenants with particular people in the unfolding work of his redemption (Gen 6, 15; Ex 19, Matt 26:26ff).

3. The following series of sidebars depend heavily both in content and organization upon the work of Meredith Kline, both in his self-published text *Kingdom Prologue* (Meredith G. Kline, 1993) and in lectures delivered at Westminster Theological Seminary in California in 1996 (“Pentateuch”). Other sources include Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, Translated (from the fourth edition, 1712) by William

Covenant of Creation

The kingdom of God as it existed in Eden prior to the fall has often been identified as being governed by a covenant, established between the Creator God and Adam, usually known as the Covenant of Works, or the Covenant of Creation.⁴ Though “covenant” isn’t mentioned in the text of Genesis 1-3, the Scriptures later use this very language to describe that arrangement.⁵ More importantly, the substance of a covenantal arrangement is present in the account. The relationship between God and Man was established through divine words and acts of commitment. These include both the creative word itself (1:3ff.), as well as the clear commands to rule the earth, cultivate the Garden, and abstain from eating the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (1:28, 2:15ff.). The sanction of death on the basis of disobedience (2:17) is an explicitly stated curse, with an implied promise of continued life based on obedience. What’s more, there is even a strong implication of a greater reward of confirmation unto eternal life.⁶

It is essential to grasp that the Covenant of Creation was fundamentally informed by the principle of works: “Do this and you shall live!” (Lev. 18:5). Whether it resulted in blessing or curse depended entirely upon Adam’s obedience, God promising only to mete out the just reward. This conditionality is the primary hallmark of works covenants.

Covenant of Redemption

While it is common to associate our redemption exclusively with grace, this oversimplification fails to account for the essential role which works play in our redemption—the works of Christ. “For as by one man’s *disobedience* many were made sinners, so by the *obedience* of one shall many be made righteous” (Rom 5:19). God’s redemptive plan answers

Crookshank, D.D. (London: R. Baynes, 1822). Reprinted by the den Dulk Christian Foundation in 1990; Gerhardus Vos’ *Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1954); and Louis Berkhof’s *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1941). Berkhof is especially helpful in providing a brief history of the development of this doctrine.

4. “Covenant of Creation” is preferred by Kline because it doesn’t obscure the fact that the works principle is not found only here. As we shall see below, the Covenant of Redemption between the Father and the Son is similarly works oriented.

5. Most notably in Isaiah 24:5 and Hosea 6:7: “But like Adam they have transgressed the covenant; There they have dealt treacherously against me.” Both of these texts are contested. Also, Jeremiah 31:35-37 taken in conjunction with 33:20-21 seem to suggest that God’s creative fiat was inherently covenantal, implying a pledge to sustain the creation order. It is important to note that the Scriptures give us a precedent for describing such a similarly unnamed arrangement as a covenant in the case of God’s promise to David in 2 Samuel 2:7 (referred to as a covenant in 2 Sam. 23:5 and Ps. 89:3).

6. The fact that man is created in the image of God implies that he like his Creator will consummate his works and enter the promised blessing of Sabbath rest (1:26, 2:3). The presence of the Tree of Life further suggests a blessed goal of confirmation in righteousness (2:9, 3:22).

Adam's disobedience (in the works-oriented Covenant of Creation) with the Last Adam's perfect obedience (in the similarly works-oriented Covenant of Redemption). In this sense, the works principle underlies *all* biblical covenants. Much confusion results from the failure to recognize this fact.

The eternal agreement between the Father and Son to save sinners (Eph 1:4, 3:11) takes the form of a covenant, with divinely sanctioned commitments and promised blessings. Thus, the Father gives the Son a commandment to obey (Jn 10:18), and Christ can say that he has accomplished the work which the Father had given him to do (Jn 17:4), fulfilling all righteousness (Matt 3:15). Christ covenants to not only actively obey God's law, but also to bear man's impending curse. As a result of his obedience, Christ receives blessings, expressed in explicitly covenantal language: "My Father has *covenanted* unto me a kingdom."⁷

Discerning a works covenant within the Godhead's eternal plan to save is far from idle speculation. It is absolutely necessary if we are to properly understand Christ as our substitute, one who stands in our place "under the Law" (Gal 4:4) and fulfills what is required of us in its entirety. This idea of a substitute is most clearly expressed in Paul's description of the first and last Adams (Rom 5, 1 Cor 15), which supports the parallel works nature of these two covenants of Creation and Redemption.

The Unified Covenant of Redemptive Grace

Christ's obedience as substitute is the foundation for the gracious restoration of covenant relations between God and man after the fall. Among the blessings he receives for his faithfulness is the redemption of his church: "As my Father covenanted to me a kingdom, so I covenant to you to participate with me in the glory of the royal court."⁸ Thus, Christ as Lord pledges to share his blessings with the church. It is on the basis of this gracious covenant alone—founded upon Christ's work alone—that sinners enter into a saving relationship with God. The history of this saving covenant stands at the forefront of the Scriptures, a single, unified pact administered in diverse arrangements from Genesis 3 to Revelation 22.

7. This is a justifiable, if somewhat unusual, rendering of Luke 22:29-30. The more typical English rendering "The Lord has appointed me a kingdom," obscures the fact that the root of the verb "appointed" (*diatithemi*) is shared with the Greek noun for "covenant" (*diatheke*). This translation is all the more warranted by the fact that the context for this teaching is the establishment of the Lord's Supper, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Lk 22:20).

Among the three major covenants in the Bible, this covenant alone is informed by grace.⁹ The distinctive characteristics of such grace are preeminently displayed at the foundation of this saving covenant in Genesis 3:15, where the Gospel is proclaimed for the first time in the midst of God's judgment upon the serpent. It is God alone who pledges future performance, namely, putting enmity between the serpent and the woman, and ultimately crushing the serpent's head. Though this "enmity" entails certain human participation, God promises to bring it about. The covenant is thus inviolable, with no "either/or" based on human performance.¹⁰ Furthermore, this covenant is founded upon the work of a substitute, "the seed of the woman," who both suffers the bruise *and* claims the victory. This child of promise is the object of hope for all the saints of the Old Testament. Paul tells us explicitly that Christ was this substitute (Gal 3:16).¹¹

The Two Covenants of Genesis 6-9

The flood episode occasions two distinct covenants. In the face of rising wickedness, God determines to blot out the entire race, saving only Noah and his kin. Here we see God's faithfulness to his promise of Genesis 3:15, for precisely when the serpent's seed threatens to wipe out all hope of promise (only one faithful family remained!), God saves his people through judgment. The first use of the term "covenant" in the Scriptures (Gen 6:18) refers to a special arrangement God establishes with Noah, for the express purpose of saving him in the midst of this crisis. Though Noah was already saved by grace, this typological arrangement serves a limited purpose (deliverance from waters of judgment) and furthermore points forward to Christ. At this typological level, the works principle is operating. This is clear in that the covenant is conditioned on Noah's obedience to the terms—he must build an ark and get on board (6:14-18).

9. Grace here is precisely understood as "divine favor in the face of demerits," in contrast to any more ambiguous understanding of grace as God's goodness, faithfulness, etc. This is important, because though God is revealed as good, powerful, and even loving by his works of creation and preservation (Rom 1:20, ?), "grace" properly understood is only evident after the fall, in the face of man's demerits. This is manifested both savingly in gracious redemption and more generally in common grace (God's patience in delaying the full fury of his wrath against sin until the final judgment).

10. God is therefore promises not only to offer salvation to man, but to actually apply it to a certain number, i.e., faith is a gift given by God (Eph 2:8). The doctrine of election is thus a necessary component of the redemptive covenant of grace, and a denial of election necessarily introduces the component of works.

11. Note that even though this covenant entailed certain performance on man's part, i.e., putting his trust in the seed and forsaking the serpent, God promises the future performance of this duty. Election is inherent in a covenant of grace, for man's faith is itself a promised blessing received from God (Eph 2:8). In this way alone can God promise the future enmity of his saints against the devil.

Noah, like Christ, was faithful in doing all that was commanded of him (6:22), and thus delivered his people.¹²

The second covenant is a covenant of common grace, established between God and all living creatures (9:12). The flood interrupts common grace, God's judgment intruding into history in anticipation of the last day (2 Pet 3:1-7). As a result, God must re-establish his promise to maintain the order of creation and delay judgment, implicit in Genesis 3. While this covenant is universal in its scope, it is not eternal in its duration. In promising explicitly temporal blessings only for the duration of the earth (8:22), this common grace covenant contrasts with the unending blessings promised in redemption.¹³

God's Covenant with Abraham The Believer

The Apostle Paul clearly tells us that the Gospel of justification by faith was “preached beforehand” in the covenant God made with Abraham.¹⁴ In a series of revelations (Gen 12-17) God promises three distinct blessings to Abraham: a royal heir, a great nation as his offspring, and a promised land. While the carrying out of this covenant includes stipulations—including Abraham's departure from his homeland and obedient reception of the covenant sign of circumcision—the fundamental principle informing this covenant is grace. Abraham is justified by faith, not on the basis of his obedience (Gen 15:6, Rom 4).

The graciousness of this covenant is emphasized by the ratification ceremony recorded in Genesis 15:9ff. Here it is God Himself who is bound by oath to fulfill his word. God's faithfulness, not Abraham's, will secure the promised blessings.¹⁵ Indeed, in Genesis, Abraham

12. It is essential that we grasp the complex relationship between the overall advancement of God's redemptive plan, which always saves men only by grace, and the *typological* overlay of a works covenant, wherein the works principle operates within certain limitations. As we shall see, this same dynamic is also at play during the more extensive duration of the Mosaic administration. Ultimately, it is this relationship between works and grace covenants that allows us to affirm both God's love and justice. If we don't recognize the works principle (and therefore God's justice), we will necessarily undermine his gracious love.

13. The rainbow is here also given as a “sign” of the covenant, an important ingredient in the maintenance of covenant relations. The “bow” is represented here as hanging horizontally in a gesture of peace, as opposed to being bent at the ready in a sign of warlike judgment (Ps 7:12). This is a tangible ratification of God's promised forbearance, a visible assurance that the Lord will follow through on his promise. Sacraments likewise confirm us in the covenant of grace.

14. Gal 3:9.

15. The covenant ratification recorded in Genesis parallels a common oath-taking ceremony in the literature of the day. In passing between the two halves of severed animals, the oath-taker swore that this very fate would befall him were he to break the covenant. For our purposes, it is important to note that God Himself, represented by the smoking oven and flaming torch, passes through the midst of the slain animals. This particular ratification ceremony also indicates what lengths God would have to go to fulfill this oath, his own Son taking on the curse of the severed

and his kin are characterized by their unfaithfulness, while God continues to fulfill his promises despite them.

Finally, it is essential to realize that each of these promises is fulfilled in two distinct stages, first according to type and finally according to fulfillment. Thus the history of the nation of Israel fulfills the first stage of God's promises to Abraham, the king, great nation, and promised land are all attained for a limited time. Yet this very same history points forward to a greater consummation in Christ. Paul tells us that only the children of Abraham *by faith* are the "true" Israel, and Hebrews 11 informs us that Abraham all along was seeking a heavenly country.¹⁶

Moses: A Typological Covenant of Works

The apostle Paul often contrasts the Mosaic law (works) with the Abrahamic promise (grace). He assumes that these two principles are fundamentally opposed to one another: "For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise" (Gal 3:18). Since Paul tells us that the Law did not invalidate the previous promise, how then are we to understand the Mosaic Covenant?

First, we must note that the Mosaic Covenant is founded upon the Abrahamic promises. In Genesis 15:13-16 God promised Abraham that he would bring his descendants out of bondage, and in Exodus 3 it is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that chooses Moses to lead his people out of Egypt. Thus, there is fundamental continuity. God's redeeming promises flow from Abraham through Moses to Christ.

But this covenant also functions on a typological level. In this regard the nation finds itself in a covenant based on works, where future temporal blessings are entirely conditioned upon the obedience of the people. Whereas the Abrahamic covenant was ratified with *God's* oath, the covenant at Sinai is ratified by *Israel's* pledge of performance: "All that the Lord has

animals on behalf of covenant-breaking men. See Meredith Kline's *Kingdom Prologue* for a full treatment of this oath ceremony.

16. Geerhardus Vos' *Biblical Theology* is particularly helpful in describing this twofold fulfillment. While David was the first stage fulfillment of royalty, it is Christ who reigns eternally as the "Son of David, Son of Abraham" (Matt 1:1). While the nation of Israel under Solomon is numbered "like the sand on the seashore" (2 Sam 17:11), the New Testament clearly distinguishes Abraham's "children of promise" from his children of flesh, telling us that it is "those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham" (Rom 9:7, Gal 3:7ff.). Finally, though Israel possesses all the land promised to Abraham (Josh 21:43-45), the New Testament throughout recognizes the Abrahamic promise terminating in a heavenly country (Heb 11:10, 16). The second stage of fulfillment is not a mere "spiritualizing" of the promises in opposition to a literal reading, as proponents of Dispensationalism claim. The heavenly country that Abraham desired is a real, physical land, occupied by actual resurrected saints.

spoken we will do” (Ex 24:7). As such, Law comes to the forefront of the nation’s existence, despite the fact that individual Israelites are still saved by grace (Ps 51).¹⁷ The history of Israel in the promised land relives the history of Adam in the Garden, their disobedience resulting in forced exile. When Jeremiah prophesies of a new covenant which is unbreakable (gracious, irrevocable) in contrast to that which Israel has already broken (works, conditional), he is contrasting the consummation of the Abrahamic promises in Christ with the typological existence of the nation of Israel—just like Paul.

The Fullness of Time

As an Israelite, Christ was born into a works covenant, “Born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law” (Gal 4:4).¹⁸ From the beginning, the promise of the covenant of grace depended upon a substitute—the seed of the woman—who would both fulfill the positive requirements of the Law as well as bear the requisite curse for the broken Covenant of Creation. The completion of his life’s mission at Calvary was at the same time the founding of a New Covenant community in his shed blood (Lk 22:20). The blessings which the Father grants to him on the condition of his obedience, he now grants to his church graciously—again, on the condition of *his own obedience* (Lk 22:29-30; Jn 6:37-40; 17:20-26).

This is a new covenant in relation to the Mosaic covenant, for the typological kingdom has been supplanted by the kingdom reality. Yet there remains continuity between the gracious covenant promised in the garden, confirmed to Abraham, and fulfilled in Christ, as is plain from Romans 4 and Galatians 3.¹⁹ Now come in its fullness, it crowds out and cancels all other typological anticipations of its reality. Precisely because this one covenant between Christ and His church has been fulfilled, the New Testament overwhelmingly indicates that a new age has dawned, the promised consummation breaking in *even now* upon history—“Like a peninsula

17. Further, we must note that types abound in the sacrificial system established at Sinai that point to Christ and bespeak grace, which nevertheless don’t undermine the works principle at the national level. While the forgiveness of sins is here prominently displayed in a manner that points to Christ, even this display was shadowy. The New Testament suggests that even this promise of forgiveness was cloaked in a certain bondage and futility that led Old Testament saints onward toward a greater hope (cf. Hebrews).

18. Note that for Paul, not only Israel is condemned by Law, for the gentiles continue to be born as sinners into the works-based Covenant of Creation (Rom 1-3). This is particularly evident in the simple fact that all men die (Rom 5:12).

19. In this sense, it is important to realize that the most fitting model for the church in the world is provided by the patriarchs, not by the nation of Israel. Like Abraham, we are pilgrims seeking a heavenly land and ruled only by a risen King (Heb 11)

protruding into the sea.”²⁰ Since Christ our firstfruits reigns in the heavenlies, and we are members of Him, our voice of praise is one with the heavenly chorus (Heb 12, Rev 4-7). Resurrection life is now ours in the midst of a dying world.

20. This is the favorite expression of Vos for this majestic inbreaking.

Key Covenant Texts

The Covenant of Creation

Gen. 1:27–28; 2:9, 15–17: God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. The LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

The Covenant of Grace Announced (The Lord’s Covenant with the Church)

Gen. 3:15: The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

The Two Covenants of Genesis 6–9

Gen. 6:18–22: “But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark— you and your sons and your wife, and your sons’ wives with you...” Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.

Gen. 8:21–22: The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. “While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, And cold and heat, And summer and winter, And day and night Shall not cease.”

Gen. 9:9–17: “Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth.” God said, “This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.”

The Covenant of Grace with Abraham the Believer

Gen. 13:14–17: The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you.”

Gen. 15:4–18: Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.” And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

And He said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it." He said, "O Lord GOD, how may I know that I will possess it?" So He said to him, "Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon." Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. "But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. "As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. "Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram....

Gen. 17:1–8: 1 Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. "I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly." Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you will be the father of a multitude of nations. "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. "I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. "I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. "I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

The Mosaic Covenant's principle of works stated, and broken

Ex. 24:7–8: Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Lev. 18:5: "So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD."

Is. 24:5–6: 5 The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.

Hos. 6:7: But like Adam they have transgressed the covenant; There they have dealt treacherously against Me.

God's Covenant with Abraham typologically fulfilled by Israel

Josh. 21:43–45: 43 So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. And the LORD gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hand. Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.

2 Sam. 17:11: But I counsel that all Israel be surely gathered to you, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea in abundance, and that you personally go into battle.

Ps. 89:3: I have made a covenant with my chosen; I have sworn to David my servant.

New Covenant promised, Mosaic covenant antiquated, and shown to be typological

Jer. 31:31–34 (cf. Heb. 8): “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. “They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

The Son, born under the law, fulfills his covenant of redemption with the Father in threefold Messianic offices

Matt. 3:13–15: Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”

John 6:37–39: “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. “For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

John 10:17–18: “For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. “No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

John 17:1–4: Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.”

Luke 22:20, 29–30: 20 And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood... “You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me [*covenanted to me*] a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Gal. 4:4–5: But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons

Christ’s bestows blessings as covenantal mediator and federal head

Rom. 5:19: 12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law... For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through

the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

1 Cor. 15:45: 45 So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

Gal. 3:9, 16: The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU." So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer... Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise... Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe... And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

Gal. 4:24–31: This is allegorically speaking: for these women are two covenants, one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother... So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman."

Heb. 9:15–16: For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.