

# Seven Covenants: The Adamic Covenant

## I. Introduction

### A. A Biblical Theme

1. **Covenant:** "An agreement between two or more parties outlining mutual rights and responsibilities."<sup>1</sup>
2. **Dispensation:** Much like an act in a play, a dispensation is a period of history in which God administers His rule and authority over humanity through a specific revelation. Each dispensation brings humanity under an obligation to a new revelation and tests man in regards to that revelation. Each dispensation ends with a judgment for man's failure.

### B. Review

#### 1. Creation

- God creates the first man, Adam, along with his wife and places the man into an idyllic paradise.

#### 2. Dispensation of Innocence

- a. **Responsibility:** Serve God and observe His commandment.
- b. **Test of Man's obedience:** In the Garden, God plants two Trees, Life and Knowledge of Good and Evil. Man is given a single, simple command – do not eat of the Tree of Knowledge. The consequence for disobedience was death.
- c. **Failure of Man:** Adam, following after his wife, took of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Good and Evil, and ate.
- d. **Judgment:** God pronounces a series of judgments on the serpent, the woman, and the man. Both the serpent and the earth are cursed. Man is alienated from God, his environment, other people, and his own self.

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<sup>1</sup> Allen C. Myers, *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), 240.

# Genesis 3:14-24

## II. The Adamic Covenant

### A. The Promise of the Covenant

#### 1. **The Enmity:** *"And I will put enmity Between you and the woman,"*(3:15)

- "'Enmity' has the intensity of hostility experienced among nations in warfare (e.g., Ezek 25:15; 35:5) and the level of animosity that results in murder (e.g., Num 35:21). The language of the passage indicates a life-and-death struggle between combatants."<sup>2</sup>
- James Smith notes, "The woman's enmity toward Satan smashed his dreams of recruiting all mankind for his rebellion against God."<sup>3</sup>

#### 2. **The Seed:** *"And between your seed and her Seed."*

##### a. Descendants/offspring

- Referencing the seed of both the serpent and of the woman indicates that the struggle goes beyond the two individuals. It actually involves the whole of mankind.
- "This continuum of experience between parent and offspring is seen by **the parallelism** of the verse (v. 15b//15c): 'between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.'"<sup>4</sup>
- Considering that the serpent is merely a foil for the spirit that possessed the serpent, then the serpent's seed must refer to all those, angelic or human, who side with Satan.

##### a. Individuals: *"He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*

- "Observe . . . that although in the first clause the seed of the serpent is opposed to the seed of the woman, in the second it is not over the seed of the serpent but over the serpent itself that the victory is said

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<sup>2</sup> K. A. Mathews, vol. 1A, *Genesis 1-11:26*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 245.

<sup>3</sup> James E. Smith, *The Pentateuch*, 2nd ed. (Joplin, Mo.: College Press Pub. Co., 1993), Ge 3:15.

<sup>4</sup> Mathews, 246.

to be gained. *It*, i.e., the seed of the woman will crush *thy* head, and *thou* (not thy seed) wilt crush its heel.<sup>5</sup>

- Thus the passage moves from the conflict of the two groups of combatants to two particular combatants.
- Matthews says, "'Seed' is a resourceful term for speaking of all human history while at the same time permitting a reference to a specific individual descendant. This explains why the individual offspring of the woman ('he,' 'his heel') can be said to do battle with the progenitor serpent ('your head,' 'you') in v. 15d and 15e."<sup>6</sup>
- Eve recognized this to be a reference to an individual. "*Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, 'I have acquired a man from the Lord.'*" (Genesis 4:1, NKJV)
- Thus we see the first indication of a **Man from God** who would overcome the work of the Serpent and undo what had been done.

### 3. **The Victory:** "*He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.*"

#### a. Bruise:

- "The same word is used in connection with both head and heel, to show that on both sides the intention is to destroy the opponent; at the same time, the expressions head and heel denote a *majus* and *minus*, or, as *Calvin* says, *superius et inferius*. This contrast arises from the nature of the foes. The serpent can only seize the heel of the man, who walks upright; whereas the man can crush the head of the serpent, that crawls in the dust."<sup>7</sup>
- Thus, it isn't the strike that makes the difference, but the one who strikes and where he lands his blows.

#### b. The Victor

- The fact that the reference is to the "seed of the woman" may serve to identify this individual as one who would be virgin born.

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<sup>5</sup> Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), Ge 3:14–15.

<sup>6</sup> Matthews, 246.

<sup>7</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, ), Ge 3:14–15.

- From history and Scripture we realize that the victorious Seed is none other than Christ Himself. (Cf. Gal. 3:16).
- **1 John 3:8.** *"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."*

#### c. Seed of the Woman

- Keil and Delitzsch says, "If then the promise culminates in Christ, the fact that the victory over the serpent is promised to the posterity of the woman, not of the man, acquires this deeper significance, that as it was through the woman that the craft of the devil brought sin and death into the world, so it is also through the woman that the grace of God will give to the fallen human race the conqueror of sin, of death, and of the devil."<sup>8</sup>

### B. The Conditions of the Covenant:

#### 1. Mercy Triumphs over Judgment

- "Note the kindness of God in promising the Messiah before pronouncing sentence in the following verses."<sup>9</sup>
- Thus, there are no conditions upon which this covenant is offered. It is purely an act of God's grace.
- However, it must be appropriated by faith.

#### 2. The faith of Adam.

- *"And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living."* (3:20)
- This occurs immediately after the announcement of the judgments, including the prediction that Adam would return to the dust, and before Adam "knew" his wife.
- He recognizes that God has spared the race from immediate extinction and has a hope of ultimate victory.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), Ge 3:15.

## C. The Cutting of the Covenant

### Genesis 3:21–24

*“Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them. Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”— therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.”*

#### 1. The blood sacrifice: *“tunics of skin”*

- The tunics of skin indicates that animals were slain by God to provide coverings for Adam and Eve.
- This is the first instance of blood atonement in Scripture.
- The commandment of God demanded that death would come to Adam and Eve if they broke His command, and indeed it had begun to germinate, but God provided a temporary “death” in the sacrificial animals.
- Adam had died spiritually when he ate of the forbidden fruit, but he would not be immediately executed. His was to be a slow death that allowed for repentance.

#### 2. The certainty of death

- To ensure that they would indeed return to the dust, God drove them out of the Garden and guarded the way with Cherubim lest they take of the Tree of Life and live forever in their fallen state.
- This is an act of mercy for death is the only means of escaping our corrupt natures.
- As Keil and Delitzsch say, “For immortality in a state of sin is not the [life eternal], which God designed for man, but endless misery, which the Scriptures call ‘the second death’ (Rev. 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8).”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, Ge 3:22–24.

### III. Analysis

#### A. We Have the Promise of a Victor

##### 1. The Last Adam

- To accomplish this victory over sin, death, and the Devil, God sends a second Man, the Last Adam.
- To undo what had been done in Adam's sin, Jesus recapitulates the story of Adam, only with different results.
- **Romans 5:12–16.** *"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus 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. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification."*

THE TWO MEN	
Adam	Jesus
Miraculously created	Miraculously conceived
A son of God	The Son of God
Head of the human race	Head of the spiritual race
By disobedience made many sinners	By obedience makes many righteous
Brought us under a curse	Became a curse for us
His sin brought forth thorns and thistles	He wore a crown of thorns
Died by the fruit of a tree	Died while hanging on a tree
Followed his wife into death	Followed His bride into death

##### 2. Christ is our Kinsman Redeemer

- **Revelation 5:1–5.** *“And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”*”

## B. We have the Hope of Victory

### 1. Over the devil

- **Psalm 60:12.** *“Through God we will do valiantly, For it is He who shall tread down our enemies.”*
- **Romans 16:20.** *“And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.”*

### 2. Over death itself.

- **1 Corinthians 15:54–57.** *“So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*