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What's New?

Series: The Weeping Prophet

The Village Church at Shell Point

Evening Service

September 18, 2022

I. **The Great Debate – Old or New?**

- A. Pews in my home church – oak
 - 1. Still there
 - 2. More than 100 years old
 - 3. Historic building – no inclination to change or renovate
 - 4. Con – most uncomfortable seats
 - 5. Pro – keeps sermons short
- B. Pews in the Morgantown CMA church before renovation
 - 1. Vintage 1979
 - 2. Padded, reasonably comfortable
 - a. Wearing out
 - 3. Pews (old) or chairs (new, flexible)
 - 4. Decision
 - a. Both!
- C. Biblically – Old v. New is crucial

II. **Covenant**

- A. Definition
 - 1. **Contract stipulating obligations and promises** between two parties
- B. Examples – Ancient Near Eastern Suzerainty Treaties
 - 1. Conquering king and vassal
 - 2. Structure
 - a. **Preamble** – who the king is
 - b. **Historical prologue**
 - (1) Including benevolent deeds of conquering king
 - c. **Stipulations** – law
 - d. **Sanctions** (curses and blessings)
 - (1) Obedience (promises)
 - (2) Disobedience
- C. **Biblical Covenants**
 - 1. God's promises
 - 2. People's response
- D. **The Organizing Principle of the Bible**
 - 1. **Covenant of works**
 - a. Adam and Eve
 - 2. **Covenant of grace**

- a. **Noah**
 - (1) Safety
 - b. **Abraham**
 - (1) Destiny
 - (2) Land
 - (3) Descendants
 - (4) Nations blessed
 - (5) Response – circumcision
 - (6) Ratified by Isaac and Jacob
 - c. **Mosaic**
 - (1) Already saved people (from Egypt)
 - (a) Historical prologue
 - (2) Stipulations (10 Commandments)
 - (3) Response of obedience required to receive blessings
 - d. **Davidic**
 - (1) King in line of David
3. Distinction between Old and New
- a. Old Covenant (Mosaic)
 - b. New Covenant

III. **Old Covenant Problems**

A. **Broken covenant**

- 1. Even before it was ratified!
 - a. **Exodus 32:19** (ESV) — 19 And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.
- 2. Covenant reissued (Ex 34)
 - a. God had Moses fashion two new tablets
 - b. **Exodus 34:6-7** (ESV) — 6 The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, 7 keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."
 - c. **Exodus 34:10** (ESV) — 10 And he said, "Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you.
 - d. Reestablished the stipulations and sanctions
- 3. Covenant broken again and again
 - a. **Psalms 78**
 - (1) 72 verses

- (2) Litany of transgressions
 - (3) Covenant breaking by the people of God
 - b. Psalm 78:9–10 (ESV) — 9 The Ephraimites, armed with the bow, turned back on the day of battle. 10 They did not keep God’s covenant, but refused to walk according to his law.
 - c. Psalm 78:11 (ESV) — 11 They forgot his works and the wonders that he had shown them.
 - d. Psalm 78:12 (ESV) — 12 In the sight of their fathers he performed wonders in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan.
 - e. Psalm 78:17 (ESV) — 17 Yet they sinned still more against him, rebelling against the Most High in the desert.
 - f. Psalm 78:32 (ESV) — 32 In spite of all this, they still sinned; despite his wonders, they did not believe.
 - g. Psalm 78:38–41 (ESV) — 38 Yet he, being compassionate, atoned for their iniquity and did not destroy them; he restrained his anger often and did not stir up all his wrath. 39 He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes and comes not again. 40 How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness and grieved him in the desert! 41 They tested God again and again and provoked the Holy One of Israel.
 - 4. Gerhard Von Rad: The reason why a new covenant is to ensue on the old is not that the regulations revealed in the latter have proved inadequate, but that the covenant has been broken, because Israel refused to obey it.
 - 5. J.A. Thompson: They had not merely refused to obey the law or to acknowledge Yahweh’s complete and sole sovereignty, but were incapable of such obedience.
 - 6. Jeremiah 31:32 (ESV) — 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, **my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.**
 - 7. Jeremiah’s testimony of covenant breaking – read 1-28!
- B. Serious covenant breaking – **Marriage Covenant** (31.32)
 - 1. **Jeremiah 2**
 - a. God is husband; Judah is wife
 - b. **Jeremiah 2:13** (ESV) — 13 for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.
 - 2. Divorce court
 - a. Recounts the good old days
 - b. Case laid out
 - (1) Forsaken God
 - (a) Passion for bride
 - (b) Protected bride
 - (c) Provided for bride

- (d) The perfect husband
- (2) Hewn own cisterns
 - (a) Bride walked out
 - (b) Bride committed adultery
 - (c) Left God for nothing
 - (d) Worse than pagan nations
 - (e) Propositioned other nations for political gain
 - (f) Broke easy yoke of Yahweh for harder yokes of Egypt, Syria
 - (g) Prostituted themselves to other gods (Baal worship)
 - (h) Vineyard turned into wild vine
 - (i) Wild animal out of control
 - (j) Evidence was insurmountable; no defense

C. Covenant breakers by nature

1. Ryken: If every sin is an act of covenant-breaking, then every sinner is a covenant-breaker. Every time you sin, you are being unfaithful in your marriage to God. That is why sin is so tawdry, cheap, and degrading.... The problem is with *us*. We are covenant-breakers by nature
2. Paul – nothing wrong with covenant itself
 - a. **Romans 7:7–13** (ESV) — 7 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” 8 But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. 10 The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. 11 For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. 13 Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

D. **Old Covenant Curse**

1. **Jeremiah 11:8–11** (ESV) — 8 Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone walked in the stubbornness of his evil heart. Therefore I brought upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but they did not.” 9 Again the LORD said to me, “A conspiracy exists among the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10 They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, who refused to hear my words. They have gone after other gods to serve them. The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant that I made with their fathers. 11 Therefore, thus says the LORD, Behold, I am bringing disaster upon them that they cannot escape. Though

- they cry to me, I will not listen to them.
2. **Jeremiah 31:29** (ESV) — 29 In those days they shall no longer say: “ ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’
 3. Cf Ezek 18.2
 - a. Old Covenant curse
 - b. **Exodus 20:5** (ESV) — 5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me...

IV. **New Covenant**

- A. Jeremiah – only place where the New Covenant promises explicitly stipulated
 1. In examining promises, see the superiority of New over the Old
- B. **Reconciliation**
 1. Reconciliation between northern and southern tribes
 - a. **Jeremiah 31:31** (ESV) — 31 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah...”
 - b. **Jeremiah 31:27** (ESV) — 27 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the seed of beast.”
 2. Reconciliation just begins there! Glorious expansion to include nations
 - a. **Jeremiah 3:17–18** (ESV) — 17 At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, **and all nations shall gather to it**, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. 18 In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage.
 3. **Fulfilled in Christ**
 - a. **2 Corinthians 5:18–20** (ESV) — 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
 - b. **Ephesians 2:11–22** (ESV) — 11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our

peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

- c. **Galatians 3:28** (ESV) — 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

C. **Regeneration**

1. **Jeremiah 31:33** (ESV) — 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
2. Problem with Mosaic covenant – written on tablets of stone
 - a. Only thing written on hearts of people was sin
 - b. **Jeremiah 17:1** (ESV) — 1 “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars...”
3. New Covenant solves that problem – changes hearts
 - a. Calvin: ... penetrates into the heart and reforms all the inward faculties, so that obedience is rendered to the righteousness of God.
4. New didn't abolish Old
 - a. **Matthew 5:17** (ESV) — 17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”
 - b. O. Palmer Robertson: The distinctiveness of the ministry of the law under the new covenant resides in its inward character. Rather than being administered externally, the law shall be administered from within the heart.
5. **Hebrews 10:15–16** (ESV) — 15 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, 16 “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,”
6. Crucial – obedience is not a condition for entering into the covenant; it is the result!

- a. Edwards: I think the difference here pointed out between these two covenants, lies plainly here, that in the old covenant God promised to be their God upon condition of hearty obedience; obedience was stipulated as a condition, but not promised. But in the new covenant, this hearty obedience is promised.

D. **Possession**

1. **Jeremiah 31:33** (ESV) — 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. **And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.**
2. One of the promises of the Old Covenant
 - a. The condition of which was obedience
3. **Exodus 6:7** (ESV) — 7 I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.
4. **Deuteronomy 26:17–18** (ESV) — 17 You have declared today that the LORD is your God, and that you will walk in his ways, and keep his statutes and his commandments and his rules, and will obey his voice. 18 And the LORD has declared today that you are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments...
5. **Song of Solomon 2:16** (ESV) — 16 My beloved is mine, and I am his...
6. John Murray: ... the crown and goal of the whole process of religion, namely, union and communion with God.

E. **Evangelization**

1. **Jeremiah 31:34** (ESV) — 34 “And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD...”
2. Command of scripture – tell everyone to know the Lord
 - a. That will not always be the case
3. What things do we do now that will last for eternity
 - a. Worship certainly
 - b. But not evangelism or missions
4. Ryken: Yet the promise of the end of evangelization is especially for eternity. There will be no revival meetings in Heaven. No one will stand on the corner and pass out tracts. No one will share the Four Spiritual Laws. No one will knock on your door and ask, “If you were to die tonight, what would you say to God when he asks, ‘Why should I let you in my Heaven?’” There will be no evangelism because there will be no need. Everyone will know God, from the least to the greatest.

F. **Satisfaction** for sin

1. **Jeremiah 31:34** (ESV) — 34 “... For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”
2. Perhaps the greatest blessing of the New Covenant
3. Accomplished by the cross of Christ

- a. **Luke 22:20** (ESV) — 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”
4. Main distinction drawn by author of Hebrews
 - a. **Hebrews 7:22** (ESV) — 22 This makes Jesus the guarantor of a **better covenant**.
 - b. **Hebrews 8:6** (ESV) — 6 But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as **much more excellent** than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.
 - c. **Hebrews 8:7–8** (ESV) — 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. 8 For **he finds fault with them** when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,”
 - d. **Hebrews 8:8–13** (ESV) — 8 For he finds fault with them when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 9 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 11 And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” 13 In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.
(1) From Jeremiah!
5. **Hebrews 9:11–28** (ESV) — 11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. 15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. 16 For

where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. 17 For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. 18 Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. 19 For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.” 21 And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. 22 Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. 23 Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. 25 Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, 26 for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

G. **Endless in duration**

1. **Jeremiah 31:35–37** (ESV) — 35 Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the LORD of hosts is his name: 36 “If this fixed order departs from before me, declares the LORD, then shall the offspring of Israel cease from being a nation before me forever.” 37 Thus says the LORD: “If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done, declares the LORD.”
2. Ryken: The New Covenant is as likely to fail as the entire universe is to grind to a halt. God will no more forget his people than humanity will unravel all the mysteries of interstellar space. The New Covenant is an everlasting covenant.
3. How can the New Covenant be endless in duration?
 - a. Contract between God and man
 - (1) Can man hold up his end?
4. Final analysis – New Covenant is between Father and Son
 - a. **Isaiah 42:6–8** (ESV) — 6 “I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, 7 to open

the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. 8 I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.”

- b. **Ephesians 1:13–14** (ESV) — 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

5. Jesus’ covenant keeping counts for eternity

H. **Urban renewal**

- 1. In spite of how much we made of the evil of the city in last lecture, our destiny is one of restored and redeemed urban existence
- 2. **Jeremiah 31:38–40** (ESV) — 38 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when the city shall be rebuilt for the LORD from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. 39 And the measuring line shall go out farther, straight to the hill Gareb, and shall then turn to Goah. 40 The whole valley of the dead bodies and the ashes, and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be sacred to the LORD. It shall not be plucked up or overthrown anymore forever.”
- 3. Fulfilled in **Nehemiah 3**
 - a. Started at Tower of Hananel
 - b. Worked way around to repairing “above the horse gate”
- 4. Still to be yet fulfilled
 - a. Oliver O’Donovan: No destiny can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, other than that of a city.
 - b. **Revelation 21:2** (ESV) — 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

V. **Only Believe**

- A. Only thing left to do
 - 1. God takes care of all the promises
- B. Thomas Boston: What remains for sinners, that they may be personally and savingly in covenant with God, is not, as parties contractors and undertakers, to make a covenant with him for life and salvation; but only, to take hold of God’s covenant already made from eternity, between the Father and Christ the second Adam, and revealed and offered to us in the gospel.