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Section: Divine Covenants (Covenant Theology)

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**HANDOUT NOTES**

**Q55. What is a divine covenant?**

A divine covenant is a relational agreement initiated by God that may include obligations, rewards, and/or punishments from Him.

* **Introduction**

**Proverbs 24:27** Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field, and after that build your house.

* **What Is Covenant Theology and Why Is It Important?**

Covenant Theology *is the study from Scripture informing us about God’s use of covenants, the details and terms of those covenants, and results of those covenants*.

Covenant Theology *is the study of covenants declared and/or detailed in Scripture and God’s use of them*.

**Sam Renihan**: “Studying covenant theology is a devotional experience that enriches one’s understanding of the unity of God’s purposes, enhances preaching from any text, informs one’s understanding of the church, assures God’s people of the security of their salvation, and much more. But above all, studying the covenant theology of the Bible magnifies the majesty of the triune God’s plan of redemption.”

In typology, there are **types** and **antitypes**.

A *type* is the thing foreshadowing something to come, the *antitype*.

**Antitypes are always greater than and distinct from the type, they are the actual thing the type or the picture pointed to.**

**Q55. What is a divine covenant?**

A divine covenant is a relational agreement initiated by God that may include obligations, rewards, and/or punishments from Him.

* **What Is a Covenant?**

**Merriam-Webster**: a formal and serious agreement or promise

**Sam Renihan**: “A commitment in and of itself is not a covenant. Sanctions or threats must be put into place to guarantee the fulfillment of the parties’ commitments.”

* **What Is a Divine Covenant?**

In this, the focus is on specific covenants that are made by God, with God.

*A divine covenant is a relational agreement initiated by God that may include obligations, rewards, and/or punishments from Him.*

* **Markers and Distinctions of Divine Covenants**

In a divine covenant, parties or persons make a special commitment to one another – that may be between the persons of the Trinity or between God and specific humans.

God has decreed what covenants He would initiate and enter into and who makes up the other covenanting party.

* **Divine covenants provide extra/additional blessings**

All divine covenants are **not natural** to man (meaning, they do not exist automatically by nature of creation), and they are not entitlements (mankind is not entitled to covenants with God in anyway).

Thankfully, Divine covenants improve or advance man’s communion with and enjoyment of God beyond what nature provides.

* **God sets the covenantal terms**
  + **Covenants of works**

When a covenant requires obedience to law/commands in order to receive the rewards it offers, it is “*a* *covenant of works*.”

In this, we must realize that by default, creatures owe the Creator perfect obedience *for no reward*. *This is our duty as the created to obey the creator in all things*.

**Luke 17:7-10** “Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”

In a covenant of works, God *offers* blessings or benefits *beyond* man’s natural or existing state. Things not automatic or otherwise available to them. Rewards that improve or advance man’s communion with and enjoyment of God beyond nature.

* + **Covenants of grace**

In a *covenant of grace,* a party covenanted to receive rewards/benefits without earning the rewards/benefits.

In a covenant of grace, enjoyment of the blessings is not based on one’s own work, but strictly on the grace of God.

* **God uses a system of representation or federal headship**

God reveals His covenants to a public person or federal head who stands on behalf of a specific group of people. God covenants with them all when He covenants with the representative—the federal head.

While God interacted with a number of Federal heads, there were only two covenants that God made with man that offered the blessing of eternal life. Two covenants and federal heads were about eternal life, while other covenants and federal heads were about other things, *not* eternal life.

* **Divine Covenants of Focus in the Coming Lessons**

