**The Marrow of Modern Divinity**

Lesson 3 – The Covenant of Grace: The Eternal Purpose & The Promise, Pt. 1

**The Law of Faith or The Covenant of Grace – The Eternal Purpose**

1. Evangelista says “The law of faith announces that God, foreseeing man’s fall, before time began, purposed and in time promised, and in the fullness of time performed the sending of His Son Jesus Christ into the world to deliver fallen mankind.” In other words, God from eternity past has always had the covenant of grace (law of faith) in mind.
   1. Galatians 3:21-22 - “Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. 22 But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”
   2. Romans 1:16-17 – “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’”
2. The point the author is trying to make is that the covenant of grace has to be eternal, otherwise if it is not, then the covenant of grace becomes Plan B for God. But if the covenant of grace is eternal, then it is Plan A for God. God has always intended for Himself to be glorified in Christ Jesus, and has always intended for salvation to be by grace through faith, rather than works.
3. Because of the Fall, Thomas Boston notes, “the satisfaction of God’s justice required the payment of a double debt: the debt of punishment (transgressing the law) and the debt of perfect obedience (the requirement of the law). The repairing of the lost image of God in man called for a Savior who had a fullness of the Spirit of holiness that could be communicated to the sinner for his sanctification.” This could only be done by Jesus Christ who alone was fit for the task in the wisdom of God.
4. So, the Son agrees or covenants with the Father as part of the eternal counsel of the 1 Godhead to sacrifice Himself for those whom the Father has elected. Berkhof defines the covenant of redemption as, “the agreement between the Father giving the Son as head and redeemer of all the elect and the Son voluntarily taking the place of those whom the Father has given Him.” This eternal covenant of redemption can be seen in the following verses:
   1. Psalm 2:7-8 – “I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.’”
   2. Psalm 40:7-8 – “Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.’”
   3. John 5:36 – “the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.”
5. Evangelista says, “Thus Christ assented and from all eternity struck hands with God, agreeing to put upon Himself man’s person, to take upon Himself man’s name, to enter in man’s place in obeying His Father, to yield in man’s flesh the price of the satisfaction of the just judgment of God, and in the same flesh, to suffer the punishment that man deserved *under the covenant of works*.”
6. So, in the eternal Covenant of Redemption, Christ agrees to enter into the same Covenant of Works that Adam was under, in order to deliver believers from the Covenant of Works. Thus this agreement of Christ on our behalf is to us a Covenant of Grace. Boston notes, “God accepted the satisfaction that He might have demanded of the elect from a Surety, while also providing that Surety and bestowing blessings upon them for His sake.”
7. And in this entire covenant making process, we see God’s eternal desire to show forth both His justice and wrath, as well as His grace and mercy. In other words, through all of this, God manifests the fullness of His character, the fullness of His glory, rather than just part.
   1. Romans 9:22-23 – “What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, **23**in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory…”

**The Law of Faith or The Covenant of Grace – The Promise from Adam through the Exodus**

1. Now the Marrow begins to shift from looking at the Covenant of Grace (Law of Faith) from the eternal perspective, to its outworking in time. And the outworking of the Covenant of Grace begins with Adam on the same day that he sinned. The promise that the offspring of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent and the serpent would bruise his heel (Gen. 3:15) was the first promise of the gospel. Scholars call this the *protoeuangelion* (first gospel). And this was the only aspect of the promise of the Gospel available to Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, and all the rest of the godly until the time of Abraham.
2. Adam and Eve had some knowledge that a sacrifice and death was now required of sinners as they were clothed with animal skins by God. So they also had some idea that their sin and shame was covered by Christ’s righteousness. From that point on, Adam would know that sacrifice is an acknowledgment of sin and that he needed to look forward for the promised seed of the woman.
   1. Thomas Boston notes that in this promise we see several aspects of the work of the promised Messiah: salvation will be accomplished by the work of God & not man (God makes the promise and takes the initiative), the Savior would become a man (seed of woman), He would suffer (bruised heel), He would conquer sin and the devil (bruised head), and salvation would be by faith in Him (believing the promise of the One to come)
   2. WCF 7.3 – “Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant [of works], the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offers unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.”
   3. Scots Confession of 1560, Article 4 – “God did seek Adam again, call upon him, rebuke his sin, convict him of the same; and, in the end, made unto him a most joyful promise, namely: that the seed of the woman should break down the serpent’s head; that is, he should destroy the works of the devil; which promise, as it was repeated, and made more clear from time to time, so was it embraced with joy, and may most steadfastly be received by all the faithful, from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to David, and so, forth to the incarnation of Christ Jesus.”
3. This also helps explain Cain and Abel. They would have learned from their father, Adam, of the need to sacrifice for sins and the covering of that sin that comes from the righteousness of God. Hebrews 11 goes on to state that what made Abel’s sacrifice acceptable to God was faith. Abel had faith in God’s promise of a seed to come, whereas Cain did not, so the Lord did not accept his sacrifice.
4. This promised seed of the woman who will bruise the head of the serpent is then expanded into a covenant with Abraham and his offspring so that all the nations of the world would be blessed (Gen. 12:3, 18:18, 22:18).
   1. Galatians 3:8 – “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’”
5. Abraham sees the promise repeated in the blood of circumcision which Evangelista says was a type of the blood of Christ, as well as the idea of a God-provided substitute when Abraham goes up to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah. Abraham also sees a type of Christ in the person of Melchizedek whose name means “King of Righteousness” and is called the “King of Peace” (King of Salem) and said to be without father or mother as well as a priest to God. In Melchizedek, Abraham saw a type of Christ (perhaps the pre-Incarnate Christ Himself?) who was both prophet (blessed Abraham), priest, and king.
6. Additionally, Abraham had some awareness or inclination that the physical Promised Land of Canaan was only a type. Hebrews 11:9-10 states, “By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. **10**For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.” Jesus Himself claims in John 8:56, “Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.”
7. When you read Hebrews 11:1-22, we see that all those believers from Adam up until the time of Moses believed upon the promises of God that had been revealed to them at that particular time and which was being passed on from father to son, from one generation to the next.
   1. Hebrews 11:13-16 – “These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. **14**For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. **15**If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. **16**But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one.”
8. Additionally, before the giving of the law at Sinai, Christ was manifested to the Israelites in Egypt through the Passover Lamb. The lamb without blemish points to Christ as the perfectly obedient lamb. The lamb dies in place of the firstborn of Israel; so also Christ dies in our place as a substitute. The lamb’s blood was spread on the doorposts; so also Christ’s blood is sprinkled on the hearts of believers by faith. Their deliverance from Egypt is a picture of salvation in Christ. Their passing through the sea [both the Flood as well as the Red Sea] is called a baptism (1 Cor. 10:1-2; 1 Peter 3:21). And they are said to have eaten and drank from Christ in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:3-4).
   1. 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 – “For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, **2**and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, **3**and all ate the same spiritual food, **4**and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. **5**Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.”
   2. 1 Peter 3:20-21 – “God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. **21**Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”
9. Because Christ is everywhere in the OT and is pre-figured in types even from the time of Adam through the patriarchs and into the time of the Exodus, the covenant of grace was made known to the saints of old and they were counted righteous for believing the promise of God, the substance of the promise being Christ.