

## Intro to series

Today we are beginning a brand new series titled “Covenant” and over the next couple of times I share with you, we’ll be taking a look at some of the Covenants that God made with his people and for all of the human race.

I want us to do 2 primary things today. First, I want us to take a quick, general overview of the Covenants that we will be studying over the coming weeks, and then I want us to specifically take a look at the first covenant that we find in scripture.

So to start us off, let me give you the 8 Covenants that are in scripture:

Today we will be looking at the Covenant God made with Adam in the Garden of Eden. Next month, we will be taking a look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Covenant God made with Adam as a result of Adams sin. Then in November we will be looking at the Covenants God made with Noah.

Now out of these 8 Covenants that we find, five of them were made exclusively with the nation and people of Israel while the other 3 covenants were made with mankind in general.

***We can also find that there are*** two types of covenants and it is important for us to distinguish between these two types of covenants in order to have a clear picture of what the Bible teaches.

1. **The first type of covenant God made with his people is a “Conditional Covenant”** - A conditional covenant is a mutual covenant that God proposes to man and it is characterized by the formula: “if you will, then I will”. And in that understanding, God promises to grant special blessings to man with the expectation that man fulfills certain conditions contained in the covenant. Our failure to do so will often result in having to deal with the consequences or punishment. And so our response to the conditional covenant agreement will bring either blessings to our lives, or curses. The blessings are secured by our obedience and we must meet the conditions of the covenant before God will meet His.

Two of the eight covenants of the Bible are conditional: the one we are looking at today, the Edenic Covenant and the one we’ll be looking at in a few weeks, the Mosaic Covenant.

2. **Now the 2<sup>nd</sup> type of covenant is the “Unconditional Covenant”** - An unconditional covenant is a sovereign act of God where He unconditionally obligates Himself to bring to pass definite blessings and conditions for the covenanted people. This covenant is characterized by the formula: “I will”, which declares God's determination to do as He

promises. Blessings here are secured by the grace of God. There may be conditions in the covenant by which God requests the covenanted one to fulfill out of gratitude, but they are not themselves the basis of God's fulfilling His promises.

Six of the eight covenants are unconditional: the Adamic Covenant (next week), the Noahic Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, the Palestinian or Land Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New/Christ Covenant.

Now, I didn't put these in your notes, but I think we should point out a few things concerning the nature of the unconditional covenants that God made with Israel.

**First:** they are literal covenants and their contents must be interpreted literally as well. There is always a lot of debate about how we should interpret the Bible, but what we will find is that all of these covenants are detailed and specific, and do not need any other interpretation in addition to what they state.

**Second:** the covenants that God has made with Israel are eternal and are not in any way restricted or altered by time.

**Third:** It's necessary to re-emphasize that these are unconditional covenants that were not retracted because of Israel's disobedience; These are unconditional covenants that are totally dependent upon God for fulfillment, and their ultimate fulfillment can be expected.

**And then the Fourth thing that we should point out here is this:** these covenants were made with a specific people: Israel, and can be clarified by Paul in Romans 9:4, and again in Ephesians 2:11-12:

**Now one more thing that we should point out before we look specifically at the Edenic Covenant today.**

This applies for ALL the covenants!! A covenant can be signed, sealed, and made for a specific time in history, but it does not mean that all the provisions go immediately into effect. In fact, three different things happen once a covenant is sealed:

**first,** some go into effect right away;

**second,** some provisions go into effect in the near future, which may be twenty five years away or five hundred years away; and

**third,** some provisions go into effect only in the distant prophetic future, not having been fulfilled even to this day.

## **Now, let's take a specific look into our very first covenant, called the "Edenic Covenant"**

The Edenic Covenant, or the Covenant of Works, or the covenant of Creation, or the Dispensation of Innocence" is an example of a conditional covenant because Adam was required to obey the terms of the covenant in order to not suffer the consequences of breaking it. And so what we have here in the opening chapters of Genesis is where God makes some conditional promises to Adam of life and blessing, but that promise is conditional upon Adam's obedience to God's command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (Genesis 2:16–17)

It's this covenant that plays a significant role in the unfolding of God's plan of redemption, as it shows man's inability to maintain a right relationship with God even when he is in the earthly paradise that God created for him.

Adam's sin broke this conditional covenant with God and left man in a fallen state, but God would soon make a second, unconditional covenant of redemption with Adam and Eve, and with us, that we'll be looking at next week. (Genesis 3:14–24).

**Turn in your bibles if you would to Genesis 1:26-30 and Genesis 2:15-17 and this is our text for the message this morning.**

### **Read Scripture**

**Gen. 1:26-30** "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food."

**Gen. 2:15-17.** "The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

So let's jump in and take a look at the

## 7 Requirements of the Edenic Covenant

1. **The first requirement is for Man to Replenish the earth (Gen. 1:28a)** – We are to fill the earth with the influence and order of mankind; we are to be fruitful & multiply!

There are a couple of things we should take notice of here. In another version of scripture that we didn't use today, it uses this word, "Replenish"

- **"replenish"** Some argue that before Adam the earth was populated by another race of people who were destroyed between **Gen. 1:1** and **1:2**. And so the command to replenish would indicate that Adam was to "re-fill" the earth with new people. Based on the context and use of the word "replenish" in **Gen. 9:1**, this theory has some merit. *However*, the Bible nowhere mentions any pre-Adamic race other than the sons of God (angels). We also tend to see the prefix "re" and assume that it implies doing something again. Often this is the case, but sometimes it is not. The *Oxford English Dictionary* tells us that the definition of "replenish" up until year 1612 was simply "to fill, stock up, inhabit, etc." So at the time of the translation of the KJV, 1611, there was no element of re-filling to the word "replenish."
- **And so the phrase, "be fruitful and multiply"** is a bit more accurate to the intent of the word, "replenish" And basically, we are told to reproduce. The earth was created for the purpose of being the habitation of man, and then man was created on the sixth day. Man was told to populate the earth; so the increase in population is part of his commission. The earth was to be filled with humanity.

The second requirement of this Edenic Covenant is this...

2. **Man is to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:28b)**

The word "subdue" literally means "to enslave" And prior to this covenant that God made with Adam, authority over the earth had been given to Satan (Ezek. 28:11-19). But when Satan fell, he lost his authority over this earth. That is the reason Genesis 1:2 describes the earth as being covered by water and *darkness* being over *the face of the deep*. God began to form and to customize the earth to make it habitable for man, and this time He would give man the authority over the earth. Man was to *subdue* it; he was to use the natural resources and energies of the earth that God had provided for him. And this term requires man to learn and study the physical sciences for their practical benefit and we are to use both the **invisible resources**: *electricity, gravity, wind, solar rays, magnetism* and the **visible resources** : *precious metals, wood, stone, water, oil, dirt, plants* for the benefit of mankind!

The third requirement is that

3. **Man is to RULE over all living things (Gen. 1:28c)** We are to have dominion over the animal creation. God has sovereign power over His creation and has delegated the authority to mankind to have dominion over the animals ([Genesis 1:26, 28](#)). David reinforces this truth as he testifies that God has “made [mankind] ruler over the works of your hands” ([Psalm 8:6](#)). However, with the authority to rule comes the responsibility to rule well. Man has a duty to exercise his dominion under the authority of the One who delegated it.

When God gave humanity dominion over the animals, it was in order to care for, tend to, and use those animals to their fullest potential in a just manner. At the time that God gave mankind dominion over the animals, humans did not eat meat ([Genesis 1:29](#)). Eating meat did not begin until after the Flood ([Genesis 9:1-3](#)), and it was at that time that animals started to fear humans. However, although God changed the way we interact with animals, in that they are now “meat,” we still bear a responsibility to care for or treat animals humanely. And the dominion over animals should entail a humane management of them as the resource that God has ordained them to be. We must fulfill our duty to manage the earth wisely until that time when the wolf shall lie down with the lamb in the kingdom of Christ ([Isaiah 11:6](#)).

The fourth requirement of this covenant is that man is

4. **Restricted to a vegetarian diet** (Gen 1:29-30) -At this point man was to be a vegetarian. There is nothing in this covenant that allowed him to eat of the animal kingdom although he was to exercise authority over it. No blood of any kind was to be shed for the nourishment of man. And so man was to eat seeds, herbs, Fruits, and leaves, and thank God he changed this part of the covenant when Noah came around!;

The fifth requirement was that

5. **Man must WORK!** (Gen. 2:15) – Adam was given the responsibility to *dress and to keep* the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15). And it’s important for us to make sure that as a God commanded requirement that we WORK when we are able to!!! The Bible speaks a lot about work and I pulled out a few verses, of the 55+ verses that specifically relates to working. Listen to these verses.

**Colossians 3:23** - Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,

**Proverbs 12:11** - Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense.

**Proverbs 28:19** - Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty.

**2 Thessalonians 3:10** – the one who is unwilling to work, shall not eat

**Now**, Even in his unfallen state, man was not to lead a life of pure leisure; work was part of the human ethic even before the Fall. And the only difference was that before the fall, the work was easy and the land would produce easily; it was not difficult at all.

The sixth and seventh requirements we will take a closer look at next week but let me share them with you...

6. **Man is forbidden to eat from the tree of knowledge (Gen. 2:16-17)** - This was the only negative commandment in the entire Edenic Covenant and was the one point that would test man's obedience. He was free to eat of all the other trees of the garden but was to refrain from eating of that one. This was the one test to see how man would respond to the will of God; it was a test of the recognition of and the submission to the will of God. Man was not to assume that, because he was given authority over the earth and the animal kingdom, he himself was independent of God and exempt from God's law. The question that raises is, "Will man, like Satan before him, reject God's right to rule and declare himself independent of God?"

The 7<sup>th</sup> requirement is...

7. **There will be a penalty of death for disobedience (Gen. 2:17b)** – This seventh requirement contained a penalty for disobedience and it wasn't referring to a physical death because man did not die on the very day that he disobeyed the commandment. So the death spoken of here must be a spiritual death. In the day that he eats of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, he will be separated from God and will die spiritually.

And this one act of disobedience has been carried through to us and we too will die spiritually if there's not an option of reconciliation and redemption, and Grace that God just pours over us! And that's what we'll be looking at next month! The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of God's Covenant with Adam is a covenant of redemption and renewal and restoration to our Creator!!

**Pray**