

COVENANT: Unpacking A Biblical Motif  
Rev. Dr. Wayne Wilke (Session 2 – 11/15/20)

**COVENANTS AT SINAI AND WITH DAVID**

- I. **Sinai/Shechem Covenant** – a suzerain-vassal covenant made with the people of Israel as the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These were the people the Lord had redeemed from bondage to the power of Egypt. A conditional pledge to be Israel's God – as her Protector, the Guarantor of the blessed destiny He had promised. The condition: Israel's total consecration to the Lord as His people (His Kingdom) who live by His rule and serve His purposes in history. The model is a THEOCRACY – God rules Israel directly.

A. Exodus 19:5; 20:1-21; 24:1-8

- The relationship is lopsided; the treaty is not negotiated; the sovereign (God) simply offers His terms and the vassal (Israel) decides if it is for them, and if so, swears obedience.
- Find “Preamble” and “Prologue”
- Find “Stipulations” and “Divine Witnesses/Public Deposit” (Ark of the Covenant – Dt. 10:5-6; Ex. 24:1-8)
- Discuss “Blessings and Curses” (Ex. 24:1-8)

B. Deuteronomy 5:1-22; 28:1-68

- See 5:1-3; the Ten Commandments are both the basis and the heart of Israel's relationship with the Lord.
- Dt. 28 is fullest account of the “blessings and curses” of the covenant.

C. Joshua 8:30-35

- Joshua 8 - **Shechem** – in the valley between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, historically important city from the time of Abraham, Joshua gathers Israel here to confirm the covenant before he passes on. This is the definitive formation of the twelve-tribe league. **Note:** Note blessings and curses read antiphonally in 8:33-35

- Joshua 24:1-33 – a lengthy historical introduction presented as the direct speech of God used as preface to a covenant renewal ceremony. The emphasis is on service to Yahweh, God of Israel, in other words, the First Commandment.
- **Yahweh** is left free and sovereign. Nothing can be used against Him. The covenant history shows his faithfulness and grace.
- **Israel's place in the covenant** is defined. There is respect for human freedom before God since the covenant is initially a matter of choice. See Joshua 24:15; 19-22; 26-27

D. Tribal Confederacy Period – see Joshua 24:29-33

II. **Davidic Covenant** – a royal grant covenant (??) made with faithful King David after his devotion to God as Israel's King and the Lord's anointed vassal had come to special expression (v. 3). An unconditional (??) divine promise to establish and maintain the Davidic dynasty on the throne of Israel (implicitly a pledge to Israel) to provide her forever with a godly king like David and through that dynasty to do for her what God had done through David – bring her into rest in the promised land.

A. 2 Samuel 7:1-16

B. If God is in league with the house of David, just what does this mean? The nation may be chastised if the King is wicked, but the oath of God will stand. Sinai spoke of blessings and curses for disobedience on the part of all Israel. This covenant now says that Israel's history will henceforth be determined by the character of the king.

## Round-Up

- The Sinai covenant was clearly understood as conditional: if you fall out of the covenant relationship, you can expect punishment (the cycles of Judges and the time of Saul).
- The Davidic covenant came to be seen as unconditional. As long as a Davidic descendant was on the throne and the temple rites were maintained, the house of David would last forever.
- The Davidic Covenant, the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem, and the erection of the Temple strengthened the conviction that the House of David was the legitimate successor to the theocracy of the tribal confederacy.