

Chapter 1

The Core Truth of the Covenant(s)

We rarely use the word “covenant” in our daily lives. The term may call to mind theological debates with little practical value. How could a discussion of the Bible’s old and new covenants possibly contribute anything essential to our understanding of God? Yet, as this chapter points out, we live within covenants every day. We may not use the term “covenant,” but we are acquainted with the concept and recognize covenants as vital to quality of life.

God has revealed Himself in Scripture as a God of covenant(s). The more we learn about His covenant(s) with humanity, the better we will understand God Himself. Indeed, the gospel is an expression of God’s covenant(s). Simply put, the gospel cannot be fully understood until it is viewed from a basic understanding of His covenant(s).

For Individual Study:

1. Define the Hebrew word “covenant.” [1]

2. List some of the Old Testament people with whom God made covenants. [1]

3. What are some covenants/contracts into which we enter? [2]



4. How does God's covenant with humanity differ from that of human contracts? [2]

a. God promises _____

b. God requires _____

“The basic idea of the covenant is that of relationship with God,”¹ a relationship characterized by love, trust, and wholehearted commitment. [2]

5. Define “everlasting covenant” as it relates to the Trinity. [3–6]

6. How does this understanding apply to all other covenants? [6]

7. The term “everlasting” is paired with the word “covenant” sixteen times in Scripture. Explain how the term “everlasting” can apply when the covenants described were made with such people as Abraham, David, and Israel. [7]

8. Reference to the “everlasting gospel” in Revelation 14:6–7 is specifically addressed to an end-time generation. Where/when was the “everlasting gospel” of Revelation 14:6 first announced to humanity? [8]

9. The everlasting gospel constitutes the core truth of the covenant of redemption—God’s everlasting covenant.

This gospel of the everlasting covenant was crafted to “meet humanity in its

_____ condition, _____ us to God, and _____

our inheritance in God’s eternal kingdom.” [9]

God’s sacrificial commitment during the reign of sin (from the fall of Adam to the second coming of Jesus) to restore humanity to an eternal hope may be termed “the covenant of redemption” or “the everlasting gospel.” [10]

10. The gospel preached in the Old Testament era looked forward to the coming _____. [9]

The gospel preached in the New Testament era, which looked back on the Messiah’s atoning death and resurrection, was the very _____ . [9]

For Group Study:

11. Share your answer to Question 1 from the Introduction.

12. From your reading thus far, what do you understand to be the core truth of the covenants? [8–10]

13. Re-read the story of John Ortberg's daughter on page 5: "Hold you me." Describe a time when you called out similar words to God, when you believed and understood, and then asked for God's self-giving love. [5]

"Even an infant being held knows, with an understanding deeper than words, that what is being expressed with the body is in fact the decision of the soul: to hold another person in one's heart. *I will seek your good; I will share your joy and hurt; we will know a kind of oneness, you and I.* It is the brief enactment of a covenant. It is a promise of self-giving love." —*John Ortberg*²

14. Share something new that you learned from this chapter or some point you have been exposed to before but now see in a new light.

15. As you read this chapter focusing on God's everlasting covenant of love, what affirmed or challenged you in your walk with God?

16. Pray together for the Holy Spirit to reveal God's truths to you and your group as you study, asking that your lives will reflect the love of the everlasting covenant.