

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Video Lecture Series

by Robert D. McCurley, ThM

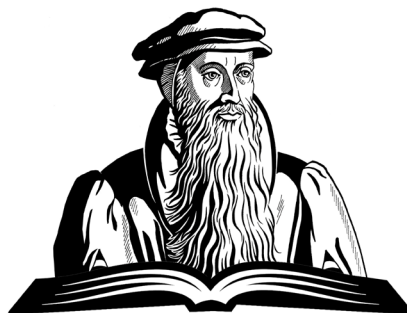
STUDY GUIDE

Module 3:

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 9:

THE DOCTRINE OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE



The John Knox Institute
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Module 3

The Nature of Sin

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Lecture 9:

The Doctrine of the Covenant of Grace

Introduction

The marriage relationship provides an earthly reflection of a heavenly relationship between God and his people. We see this all through the Old Testament—in the Psalms and the prophets, for example. We see it in the New Testament, notably in places like Ephesians chapter 5, but all the way to the end, in Revelation chapter 21. After the fall, God established a covenant relationship with his people, which we call the Covenant of Grace. In this lecture, we turn our attention to the Covenant of Grace.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism, question #20, says, “God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.”

Theme: *The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace.*

I. Scriptural Basis

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (Genesis 3:15)

1. This text provides, in embryo, the whole Doctrine of Salvation for sinners.
2. God takes the initiative in establishing the covenant on his end.
3. God will unfold and expand his revelation of the Covenant of Grace through the remainder of the history of redemption.
4. Christ will crush the head of the serpent.

5. Three contrasts:
 - a. The serpent and the woman,
 - b. Christ and Satan,
 - c. The church and the world.
6. The promise of Christ in Genesis 3:16 extends to the triumph of Christ's people over the devil.

Questions:

1. Why do we call Genesis 3:15 the first gospel message? What is at the heart of this message?

2. What are the implications of God saying, "I will put enmity between..."?

3. What will be the result of this covenant? What are the three contrasts in this covenant declaration?

4. What portion will Christ's people have in this covenant promise?

II. Doctrinal Overview

As summarized in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 7, paragraph 3:

"Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offereth 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 life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.”

1. The heart of the Covenant of Grace, in biblical terminology:
 - a. *“I will be your God, and you shall be my people.”*
2. The unfolding scope of the Covenant of Grace throughout the history of the Bible.
 - a. The Noahic covenant.
 - b. The Abrahamic covenant.
 - c. The Mosaic covenant.
 - d. The Davidic covenant.
 - e. The new covenant.
3. The continuity and discontinuity between Old and New Testaments.
 - a. They must be held together.
 - 1) They reveal the same God and Savior,
 - 2) the same gospel of grace,
 - 3) and they represent one people of God.
 - b. Different administration of the Covenant of Grace in the Old and the New Testaments.
 - c. The important place of kingdom expansion:
 - 1) “come and see” vs. “go and tell” model.
 - d. Greater degrees of blessings in the New Testament.

Questions:

1. What is the heart of the Covenant of Grace? Please show this from the Scriptures.

2. What is the Noahic covenant? What does this covenant contain?

3. What is the importance of the Abrahamic covenant? What is the seal of this covenant? What is the extent of the blessings in this covenant?

4. At what place did God introduce the Mosaic covenant?

5. What is the key text of the Davidic covenant? How does the Davidic covenant point to the identity of the seed of the woman?

6. Read and meditate on the passages in Jeremiah 31:31–34, Ezekiel 36:25–27, 2 Corinthians chapter 3, and Hebrews chapters 8, 9, and 10. What do these passages tell us about the New covenant compared with the Old covenant?

7. What continuity exists between the Old Testament and the New Testament?

8. What are the discontinuities between the Old and New Testaments?

III. Polemical Exposition

One dominant Error: *The Mosaic Covenant and the Covenant of Grace are opposed to each other.*

1. The Mosaic covenant is part of the Covenant of Grace.
 - a. God's first words at Mt. Sinai convey a message of gospel redemption and the Covenant of Grace (Exodus 19:4-5).
2. God's law itself is full of the message of the gospel, with Christ as Savior.
3. There is still an element of blessing and curse in the New Testament.
 - a. Ananias and Sapphira.
 - b. Hebrews 6, 10, and 12.
 - c. Christ's letters to the churches of Asia.
4. There is still continuity.
 - a. The Lord's Supper, Matthew 26:28 is from Sinai, in Exodus 24:8.

Questions:

1. What makes some people think that the Mosaic covenant is opposite to the Covenant of Grace?

2. Please give a full proof of the ways that the Mosaic covenant is part of the Covenant of Grace.

IV. Practical Exposition

1. This Covenant of Grace leads us to delight in Christ in all of the Scriptures.
 - a. We should study the Old Testament, looking for Christ and the gospel.
2. It is astonishing that the God of glory would condescend to take us to himself.
3. The household principle:
 - a. Reinforces the necessity of receiving the gospel promises with faith.
 - b. We're taught to point our children to Christ.
4. We have the wonder of restored fellowship with God.

Questions:

1. How does understanding the continuity and the discontinuity of the Old and New Testaments help us to understand the Bible? How does it help us to delight in Christ?

2. What Scripture passage is the heart of the Covenant of Grace? How does it apply to the Christian's daily life?

3. What is *the Household Principle* as taught in the Bible? What implications are there for family life? What does that reinforce for us about the gospel?

4. What is the life blood of living in the covenant of God's grace?

V. Self-Reflection

Having completed this study on the Covenant of Grace, it is a good time for self-examination. Rather than applying this study intellectually, try to make application of what it means to your soul. Does your heart delight in these truths? Is it full of praise to God? Or is your heart still cold and hard toward God's Covenant of Grace? As Rev. McCurley said, "The life blood of living in the covenant of God's grace is to cultivate and to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever, to seek out opportunities of nearness to him in his ordinances, and his promised presence, and to hold fellowship with him. The Covenant of Grace fuels all of these wonderful privileges."
