

# MY COVENANTAL MISSION

## 1 Peter 2:9

Covenants play a major role in the Bible's narrative but do not, in my experiences, have much – if any - role in our day-to-day lives. While we might not commonly talk about covenants, our daily lives do include binding agreements (marriages, contracts, loans, etc.) that offer a way for us to begin thinking about the Bible's emphasis upon covenants. This lesson will draw on those insights to help us think about God's covenant with Israel in the Old Testament, the special mission it gave to the nation, and how the New Testament extends that same mission to the church today.

## Covenant

- A covenant offered a legal mechanism to formalize a relationship between two or more parties and to define binding obligations for those involved in it.
- But a covenant was not merely a legal entity; its legal character sought to establish a relationship between the involved parties and therefore carried ideas that go beyond the merely exchange nature of the legal contracts common in our world (*cf. Deuteronomy 7:6-11*).

## God's covenant with Israel

- God's global promises to Abraham motivated His covenant with Israel (*Deuteronomy 7:6-8; Genesis 22:18*).
- God's covenant with Israel had a missional focus (*Exodus 19:5-6*).
- Israel would fulfill its mission by obeying its covenant obligations to God (*Deuteronomy 4:1-8*).
- Even though Israel rebelled against its covenant obligations, God remained faithful to, and fulfilled, His promise that shaped His purposes for nation (*Ezekiel 36:22-38; Genesis 12:1-3*).
- The Old Testament story of Israel's covenant relationship with God includes promises of a better, future covenant that would replace the covenant with Israel God issued at Mount Sinai (*Jeremiah 31:31-34*).

## God's covenant with Us

- Jesus identified himself as the goal of God's covenant with Israel (*Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44-49; John 5:39-40*) and as the one authorized to issue a new covenant (*Matthew 26:26-29*).
- Jesus' covenant extends Israel's mission to the church (*1 Peter 2:9; Exodus 19:5-6*).
- The church inherits Israel's mission because it also inherits the promise God made to Abraham (*Galatians 3:19-4:7; cf. Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:16*).

- As with Israel, the church's covenant carries a global mission (*Matthew 28:18-20*).
- The church fulfills its mission through the transformed living that defines those who belong to Jesus' covenant community (*1 Peter 2:9-3:8; Titus 2:10*).
- In particular, love and unity identify those who belong to Jesus and become principle ways through which the church accomplishes its mission (*John 17:21; 13:34-35*).

## Applications

- The Old and New Testaments tell one unified story; we cannot properly understand our identity today if we do not begin to understand the relationships between the two Testaments.
- The covenant mission Jesus enters into with us grants us an important mission and identity.
- Our mission is focused on drawing people to God; evangelism is a non-negotiable, defining feature of our relationship with Jesus and our purpose in the world (*Matthew 5:16; 28:18-20; Colossians 4:5-6; 1 Peter 2:9-12; 3:15-16*).
- Evangelism cannot be separated from our character. The covenant Jesus enacted allows us to have a relationship with God through which we become transformed people, a transformation that evidences our message about Jesus (*cf. 1 Peter 2:9-3:17*).

We commonly praise Jesus for giving us a new covenant, but we sometimes do not emphasize the expectations that attend that covenant. Jesus' covenant is a blessing that allows us to have a relationship with God, but that covenant expects us to become transformed people who actively represent Jesus and his concerns in our world. We should therefore ask ourselves whether our lives actively represent Jesus or someone or something else.