

## PPT Covenant – “Bible in 9 weeks” series – part 3

Rev. Bruce Stanley [www.waitara.anglican.asn.au](http://www.waitara.anglican.asn.au)

### **COVENANTS – two way and one way**

**PPT** Today we’re talking about “covenants”. Most people think of marriage when they think of a covenant. In a marriage ceremony, 2 people make **covenant promises** to each other - to love and cherish, to honour, for richer for poorer, for better for worse, etc, etc.

Here’s an example of an interesting wedding vow promise:

I, John, choose you, Karen, to be my wife. In front of our friends and family gathered here I promise to love and cherish you throughout the good times and bad times. I promise to try to remember to put down the toilet seat and to replace the toilet roll when it finishes. Then...

I, Karen, choose you, John, to be my husband. In front of our friends and family, I promise to love and cherish you through every obstacle that may come into our path. I promise to learn how to change a tire. I will comfort you when your team loses and drink beer with you when they win.

In a marriage ceremony, TWO people make covenant promises.

**PPT** God makes 2 big covenants in the Bible: The OLD covenant (also known as the OLD testament) and the NEW covenant (known as the NEW testament). And in these 2 covenants, God makes covenant **promises**.

**PPT** But, unlike marriage, when God makes a covenant, it’s ONE WAY. **God is the one making all the promises to us.** Today, we’re going to look at 3 OLD covenant promises and 3 NEW covenant promises to give us a picture of “Covenants” in the Bible.

### **PPT OLD COVENANT PROMISES**

Let’s start in the OLD Testament, or the OLD Covenant and look at 3 of God’s covenant promises. Turn with me to Genesis 15 for the first 2 covenant promises. Verse 18:

**PPT** *“On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said: ‘to your descendants I give this land...’ ”*

There are 2 covenants here. **Descendants** and **land**. And they’re both pretty amazing promises, because they both seem to be impossible!

#### **1. PPT Descendants**

First of all, Abraham is thinking – “Descendants?” I’m 99 years old, my wife is 90. There’s no WAY we’re having children! But... God always keeps his covenant promises, even when they sound impossible. So Abraham trusted God and at the age of 100 he had a son, Isaac. And eventually through Isaac, Abraham then became the Father of a great nation called Israel.

#### **2. PPT Land**

The second covenant promise of land also seemed impossible. Abraham’s descendants became very numerous and then they became slaves in Egypt under Pharaoh for 400 years. And Moses was sent by God to bring them out of Egypt. Then they wandered around in the desert for 40 years because of their disobedience, and it seemed like they would NEVER enter the promised land. But... God still kept his covenant promises. And eventually Israel entered the Promised Land.

Two Covenant promises. A nation and a Land.

Finally, the third part of the promise – God promises a King forever over Israel.

### 3. PPT King

Turn with me to 2 Samuel 7:16 – God promises to David: <sup>“16</sup> *Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me ; your throne will be established forever.*’ ”

God makes a covenant promise that he will always give Israel a King from the line of King David. And that seemed impossible at times as well. But God always provided a King over Israel.

PPT So there are the 3 OLD covenant promises – we could summarise then like this:

1. God’s people – the descendants of Abraham - Israel
2. God’s place – the Promised Land (Canaan)
3. God’s rule – the throne of King David

NOW, let’s turn to the NEW Covenant – or the NEW Testament – and have a look at 3 covenant promises, very similar to the OLD 3, except the NEW covenant is a **better** covenant as Hebrews says:

#### PPT

Hebrews 7:22: “...Jesus has become the guarantee of a **better** covenant.”

Hebrews 8:6 – “...the covenant of which he (*Jesus*) is mediator is **superior** to the old one, and it is found on **better** promises.”

So let’s have a look at the NEW covenant:

### PPT NEW COVENANT PROMISES

#### 1. PPT Descendants

Turn in your Bibles with me to John 1:12 and have a look at what the NEW, better covenant says about descendants:

*“Yet to all who received him (Jesus), to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”*

Under the Old Covenant – God promised a nation to come from the descendants of Abraham.

Under the New Covenant – God promises that all who believe in Jesus can be called children of God.

The new covenant is better! Children of God. What does that mean for us?

PPT III – Who’s this? (Ian Thorpe) – What do you know about him? He’s a swimmer. Male. 5 Olympic gold medals. 11 World championship gold medals – more than anyone else. Born weighing 4.1kgs. Grew up in Milperra. He used to have a chlorine allergy. Holds the world record for the 400m freestyle (Since 1999) at 3:40:08. But who is he? We often define people by their achievements, their looks, their wealth, their characteristics.

If someone asked you “Tell me about yourself”, what would you say? How do you define yourself? By your skills or your career? “I’m an artist, I’m a doctor, I’m a teacher, I’m an engineer.” Maybe you define yourself by your relationships – I’m a father, or a mother or a sister or a brother.” Or by where you’ve come from or what you look like: “I’m Australian, I’m Chinese, I’m Korean, I’m Sri Lankan, I’m tall, I’m short, I’m rich, I’m poor,...”

But under the new covenant, God says that if we believe in Jesus, we can call ourselves God’s children. **That’s who we are.** God doesn’t define us by our nationality or our career. He defines us by our relationship with him. And he calls us his **children** if we follow Jesus.

What about the second covenant promise: Land

## 2. *PPT Land*

In the OLD Covenant, God gave his people the Promised Land of **Canaan**.

In the NEW Covenant, God promises us the future home of **heaven**.

The NEW covenant is BETTER!

2 Corinthians 5:1 – *“Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.*

**PPT III** – The great Australian Dream was always to own your own... home. That’s pretty difficult these days with the prices of real estate. So now people also dream of holidays. These are two things that really motivate people aren’t they? Owning your home and going on holidays. You often see people win money on game shows – and what do they want to do with it? Go on a holiday or pay off their mortgage. Having a “place” to go is important to us. Whether it’s a place to go home to each day, or a place to go on holidays.

God promises us a place, a home, in heaven. But we can easily get caught up making our home here on earth so comfortable, that we forget that we’re leaving all this behind! It’s easy to get caught up with renovation makeover shows or getaway holiday shows. But these things are so temporary. God’s promise is an **eternal** heavenly home, and that’s where we need to be focussed. If we’re dreaming of owning our own home or going on our next holiday, we’re dreaming the wrong dreams! We won’t find real lasting satisfaction in our homes or our holidays – because those things are temporary.

Here’s my confession to you – I envy people with their own home. That’s my sinfulness. I covet. I confess that to you. I covet double garages and a free standing home to call my own. I covet a place where my family can live and grown up in for 20 years, like I did as a child. But I need to constantly remind myself that it’s not what life is really about. Because my true home is heaven.

Finally, let’s look at the third covenant promise in the New Covenant – Rule

## 3. *PPT Rule*

Under the OLD Covenant, God established the throne of King David forever.

Under the NEW Covenant, Jesus is the ruler, from the line of David, but Jesus will rule **forever**. Turn with me to Luke 1:30-33:

*“<sup>30</sup>But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. <sup>31</sup>You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”*

So what does this mean for us? It means that we have a King who will rule over us forever!

**PPT III** – Here are 5 of the names found on the list – “10 evil rulers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century” - Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe), Idi Amin (Uganda), Saddam Hussein (Iraq), Pol Pot (Cambodia), Adolf Hitler (Germany). There are plenty of evil rulers on our world. And we can look at that list and see how great it is that **Jesus** is our **ruler**. But having Jesus as our ruler means more than that.

**PPT** Look at this list: Wealth. Lust. Gossip. Power. Selfishness. More evil rulers in our life.

**PPT** Look at this list: Sickness. Poverty. Depression. Loneliness. Fear. More evil rulers in our life. There are so many things that can rule over us. So when God promises to make Jesus our King forever, that’s good news! Because it means that even though these evil things can come into our life, they don’t OWN us.

God's NEW covenant is good. He calls us children of God. He gives us the future of heaven. And he makes Jesus the ruler of our life.

**PPT** Just compare that with the covenant the world offers: Take whatever you can, until you die. No promises. You can be lied to, cheated, let down. You might have some fun along the way, but then you'll face death with no hope. Nothing is for certain, except that there are no promises that have to be kept. No promise of a family. No promise of a future. That's what the world offers. A covenant with NO hope and NO promises.

**PPT** Look at God's covenant – Child of God. Future of heaven. Jesus as King.

If your faith is not in Jesus, then consider what **God** is offering you, and then consider what the **world** is offering you.

If your faith IS in Jesus, then ask yourself today:

1. Do I define myself , first of all, as a child of God?
2. Do I put my hope, first of all, in the future of heaven? And finally,
3. Do I let Jesus, first of all, rule my life?

Let's pray.