

EVERY TRACK EVERY WEEK

WEEK 14: Leader Study Guide

Two Covenants. Two Ways to Be Saved?

-Welcome!

-Intro: Thanks for being here! Revisit last week's points

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INTRO:

Hi, and welcome to Every Track Every Week. My name is _____ and I am involved with Texas FCA Motocross through _____. I've been involved with FCA MX for _____ years and my favorite thing about the ministry is_____.

This week's discussion is based upon episode #103 of our podcast "The Gospel Driven Athlete" titled, "Two Covenants. Two Ways to Be Saved?" This week we are going to look at the two main covenants found in the bible and explore the question of whether or not these two covenants actually present us with two different possible ways to be saved. If you are unfamiliar with the concept of covenants, that's ok! In brief- covenants are relationships that God establishes with us that are guaranteed by His Word. The two covenants that we are going to talk about this week are known as the "Covenant of Works" and "The Covenant of Grace." The Covenant of Works was originally established with Adam in the Garden and it promised eternal life to Adam and all mankind- if and only if- Adam obeyed God perfectly, and it promised death and suffering to Adam and all mankind, if Adam disobeyed at any point. The Covenant of Grace on the other hand, lies in stark contrast to the Covenant of Works and is the covenant through which all believers are actually saved. This covenant is a covenant that God Himself not only establishes and guarantees by His Word, but that God bases upon Christ's obedience, rather than upon man's obedience. God essentially says, "I will be your God, and you will be my people. Regardless."



-Ice Breaker Question: *Why do you think it is that we often feel like we have personally won or lost when our favorite team or favorite rider wins or loses? For example, if you're into baseball, you likely either felt like you yourself won or lost the World Series recently when the Red Sox won. You FELT like you won... or you FELT like you lost. You may have cheered for joy, or you may have yelled in frustration, right along with the team. It is almost as if you were a part of the team... like you were right there playing with them. Or, if you don't like baseball, when the U.S team at MX Des Nations got straight up beat recently, you may have felt like you yourself lost... or you may have felt like the United States in general lost... like the entire country somehow lost. Why do you think this is? Why do we feel a connection with specific teams or with specific riders?*

***answer hint-** We naturally feel tied to certain teams, certain riders, even certain brands of motorcycles, because we naturally understand the idea of representation. We are created by God, in the image of God, understanding portions of how God operates, and a big part of how God operates is through the concept of representation (also known as federal headship) and this concept is what forms the framework of covenants. We automatically default to this model of representation, because this is how we were created. When our favorite team wins, we win, because that team “represents” us in some form or fashion. When our favorite rider loses, we lose, because that rider “represents” us in some form or fashion (our values, our preferences, our brand, our home state, etc.). This ties into what we are going to be talking about this week

-Question 1: What is the Covenant of Works and why is it important?

***Answer:**

1. The Covenant of Works is the agreement, or relationship, that God established with the first son of God- Adam, in the garden, shortly after God created the world and everything in it.
2. We see the Covenant of Works come up in the very first pages of Scripture. In Gen 2:15-17, we read, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat^[d] of it you shall surely die.” While the word “covenant” isn’t stated here explicitly, the concept is clear. A covenant is a relationship that God establishes and that is guaranteed by His Word, and we see here that God establishes a relationship with Adam and that He



guarantees it by His Word in Gen2. The structure of a covenant is there, and if someone were to question whether we were imposing this language on the scripture, we can even compare this structure to that which is found in common agreements made in the ancient near-east, between kings of that time that conquered other kings. The agreements that were made after a stronger king conquered a weaker king are representative of the covenants we read about in the Bible, and this is because this was the common form of agreement back then.

3. As we read the Bible more and start to see it in its fullness, we start to see pretty clearly that God deals with His people, across redemptive history, through the structure of covenants. So, the fact that a covenant is introduced in the very first pages of Scripture isn't too surprising.
4. The story of the Bible as a whole is about God's Kingdom and this story is told through the framework of God's Covenants.
5. So, that touches a bit on the "what is the Covenant of Works" question. To try and answer the "why is it important" question, I would say that this covenant is important because, as we talked about in our podcast on the "Two Adams", all mankind (ladies included) are born into and under the Covenant of Works. Everyone is required to uphold and fulfill the Covenant of Works, in order to be justified before God.

-Question 2: That brings up a really important question. What is necessary in this covenant (the Covenant of Works), for man to do in order to be justified in the sight of a Holy God?

***ANSWER:**

1. The short answer to that is that perfect obedience is the only thing that is acceptable in order to be justified in the sight of a Holy God.
2. God explicitly promises death to Adam if he disobeys Him, and implicitly promises life to Adam if he obeys God. This blessing/ curse aspect of this covenant with Adam is important to note, as this is always present (in one form or another) in the covenants that God makes with His people.
3. Back to the "why is this covenant important" question from earlier- the Covenant of Works is important because it shows us what requirement we are born under... we are born under the same requirement that Adam was born under- the requirement of perfection. We must be personally, perpetually, perfectly obedient, if we are to be right in the eyes of God,



based upon our own works. And that is most definitely not good news. Thankfully, God doesn't stop there.

Question 3: The fact that God does not stop there leads us to our next question. What is the Covenant of Grace and why is it important?

***ANSWER:**

1. The Covenant of Grace is the Covenant through which all believers are saved. This includes people in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Regardless of the era a person was born in, if they are saved, they were saved as a result of the Covenant of Grace.
2. We see this covenant come on the scene in the chapter immediately after we see the Covenant of Works come in. In the first half of Gen3:15 we read the account of God cursing Satan, and in essence doing away with the covenant that Satan and Eve made with each other, when God says to Satan, **"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring^[e] and her offspring;"** But it's not simply a curse on Satan and the woman. The second half of the verse says, **"he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel"**. This second half of the verse is super significant. While God is most definitely cursing Satan in the first half of the verse, and while the woman and her offspring will forever be at odds with Satan as a result of their inability to keep the Covenant of Works (which is essentially perfect obedience to God), in essentially the same breath that we see God cursing Satan and mankind, we also hear God make a promise to redeem mankind. He tells Satan that he will put opposition between him and the woman and then God goes on to promise that the offspring of the woman will crush the head of the serpent. This is what is known as the Protoevangelium (or "first gospel"). God is promising to send a second Adam (like we talked about a couple weeks ago) to do what the first Adam failed to do. And while the first Adam stood naked at the tree and failed to cast out the serpent as he was commanded to (as guardian of the garden), the Second Adam (Jesus Christ) will hang naked on a tree and in the process defeat Satan and cast him out completely.
3. We also see this covenant further developed in God's dealings with Abraham in Genesis 12, Genesis 15, and Genesis 17. God promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 to "make of [him] a great nation". God elaborates on this covenant promise in Genesis 15 by enacting this Covenant with Abraham (who was at that time still named Abram) by



putting Abram into a sleep-like state where he was only able to watch God in what was a covenant ceremony. God had Abram bring several animals for the ceremony and split them in half, then God in the form of a smoking pot and a flaming torch passed through the halves of the animals, symbolizing and illustrating the fact that this covenant (the Covenant of Grace) was solely dependant upon God and if the covenant was broken, God would take on the curse upon Himself, in contrast to the Covenant of Works where the consequence for Adam's disobedience was a curse to Adam and his offspring. So God makes this covenant with Abram (the Covenant of Grace) and essentially says, "if this covenant is broken, let it be to me as it is to these dead animals". This was common language and common practice for covenant ceremonies amongst kings in the ancient near east, except the lesser party in the covenant would be the one walking through the dead animals, agreeing that if they break the covenant, they are to be killed like the animals. This is like the handshake taken to 11... this is like swearing to your mortgage company or your auto-loan company that if you don't pay your bill, they can come and cut you in half and take your house and car... It's no joke. Only God is the one swearing the oath and He Guarantees it by His own word and since we know that God cannot lie, we know that this promise cannot be broken. In Genesis 17:7, God essentially summarizes this covenant by saying to Abraham "And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you". Over and over, God says, "I WILL"... "I WILL"... "I WILL"... This Covenant of Grace is no longer based upon what you or I do. It is based upon what God would do and upon what He did do in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

-Question 4: What is necessary, in this covenant, for man to do in order to be justified in the sight of a Holy God?

ANSWER:

1. Faith in Christ. Simple as that. Faith is the condition of the Covenant of Grace. Faith in Christ is how people are saved today and it's how people were saved in the Old Testament.
2. Some may ask how this is possible, since Jesus had not walked the earth in the Old Testament as He did in the New Testament... and that's a good question. We have to take in to account that today, we now look BACK on what God has already accomplished through Jesus Christ on our behalf, as



promised in Genesis 3, whereas, people in the Old Testament were looking FORWARD to what God WOULD accomplish through the seed of the woman (Jesus Christ), as promised in Genesis 3. We place our hope and trust in what God has ALREADY accomplished in Christ. People in the Old Testament placed their hope and trust in what God WOULD accomplish in Christ.

3. There is not, nor has there ever been, two ways to be saved. Galatians 2:16 (among several other places) makes it very clear. “yet we know that a person is not justified^[b] by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.” This was such a crucial issue for Paul (the author of Galatians) and the Galatians themselves that he says it twice! “A person is not justified by works of the law.... By works of the law no one will be justified?”
4. We also see this clarified at length in Hebrews chapter 11, and in pretty much every book of the New Testament.

-Question 5: Why is it so important that we get this doctrine right?

ANSWER:

1. Getting this right is not about being right. Getting this doctrine right is important because the minute we think there are any other ways of salvation outside of the accomplished work of Christ on our behalf, is the minute we diminish Christ’s Lordship, it’s the minute we rob God of His glory, it’s the minute we begin saying that Christ isn’t enough, and it’s the minute we begin offering false hope.
2. Getting this right is important for a number of reasons. To name some- to get this right means that we give all glory to God, we offer Christ as what He says He is in John 14:6, “the way, and the truth, and the life.”
3. Getting this right also brings a great deal of clarity about the fact that God is immutable (unchanging) and that He operates the same way today that He did 100 years ago, 1000 years ago, 4000 years ago... God “is the same yesterday, today, and forever” Heb13:8, and people have been saved the same way yesterday, today, and forever- by faith in Jesus Christ. And that’s not only important for clarity’s sake. That is important for the knowing the character of God.



Question 6: How should these realities and truths drive our attitudes, actions, and lives?

-Lets pray.

