

COVENANT RENEWAL

Genesis 1:26-28

Matthew 28:18-20

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I am delighted once again to have Mr. Andrew Lohr contribute to Covenant Renewal. Although we have never met, he has written to make suggestions over the years. A couple of years ago, he wrote on the covenantal structure of Hebrews. He did an excellent job. He opened up fresh thoughts into the book, while provoking my own thinking with his useful insights. If we are to judge by your response as readers, he also provided much food for thought for you.

In the present study, Mr. Lohr attempts to understand the Book of Genesis in a covenantal way. He makes some helpful comments about how the covenant structure could be modified. Most notable among his comments is his idea about calling the third part of the covenant, "edibles." I am not convinced yet but he does have a point worth considering. There is no doubt that the ethics section does

consistently involve food. Not often enough, however, for me to rename the entire section.

Perhaps his objection grows out of his concern over the designation, ethics, for the third point of the covenant. He rightfully notes that the entire covenant is ethical. I agree. But, I should mention that I intend the reference to the third point, ethics, in the sense of ethical stipulations. I hope this helps. At least, by Mr. Lohr's work, I have been given the opportunity to learn from him and refine my own thinking.

At the end of Mr. Lohr's study on Genesis, he adds an interesting little appendix. I have included it to show the reader what can be done once the covenantal pattern within Scripture is seen. Perhaps by seeing another use it, the covenantal nature of Scripture will be appreciated even more.

GENERATIONS OF GOD: THE COVENANT STRUCTURE OF GENESIS

by Andrew Lohr

Genesis is obviously divided up in some way by the recurring clause, "These are the generations of. . .," but just how? After brief groundwork, let me offer a suggestion.

The Hebrew word translated "generations" is "toledoth," #8435 in Strong's Concordance's numbering of Hebrew words. (A different Hebrew word, "dor," #1755, is also sometimes translated "generation/s.") "Toledoth" occurs 11 times in Genesis in the phrase "the generations of. . .," as follows:

- Genesis 2:4 "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth. . ."
- 5:1 "This is the book of the generations of Adam."
- 6:9 "These are the generations of Noah. . ."
- 10:1 "Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah. . ."
- 11:10 "These are the generations of Shem. . ."
- 11:27 "Now these are the generations of Terah. . ."
- 25:12 "Now these are the generations of Ishmael. . ."
- 25:19 "And these are the generations of Isaac. . ."
- 36:1 "Now these are the generations of Esau. . ."
- 36:9 "And these are the generations of Esau. . ."
- 37:2 "These are the generations of Jacob. . ."

"Toledoth" also occurs at 10:32, "These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations," and in 25:13, "and these are the names of the sons of Ishmael. . . according to their generations."

it seems clear to me that the standard phrase "the gen-

erations of" marks the heads of the titles of sections. The word "generations" (or "births") suggests this. Usually the material following a "toledoth" clause has more to do with the man named in the clause, than the material proceeding.

Ishmael (25:12-18) and Esau (36:1-43) are especially clear cases, but 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:27, 25:19, and 36:9 are also followed by coverage of descendants or activities of the men named. And so it is in 25:13 (a nonstandard phrase). A majority, but not all, of the material about "the heavens and the earth" (2:4), "Jacob" (37:2), and "the sons of Noah," after their generations (10:32, a nonstandard clause) precedes their toledoth phrases. Ten heads, three possible tails; the heads have it.

But if toledoth clauses are heads of sections, why is there not one at the head of the book? To dismiss Genesis 1:1-2:3, or the first part of any other book, as "Introduction" because it doesn't fit neatly into an outline, has always struck me as evasive. (Of course, if toledoth clauses are tails of sections, why is there none at the end of Genesis? — unless Exodus 1:1, "Now these are the NAMES of the children of Israel," qualifies as Henry Morris suggested. And, if they serve as chapter titles, why is Abraham, the father of all who believe, a mere part of "the generations of Terah," although Abraham has more chapters (12-25) than Terah has verses (11:26-32)?

These questions lead me to believe there are two places in Genesis where the general "toledoth" literary structure leads us to expect "toledoth" clauses but we don't find any: Genesis 1:1 and 12:1. I suggest that these places mark the beginnings of special activities of God: creation and redemption. We might call these "the generations of God," but cautiously, because "generations of God" could suggest pantheism or chain-of-being philosophy. Genesis uses silence. God created (Hebrews 1:2) and saves (Acts 4:12) the world through His Son Jesus, so we might call

Genesis 1:1 and 12:1 the mighty acts of the Word. I think when we recognize how important 1:1 and 12:1 are, we hold the key to understanding the structure of Genesis.

What follows from the above? Well, the stories of creation and Abraham now fit smoothly into the overall structure of Genesis. The special emphasis on redemption (Abraham) and creation – those two – highlights the greatness of redemption and God's special, direct work therein. (Redemption resembles creation more than it resembles generation.)

For those who know Ray Sutton's five-point covenant model expounded in "Covenant Renewal" and in his book *THAT YOU MAY PROSPER: DOMINION BY COVENANT* (available from I. C. E., for \$15.95), here is a suggested fit between Genesis and Sutton's model.

(James B. Jordan of Biblical Horizons sees a more thematic structure in Genesis. I don't think what Jordan sees and what I see necessarily contradict one another. The Holy Ghost may have had both in mind: Jordan's subtle patterns underlying my Suttonian highlights. Since Jordan himself – the greatest theologian this side of Heaven and Hell – sees an overlapping structure, he shouldn't complain if someone else sees more overlap. For Jordan's views in general (though not on the structure of Genesis in particular), includes covenant models with up to 12 points (See his wonderful book *THROUGH NEW EYES: DEVELOPING A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE WORLD*, available from Biblical Horizons, Box 1096, Niceville, FL 32588 for \$12.00 post-paid.)

Sutton today calls his five points (1) transcendence, (2) hierarchy, (3) ethics, (4) oath, and (5) succession – forming the pleasant acronym THEOS. (1 sometimes call ethics "edibles" and oath "output" for reasons which belong in another essay, not yet written. Briefly, all five points are ethical, so "ethics" is too broad a name for the third point. Provision, both physical and redemptive, is a central concern, or the central concern, of the third point – notice how often food comes up in these sections – although this provision cannot be separated from the righteous courses of faith, leading to action, by which the Lord provides for the people in covenant with Him. On the fourth point, preliminary feedback [output] is sometimes a more prominent feature than ratification [oath].)

So:

TRANSCENDENCE. Genesis 1:1 – "Generations of" God (Elohim), the transcendent Creator. (By NOT using "generations," Genesis emphasizes the Creator/creature distinction.)

HIERARCHY. 2:4 – Generations of the heavens and of the earth, most notably (5:1) Adam, who had a hierarchical position under God and then put mankind under Satan. ("BOOK OF the generations of Adam," 5:1, is not quite standard for a toledoth phrase, and Adam is the chief creature on earth, so I have some textual excuse to merge these sections).

ETHICS/EDIBLES. 6:9 – Generations of Noah: the righteous eat within the ark (6:21) and are saved and offer sacrifices. Sharks eat the wicked.

OATH/OUTPUT. 10:1 – Generations of Noah's sons, who try to make themselves a name, a tower to Heaven and a united settlement to bless themselves and establish their oaths: "let us. . ." God nullifies their endeavors: "Let US. . ."

SUCCESSION. 11:27 – Generations of Terah: God is still raising up inheritors of the promise of redemption.

And again:

TRANSCENDENCE. 12:1 – "Generations of" God (Jehovah) the transcendent Savior of believers. By NOT using "generations" where one would expect it, Genesis

emphasizes the Savior/sinner distinction.

HIERARCHY. 25:2 – Generations of Ishmael, which soon stop; God knows him, but his hierarchical position is below Isaac.

ETHICS/EDIBLES. 25:19 – Generations of Isaac. Isaac and Esau eat; Jacob receives blessing and birth-right.

OATH/OUTPUT. 36:1, 36:9 – Generations of Esau, which soon stop; God knows him, but the oaths of Esau, Isaac and God to Jacob matter more.

SUCCESSION. 37:2 – Generations of Jacob, whose offspring will come back from the dead to inherit the promises.

I believe I had recognized the importance of 1:1 and 12:1 as silent toledoth before reading *THAT YOU MAY PROSPER*.

APPENDIX

Other passages which may show 5-point covenant structure. I do not necessarily agree with other covenantors, nor know what their studies show, and I haven't studied these in much depth. But these suggestions might be useful to preachers, teachers, and students even in this raw form.

The Whole Bible

T: Pentateuch.
H: Rest of the O.T.
E: Gospels.
O: Acts and Epistles.
S: Revelation.

The Old Testament

Leviticus. T 1-7, H 8-10, E 11-19, O 20-25, S 26-27.

I & II Chronicles. T I:1-9, H I:10-29, E II:1-9, O II:10-36, S II:22-23.

Ezra. Fourfold cycle:	T:	1:1	3:1	5:1	7:1
	H:	1:2	1:2	3:3	7:11
	E:	1:8	3:7	6:18	8:21
	O:	2:1	3:10	6:19	9:1
	S:	2:70	4:1	(7:1)	10:18

Psalms

Psalm 2. T 1-3, H 4-6, E 7-9, O 10-12 (Kiss the son), S 12b (lest. . .)

Psalm 28. T 1-2, H 3-5, E 6-7, O 7b ("My heart leaps for joy, and I will give thanks to him in song" – NIV), S 8-9.

Psalm 45. T 1-2, H 3-7, E 8-9, O 10-15, S 16-17. Psalm 71. T 1-4, H 5-13, E 14-18, O 19-21, S 22-24.

Psalm 72. T 1-7, H 8-11, E 12-14, O 15-17, S 18-20.

Psalm 78. T 1-5, H 5b ("which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children. . .") – 11, E 12-31, O 32-54, S 55-72.

Psalm 89. T 1-13/1-18, H 14-29/19-29. E 30-37/30-34, O 38-45/35-45, S 46-52/46-52. (Not only do I not necessarily agree with other dividers of the word of truth, I do not necessarily agree with myself. This Psalm twice struck me as covenantally structured, but I divided it differently.)

Psalm 90. T 1-6/1-3, H 7-11/4-6, E 12/7-12, O 13-15, S 16-17.

Psalm 91. T 1-2, H 3-8, E 9-13, O 14-15, S 16.

The Psalms of Ascents (Psalms 120-134). Three THEOS cycles: 120-124, 125-129, 130-134.

Psalm 144. T 1-2, H 3-4, E 5-8, O 9-11, S 12-15.

Psalm 146. T 1-2, H 3-4, E 5-7, O 7b ("The LORD sets prisoners free. . .") – 9, S 10.

other Old Testament Scriptures

Proverbs 1-9. T 1-4, H 5, E 6, O 7-8, S 9.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12. T 52:13-15, H 53:1-3, E 53:4-6, O 53:7-9, S 53:10-12.

New Testament Books and Passages

Matthew 5:21-46. T 21-26, H 27-32, E 33-47, 038-42, S 43-48.

Acts. T 1:1, H 6:1, E 6:7, 09:32, S 13:1. (Marked by references to "multiplying" (Greek *plathuno*).

1 Corinthians. T 1-4, H 5-7, E 8-11, 012-15, S 16. (This outline, except for the inclusion of chapter 15 with 12-14, predates my acquaintance with Sutton's covenant model.)

Galatians. T 1:1, H 2:1, E 3:1, 05:13, S 6:7.

Philippians. T 1:1, H 1-12, E 2:1, 03:1/3:17, S 4:20.

II Peter. T 1:1, H 1:3, E 1:12, 02:1, S 3:1.1

The Covenant of Moses and the Church by Ray R. Sutton

The covenant of Moses has several unique features. I have considered them as originally presented in the Old Testament and fulfilled in Christ. In this study, I turn my attention to the fulfillment of Moses in the Church. Although some in the Reformational and in the modern Church have great difficulty seeing Moses in any sense in the New Covenant, especially the Church, I find the Mosaic covenantal distinctive clearly emerging in the Body of Christ.

This observation, however, is not to say that the Mosaic covenant and the New Covenant are identical. The New Covenant is the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament. It has all of the features of all of the covenants. It is not and should not be limited to any one covenant. It is truly a greater than covenant, to use the words of the writer to the Hebrews. It seems to me that those who object to the suggestion that Moses is in Christ and the Church do so because they can only think of this in reductionistic terms. They can only consider this Mosaic-Christ-Church relationship as a one-to-one equivalent. If they could see, instead, that Moses together with all of the other covenantal heads of the Old Testament are fulfilled in Christ and the Church, they might be able to fathom the Mosaic influence on the New Covenant. Unfortunately, they do not because theology is often taught in seminary in a reductionistic fashion, and they can only conceive of Moses and Christ in a contrasting rather than a completing relationship.

The student of the New Testament should not have to stretch too far at least to see the outworking of Moses in Christ and the Church. If we keep in mind the covenantal distinctive of the Mosaic covenant, the interpreter of Scripture should be able to follow the connection. He should be able to understand the continuities and discontinuities in their proper sense. This becomes apparent with the first point of the Biblical covenant.

Mosaic Transcendence in the Church

The fundamental transcendent characteristic of the Mosaic covenant is glory. The light of God was manifested to Moses in a more intense way than ever before. It shown on Moses' face in such a way that he carried the illumination with him after he descended from the mountain where he received the law of God. In subsequent events, he continued to receive glory when he met with God. Always, he would return with the bright glow on his face. No one to my knowledge prior to Moses ever had this experience documented in Scripture. Moses was uniquely marked by this transcendent and immanent expression of the presence of God with him.

Just as we saw this Mosaic transcendence fulfilled in Christ, so it can be found in the Church. The Body of Christ is also dramatically marked by the glory presence of God.

The Apostle Paul says,

For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you. . . . For all things are for your sakes, that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison (II Corinthians 4:6-17).

This passage shows the powerful glory connection between the Mosaic covenant and the New Covenant. Indeed, this is the major theme of the second letter to the Corinthians. Notice all the references to glory and light. Some simple observations about the continuity and the discontinuity of Mosaic glory should be made.

First, as for the continuity with the Mosaic covenant, the Apostle uses personal trials related to a defense of his apostolic ministry as the context for the manifestation of the glory of God. This is parallel to Moses' experience. If ever there were a leader of the Old Testament who was assailed by his followers, surely no one faced more rebellion than Moses. The Book of Numbers records eleven and possibly fifteen such insurrections against his ministry. In the midst of these tribulations, God manifested His glory on His servant. The same happened to the Apostle but this is not where Paul stops. He intends for the Church to see that it will have the same experience. When trials occur the glory of God shines forth on the Body of Christ. Struggles might bend the fragile, earthen mortal body, but the eternal weight of glory goes far beyond momentary afflictions.

Second, the discontinuity of Mosaic glory is the temporary character of God's presence. The Apostle Paul says in the same context as the passage before,

But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory on account of the glory that surpasses it. For that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory (II Corinthians 3:7-11).

Paul does not deny the glory of the Mosaic covenant. He contrasts it as "fading away." He calls it temporary. Here is the New Covenant discontinuity. The covenant with the Church gives lasting glory. To be exact, Christ is more near and remains closer to the Church in its trials than He did with Moses in his struggles. Whereas Moses ran out of glory, the Church manifests greater glory in greater conflict. The "charge" of glory in the Church's battery never runs out. Moreover, it becomes a stronger charge in the midst of crisis. How? The Apostle says that the "giving of thanks abounds to glory." The way the Church increases

its sense and manifestation of the presence of God is by giving thanks!

Thus, the distinctive reality of the glory of God in the Mosaic covenant is found in the Church with similar and greater force. I have spent more time on this aspect of the covenant in relation to the comparison of the Mosaic covenant's fulfillment in the Church, because this is the unique feature of the Mosaic covenant.

Mosaic Hierarchy in the Church

The representative system of government under the Mosaic economy is the most notable hierarchical feature about this covenant. The great leader faced a crisis trying to handle all of the problems of thousands of people. He found good counsel from his father-in-law, Jethro, priest of Midian. He was told to tell the people,

Choose wise and discerning and experienced men from your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads. . . . Then I charged your judges at that time, saying, "hear the cases between your fellow countrymen, and judge righteously between a man and his fellow countryman, or the alien who is with him. You shall **not** show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God's. And the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it (Deuteronomy 1:13-17).

Notice that the instructions given to the people were that they should "choose from among themselves wise and discerning and experienced" leaders. Then, Moses ordained them. True Biblical representatives were established. They were selected by the people. But they were ordained by Moses to show that the power did not come from the people.

As we turn to the New Covenant, we find a striking parallel to Moses' form of representative government. When the Church needed help for its leadership because of one of its early crises, the Apostles gave them the following instruction,

"Select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." And the statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parnenas and Nicholas, a proselyte from Antioch. And these they brought before the Apostles; and after praying, they laid hands on them.

Notice the parallel. The Apostles gave instruction. The people chose representatives. The apostles ordained. Thus, the Mosaic hierarchical principle of representation appears in the New Covenant with the Church.

Mosaic Ethical Stipulations to the Church

Much has already been said about this parallel by other writers in the historic and contemporary Church. The only additional comments that I should make at this point concern some simple observations about the relationship between Mosaic stipulations and the nature of the **Instructions** given to the churches of the New Testament.

First, pertaining to those commands given to the Church for the Church, they can best be categorized in terms of the Ten Commandments. If the student will take

a New Testament and write out all of the commandments, he will discover that they organize into ten categories. Thus, the New Testament assumes the perpetuity of the commandments of God.

Second, regarding the civil commandments of the Old Testament, it is significant that the central New Testament passage on the moral responsibility of the State falls in the context of the **re-statement** of the Ten Commandments. After the Apostle Paul tells the Church at Rome to obey the civil authorities because they are a "Minister of God to you for good" (Romans 13:4), he goes on to say the following:

Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. . . . for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Romans 13:7-9).

In the context of discussing the State, the Apostle refers to the Ten Commandments and says that they are binding. And, he quotes Moses directly in specific commandments and the general statement, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (cf. Exodus 20:13ff. & Deuteronomy 5:17ff.). The Mosaic stipulations of the Old Testament in some sense still apply to the Church. Laws regarding blood, food, and race change because of a change in the sacraments from circumcision and passover to baptism and eucharist. But the moral and civil laws apply unaltered for the establishment of a Christian society all over the world.

Mosaic Sanctions in the Church

The Mosaic covenant promised blessing and cursing should the covenant be kept or broken. Specifically, sickness and death would result from covenant breaking. Here is the important parallel between the Mosaic and the New Covenant. The Apostle Paul tells the Corinthian Church that it will become sick and die if the Lord's Supper is taken unworthily (1 Corinthians 11 :32ff.).

Mosaic Succession in the Church

I pointed out in the last study of the fulfillment of Moses in Christ that Mark's resurrection account draws an important parallel between Christ and Moses. The Gospel writer implies that the apostles become new Moseses. This great succession scene is confirmed by the role bequeathed to the Church. As Moses called Joshua to his side to empower him to pass judgment on the Promised Land, the Apostle Paul transfers the judging role given to the Apostles to the Church when he says, "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world" (1 Corinthians 6:2). This implies that the Church is the new heir, charged with the solemn responsibility of continuing the work of the apostles.

Thus, the Mosaic covenant is fulfilled in the Church. Certainly there are discontinuities. But continuities are just as certain. This means that the Church is the completion of all that was fulfilled of the Mosaic covenant in Christ. As the disciples were commissioned to go as new Moseses, so the Church is sent forth to be the same. The exception is that the Church can be greater than Moses because Christ is the true and even greater Moses!