

MYSTERY OF HIS WILL

1. **Ephesians 1:11** In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will . . .
2. **Acts 15:18** Known to God from eternity are all His works.
3. **Ephesians 1:9** . . . having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself . . .
4. **Ephesians 1:18-2:5-6** . . . the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which (v. 20) He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And (v. 22) He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. And you (2:1) He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God (v. 4), who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus . . .

The Subjective Experience of the Body

5. **Romans 12:1-4** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of

your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For (v. 3) I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, . . .

6. **I Corinthians 6:15** Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not!

7. **Romans 6:13** And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

8. **Ephesians 3:2-6** . . . if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which (v. 5) in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, . . .

9. **Ephesians 1:21** . . . far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

10. **Ephesians 2:7** . . . that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

11. **Ephesians 5:32** This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

12. **Ephesians 3:9-11** . . . and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ, to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according (v. 11) to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, . . .

THE BIBLICAL COVENANTS

The Edenic Covenant – The covenant in Eden is the first of the general or universal covenants. In it, Adam is charged to: (1) populate the earth (Genesis 1:28); (2) subdue the earth (Genesis 1:28); (3) exercise dominion over the animal creation (Genesis 1:28); (4) care for the garden of Eden and enjoy its fruit (Genesis 1:29; 2:15); and (5) refrain from eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, under penalty of death (Genesis 2:16-17). The Edenic Covenant was terminated by man’s disobedience, when Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, resulting in their spiritual and physical deaths. This failure necessitated the establishment of the covenant with Adam.

The Adamic Covenant – The Covenant with Adam is the second general or universal covenant. It could be called the covenant with mankind, for it sets forth the conditions which will hold sway until the curse of sin is lifted. According to the covenant, the conditions which will prevail are:

- a. The serpent, the tool used by Satan to effect the fall of man, is cursed. The curse affects not only the instrument, the serpent, but also the indwelling energizer, Satan. Great physical changes took place in the serpent. Apparently it was upright; now it will go on its belly (v. 14). It was the most desirable animal of the animal creation; now it is the most loathsome. The sight or thought of a snake should be an effective reminder of the devastating effects of sin.
- b. Satan is judged—he will enjoy limited success (“you shall bruise His heel,” v. 15), but ultimately he will be judged (“He shall bruise your head,” v. 15).
- c. The first prophecy of the coming of Messiah is given (v. 15).
- d. There will be a multiplication of conception, necessitated by the introduction of death into the human race (v. 16).
- e. There will be pain in childbirth (v. 16).
- f. The woman is made subject to her husband (v. 16).
- g. The ground is cursed and will bring forth weeds among the food which man must eat for his existence (vv. 17-19).
- h. Physical changes takes place in man; he will perspire when he works. He will have to work all his life long (v. 19).
- i. In sinning, man dies spiritually, and ultimately will die physically. His flesh will decay until it returns to dust from which it was originally taken (v. 19).

The Noahic Covenant – The covenant with Noah is the third general or universal covenant. Noah has just passed through the universal flood in which all the world’s population had been

wiped out. Only Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives – eight people – constitute the world’s population. Noah might have thought that the things provided by the covenant with Adam had now been changed. However, God gives the Noahic Covenant so that Noah and all the human race to follow might know that the provisions made in the Adamic Covenant remain in effect with one notable addition: the principle of human government which includes the responsibility of suppressing the outbreak of sin and violence, so that it will not be necessary to destroy the earth again by a flood. The provisions of the covenant are:

- a. The responsibility to populate the earth is reaffirmed (v. 1).
- b. The subjection of the animal kingdom to man is reaffirmed (v. 2).
- c. Man is permitted to eat the flesh of animals. However, he is to refrain from eating blood (vv. 3-4).
- d. The sacredness of human life is established. Whatever sheds man’s blood, whether man or beast, must be put to death (vv. 5-6).
- e. This covenant is confirmed to Noah, all mankind, and every living creature on the face of the earth (vv. 9-10).
- f. The promise is given never to destroy the earth again by a universal flood (v. 11). The next time God destroys the earth, the means will be fire (2 Peter 3:10).
- g. The rainbow is designated as a testimony of the existence of this covenant and the promise never to destroy the earth by flood. As long as we can see the rainbow we will know that the Noahic Covenant’s in existence (vv. 12-17).

The Origin of Human Government – It has been assumed that human government was officially instituted after the Great Flood in Genesis 9. However, some form of law and order undoubtedly existed prior to this period. This is strongly suggested by both Jesus and Jude. Jesus in Luke 17:26-27 says that prior to the Flood in Noah’s day people conducted their affairs in much the same manner as we do today. Jude gives us the text of a message Enoch preached to sinners prior to the Flood (Jude 1:15). We learn that one of the main factors which brought about the Flood was man’s disobedience to the revealed law of God.

The Abrahamic Covenant – The covenant with Abraham is the first of the theocratic covenants (pertaining to the rule of God). It is unconditional, depending solely upon God who obligates Himself in grace, indicated by the unconditional declaration, “I will,” to bring to pass the promised blessings. The Abrahamic Covenant is the basis of all the other theocratic covenants and provides for blessings in three areas: (1) national – “I will make you a great nation,” (2) personal – “I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing,” and (3) universal – “in you all families of the earth shall be blessed.” This covenant was first given in

broad outline and was later confirmed to Abraham in greater detail (Genesis 13:14-17; 15:1-7, 18-21; 17:1-8). The Abrahamic Covenant constitutes an important link in all that God began to do, has done throughout history, and will continue to do until the consummation of history. It is the one purpose of God for humans into which all of God's programs and works fit. The personal aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant are fourfold: (1) to be the father of a great nation, (2) to receive personal blessing, (3) to receive personal honor and reputation, and (4) to be the source of blessing to others. The universal aspects of the covenant are threefold: (1) blessings for those people and nations which bless Abraham and the nation which comes from him; (2) cursings upon those people and nations which curse Abraham and Israel; and (3) blessings upon all the families of the earth through the Messiah, who, according to the flesh, is Abraham's son and provides salvation for the entire world.

The Mosaic Covenant – The covenant with Moses is the second of the theocratic covenants (pertaining to the rule of God) and is conditional. It is introduced by the conditional formula, “if you will indeed obey My voice . . . then you shall be a special treasure.” This covenant was given to the nation Israel so that those who believed God's promise given to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3) would know how they should conduct themselves. The Mosaic Covenant in its entirety governs three areas of their lives: (1) the commandments governed their personal lives particularly as they related to God (Exodus 20:1-26); (2) the judgments governed their social lives particularly as they related to one another (Exodus 21:1-24:11); and (3) the ordinances governed their religious lives so that the people would know how to approach God on the terms that He dictates (Exodus 24:12-31:18). The Mosaic Covenant in no way replaced or set aside the Abrahamic Covenant. Its function is clearly set forth by Paul (Galatians 3:17-19), who points out that the law, the Mosaic Covenant, came 430 years after the Abrahamic Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant was added alongside the Abrahamic Covenant so that the people of Israel would know how to conduct their lives until “the seed,” the Christ, comes and makes the complete and perfect sacrifice, toward which the sacrifices of the Mosaic Covenant only point. The Mosaic Covenant was never given so that by keeping it people could be saved, but so that they might realize that they cannot do what God wants them to do even when God writes it down on tablets of stone. The law was given that man might realize that he is helpless and hopeless when left to himself, and realize that his only hope is to receive the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus (Galatians 3:22-24).

The Palestinian Covenant – The covenant concerning Palestine is the third of the theocratic covenants (pertaining to the rule of God). The Palestinian Covenant has two aspects: (1) the legal aspects which are immediate and conditional (Deuteronomy 27-29); and (2) the grace aspects which are future and unconditional (Deuteronomy 30:1-9). The enjoyment of the

immediate blessings are introduced by the conditional formula; “if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God . . . the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth” (Deuteronomy 28:1). Sadly, Israel did not meet the condition of obedience, and is still experiencing God’s curses and punishment for their disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The unconditional grace aspects of the Palestinian Covenant have yet to be realized. God will regather the scattered people of Israel and establish them in the land He has promised unconditionally to give them. Deuteronomy concludes the Palestinian Covenant with a final warning and challenge for obedience (Deuteronomy 30:1-20).

The Davidic Covenant – The covenant with David is the fourth of the theocratic covenants (pertaining to the rule of God). In this covenant David is promised three things: (1) a land forever (v. 10); (2) an unending dynasty (vv. 11, 16); and (3) an everlasting kingdom (vv. 13, 16). The birth of Solomon, David’s son who is to succeed him, is predicted (v. 12). His particular role is to establish the throne of the Davidic Kingdom forever (v. 13). His throne continues, though his seed is cursed in the person of Jeconiah (Coniah), who was the king under whom the nation was carried captive to Babylon. Jeremiah prophesies that no one whose genealogical descent could be traced back to David through Jeconiah and Solomon would ever sit on David’s throne (Jeremiah 22:24-30). Joseph, the legal, but not physical, father of Jesus traces his lineage to David through Jeconiah (Matthew 1:1-17). David, however, had another son, Nathan. His line was not cursed. Mary, the physical mother of Jesus, traces her lineage back to David through Nathan (Luke 3:23-38). Notice the care and the extent to which God goes to keep His word and to preserve its truthfulness. The virgin birth was absolutely essential not only to assure the sinless character of Jesus but also to fulfill the Davidic Covenant. Jesus receives His “blood right” to David’s throne through His earthly mother, Mary, and His “legal right” to David’s throne through His adoptive earthly father, Joseph. The virgin birth guarantees that one of David’s line will sit on David’s throne and rule forever, while at the same time preserving intact the curse and restriction on the line of descent through Jeconiah.