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Partners with God

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What do you think of when you think about covenant with God? Some might think of God as a friend, as a Father, or as a teacher. But rarely do we consider covenant in the terms of **partnership**, i.e. *working together to accomplish a goal*. This is what I want us to spend a few moments thinking about: covenant partnership with God. I want to take a **bird's eye view** of the Bible but notice particularly the theme of covenant partnership over the years – then bring it back to us.

Covenants Broken

What do we see at the very beginning of the Bible? God creates a beautiful world in which righteousness and perfection dwells, he creates humans to bear his image, to multiply, to work the land and name the animals – he's **partnering** with them to make this world a beautiful place and to spread his glory everywhere. As you know, so the story goes, humans break that partnership and this is the reason why the world is filled with corruption, ugliness and death. And the rest of the Bible is God working to restore that partnership, that relationship, to renew a corrupt world through covenants.

Think of a covenant as a **handshake**, if you will. And what this handshake symbolizes is an agreement to work together. On God's side: he makes promises to **ble**s in many ways. On Man's side: there are conditions God expects us to commit to.

Here are some examples of primary covenants throughout the Bible:

Noah: God floods earth because of corruption. He *promises* never to flood the earth again (with the rainbow given as a symbol). But there is no condition placed Noah, instead God says "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth" (**Ge.9.21**), meaning, God is going to be faithful to his promise even when man will fail.

Abraham: God calls his family to a different land and promises to bless him and through him the whole world (circumcision given as symbol). But Abraham is told to be faithful to YHWH. That's his commitment, his condition.

Israel: God redeems them from slavery in Egypt, brings them to Sinai and promises to make them his people to reflect his glory to the rest of the world (Sabbath given as symbol). But Israel is told to follow the law of YHWH.

David: David is ruling over the great nation of Israel and God tells him he would make him a house and establish his throne in Israel forever. But David is to be faithful and his family is to lead the people in righteousness.

Then the covenants are broken, and all partnerships begin to fall apart – be it Noah, Abraham, Israel, or even David. They all failed. They all broke partnership and covenant. They all sinned. So, Israel, the nation that God refers to as his son, is *exiled* – banished from the garden once again, to the east of Eden.

Covenant Renewed

But during this time the prophets told of a day when God would establish a New Covenant – through the one who would fulfill all covenants: **Jesus**. Jesus came and we're told that he was the seed of **Abraham** and all families would be blessed through him (Ac.3.25-26). Jesus came and we're told that he was the faithful **Israelite**, the faithful son of God who alone obeyed all the commandments. Jesus came and we're told that he is the son of **David**, the true king to sit on the throne.

And so what man could not do, Jesus did. God fulfilled all partnerships by basically getting it done himself through his son. And now Jesus has made the way to fix our partnership, relationship, and covenant with God, through a New Covenant – symbolized with the bread (his body) and the juice (his blood), the price of our forgiveness. He promises to save us, to renew us, to give us his holy Spirit to empower us toward obedience and make us holy like himself. Our part in the new covenant is to receive Christ by faith and baptism – and to follow him in obedience.

Do you know what this makes you? *Partners with God*. Paul said in our text, **2Co.6.1**, that they were "**working together** with him"; **1Co.3.9** "for we are God's **fellow workers**"; **Mk.16.20** "and they went out and preached everywhere, while the **Lord worked with them** and confirmed the message by accompanying signs"; **He.3.14** "For we have become **partners** of Christ, if indeed we hold fast the beginning of our commitment steadfast until the end". *Do you view yourself as a partner with God?* Because God wants to partner with you to actually do something great in this world – to do something that lasts. Reconciling the world to him by sharing the story of Jesus, loving the vulnerable, leading the organization and growth of the next generation, encouraging the church, bringing justice and equity to God's world – how will we partner with God?