

The School of Biblical Law

Covenant and Law

Lesson Ten: "The Covenant Model: Succession"

The last section of the Covenant Model is entitled succession or continuity and defines the heir of the hierarchy that is appointed and endowed with legal authority to guarantee the continuation of the treaty.

1. Before Abraham was qualified to cut covenant with the Lord, his legal heir needed to be recognized. "And Abram said, LORD, God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou has given no seed: and lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And behold, the word of the Lord came unto him saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir" (Gen. 15: 2-4).

Confirmation of the true heir guarantees the continuity of the covenant.

When requested of the Lord to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, Abraham knew that Isaac would continue to live, even if he had to be raised from the dead, because God had promised that Isaac was the God-ordained heir to the covenant (Gen. 22; Heb. 11:17-19).

2. At the time of the death of God's chosen hierarchy, a ceremony was conducted to pass on the inheritance and legally appoint the chosen covenantal heir.

The Patriarchs gathered their children and imparted to all but identified the son with first born inheritance who was chosen for covenantal hierarchy.

- Isaac imparted to Jacob (Gen. 27:26-29).
- Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph (Ge. 48:9-22).
- Moses spoke over the tribes but appointed Joshua as first born over nation (Deut.31:23; 33).
- Church leaders are appointed by the laying on of hands and the transference of the right to rule.

In the suzerain treaties, the king would gather his followers at the time of his death and require that they would pledge allegiance to his successor. This ceremony was often accompanied by a meal and would be done a second time after the suzerain king had died.

- Moses appointed Joshua and the people acknowledged; and after the death of Moses, the nation celebrated Passover meal and conducted the ceremony of circumcision – covenant renewal (Josh.1-5).
- Jesus gathered his disciples to celebrate the Passover, and during the ceremony, confirmed that He was the new leader as He transferred the ceremony out from under Moses' administration to that of His own (Luke 22: 14-22).

The transfer ceremonies were more than symbolic; they were judicial.

3. God promised historic continuity up to 1000 generations but warned that the covenant breaker would be cut off in the third or fourth generation (Ex. 20:5-6).

When the covenant is denied, there is a lack of renewal and a failure to inherit.

Esau, as a man of power with a taste for blood, sold his birthright to Jacob, who was God's choice to be heir; but the lawfully-obtained right needed to be judicially transferred.

- Esau, who must have assumed he could maintain the right to covenantal hierarchy through his natural lineage or through domination and power, was dispossessed and sought to destroy Jacob.
- In Jesus' day, the Herodian kings, who were Edomites and who sought to kill baby Jesus and were culpable in his crucifixion, thought they could guarantee inheritance through power but were disinherited in the end.

The church of Jesus is invited to ratify the covenant in baptism and renew the covenant in communion. Each of these ceremonial steps possesses covenantal authority and places the believer in position for continuity of covenant authority and blessings.