

## The School of Biblical Law

### Covenant and Law

#### Lesson Six: "The Covenant Model: Ethics"

The third section in the covenant model is called ethics and is built upon the concepts of transcendence and hierarchy. Covenants are generated by someone who seeks to league with another. Covenants are received by someone who wants to benefit from the promises and provisions offered by the giver. To ensure that both parties obtain the benefit that they expect to receive, the terms must be defined. When each party lives faithfully to the terms, the promised benefits can be exchanged.

1. The first covenant found within the pages of scripture was offered by God, who was the Sovereign, to Adam and Eve, who were the hierarchy. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-17)

Within the context of this covenant, God outlined the rules: "Thou shall not eat."

The Tree of Knowledge was an embodiment of Law planted in the Garden.

The ethic of "Thou shall not eat" given to Adam was not only a literal law that Adam and Eve were required to follow but it was also a testimony as to who had the authority to give the terms of the covenant.

2. In every covenant, the terms are handed from the greater to the lesser or from the sovereign to the hierarchy.

Ethics are the stipulations or rules that the covenant giver expects the covenant recipient to follow.

The covenant, which God institutes, and the human forms of covenant, which are treaties and contracts, are ethical at their core; and the terms are the standards in each form of these covenants.

Man is either a covenant-keeper or a covenant-breaker, which are terms applied to the hierarchy based upon faithfulness to the covenant terms or unfaithfulness to the terms, respectively.

3. Moses ascended Mt. Sinai into the fiery cloud to commune with God and to receive the covenant that God was offering to Israel.

"And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. (Ex 19:3-6) And God spake all these words, saying, I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Ex 20:1-3) In the covenant that God offered to Israel, God initially identified Himself as the covenant-giver; secondly, He presented the promises and provisions; and then, He also defined the terms or laws to which He expected obedience and compliance.

Every covenant has ethics or rules. Rules are not a form of bondage; but, rather, rules define an ethic or a standard of behavior. If the ethics are not outlined by the sovereign, the hierarchy will live by the ethic that he has self-determined, which may or may not be up to the specifications desired by the sovereign. If the behavior and actions of the hierarchy are sub-standard to the expectations of the sovereign, contracted blessings may be withheld and covenant privileges forfeited. Ethics or laws make clear what is expected and serve as a guarantee that rewards can be meted out.