

## The School of Biblical Law

### Covenant and Law

#### Lesson Eight: “The Covenant Model: Sanctions”

The fourth section of the covenant model outlines the sanctions of blessings and curses that are tied to covenantal obedience or disobedience, respectively. This section also addresses the manner in which the covenant is received, which is accepting the terms and the sanctions by taking an oath in the presence of witnesses. To cut a covenant, all three items –sanctions, oath, and witnesses – are necessary and are addressed in the fourth section of the covenant model.

1. The promise of blessings refers to receiving the reward or the inheritance, whereas cursing concerns disinheritance and the outworking of death.

The motivation to activate any covenant is for the transference of reward or blessing.

- Abraham was promised that God would be his shield and great reward.
- Israel was called to be God’s peculiar treasure, kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.
- Naturally, business contracts, bank loan contracts, and family covenant seek the reward.

The most common biblical image for blessing is the garden whereas the frequent metaphors for curses are desert (desolation) and sea (chaos).

2. The sanctions are actually promises and, because they are issued in advance, they are promissory or prophetic. (Examples: Gen. 2:17 and Deut. 28)
3. Sanctions are judicial and, after the fall, involve a judgment before the release of a blessing.

Adam was to have received the blessing of Sabbath rest without the sanction of a curse, but sin disrupted the blessing and the curse came first. The prophetic promise of Gen.3:15 promised a blessing that could only be released through the crucifixion of Christ who born our curses.

- Judgment and the corresponding items of discipline and suffering release maturity and success; nothing is instant.
- Every occupation requires the sanctions of discipline and hard work to make better employees or better leaders.
- Parents willing to discipline raise better children; a people willing to implement judgments will rule a nation.
- All the disciplines of God are redemptive and tutorial.

4. The Bible is covenant book containing both the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

Numerous examples of the sanctions being meted out may be found in the Old Covenant.

- The Book of Joshua reveals obedience that resulted in the blessing of inheritance, but the Book of Judges illustrates unfaithfulness resulting in discipline and death.
- Kings and Chronicles are replete with examples of both sides of the sanctions; but when a king and a people would self-discipline, they would align themselves for blessings.
- Babylonian captivity saw the nation removed from their garden land and taken to a wilderness of the Gentile nation to be chastened before being allowed to return back to the promise land.
- Jesus foretold the disinheritance of the apostate Jewish nation as He announced the closing of the Old Covenant, but he also stated that from the destruction of the old temple He would raise up the new (Jn. 2:19; Mt.16:18).

Each communion celebration is a remembrance that the believer’s blessings are based upon the suffering of Christ.

The promises of punishment work to produce fear and reverence in the believer’s heart. God is not a man that He should lie (Num. 23:19). Fear is the beginning of wisdom (Ps. 11:10). As wisdom mature, fear is replaced with understanding and a love for God and His ways. Promises of reward are motivational. “For the joy set before him, Jesus endured the cross” (Heb. 12:2). Sanctions both promise and deliver the reward.