

2026_08_16_Dispensationalism

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[0:00] Genesis chapter 17. By the way, all of this wonderful fellowship that we experience on Sunday mornings does not have to wait until next Sunday.

! And other opportunities to get together.

We had a youth game night. And some of the youthful dads joined in on that. Along with the younger people. But fellowship among the body of Christ is such an important part of living the Christian life.

Connecting with one another on a regular basis. And really, you know, just connecting once a week on Sundays for five, ten minutes.

Really, it mostly doesn't cut it. And so, build relationships with one another. And by the way, it doesn't necessarily mean it has to be with people at your local church.

[1:12] There are Christians in the greater body of Christ that also are part of the body of Christ. That we can and should fellowship with. But it's also good to really get to know the people that are part of your local body, your local congregation.

Speaking of the local body of Christ, we are going to be talking this morning. We've been doing a series on dispensationalism. And dispensationalism is just a framework for how to approach and understand the Bible.

We're actually going to speak briefly about one of the alternatives to dispensationalism called covenant theology. Over the next few weeks, we'll get into that a little bit more.

Last week, we focused on this topic of God's messengers. And understanding who God's messengers were throughout the ages helps us to understand what instructions, what things that they wrote, whether it's history or instruction or prophecy, how we ought to read it, whether it's something that is simply for us, for our learning, or if it's something to us that gives us direct marching orders, if you will, on how we ought to live or promises that might belong to us. Today, we're going to focus on the topic of who are God's people. So last week, God's messengers. Today, we're going to look at who are God's people.

[2:38] Does God have just one group of people? And that's a debate among Christians. Is there just one group of people throughout the ages? Or are there different groups of people that we need to recognize in order to help us understand the Bible?

In future weeks, like next week, we're going to be looking at God's promises. God's promises. Are God's promises always the same for everybody? We're going to be looking at the distinctions between worship and then also mission.

What is our mission today? Is it the same mission as we see from other folks in the Bible throughout history? And then the last one we'll look at is our future.

What does our future look like in this age of grace versus maybe is there a different future for other people, groups in the Bible? But today, we're going to kind of set the framework, set the groundwork by looking at are there two groups of people or are there just one?

I told you to open up your Bible to the book of Genesis in Genesis chapter 17. And this is where we're going to start. This is the place in the Bible where God calls out an individual to start a family that will eventually become a nation.

[4:04] And this is the forming of a new group of people, a people that will be called a special people. I'm going to read about 14 verses here in this passage, and then we're going to talk about it a bit.

Genesis chapter 17, starting with verse 1. When Abraham was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, I am Almighty God, walk before me and be blameless.

And I will make my covenant between me and you and will multiply you exceedingly. Keep this in mind, a covenant, and he will multiply him. Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham. For I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.

Not just a nation, but many kings. And I will establish my covenant, there's that word again, between me and you. And not just between me and you, but also your descendants after you in their generations.

[5 : 21] For an everlasting covenant to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger.

All the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession, and I will be their God. And God said to Abraham, As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you, throughout their generations.

There's this covenant, and you need to keep it, and also your children. This is my covenant which you shall keep between me and you and your descendants after you. Every male child among you shall be circumcised.

And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins. And that shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised.

Every male child in your generations. He who is born in your house, or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. He who is born in your house, and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised.

[6 : 28] And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male child who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people.

He has broken my covenant. Here God is starting with a man named Abraham, and he is establishing for himself a people that will be a special people.

He's making to Abraham and to his descendants promises, things that he will accomplish through Abraham. Promises to give them a land, to make them nations, to have kings and a kingdom.

There's also, along with this, these promises, a covenant. A covenant with a sign that comes along with it, but also things, a covenant to keep things that must be done.

The sign of the covenant is this kind of bizarre practice, this ritual, called circumcision. The cutting of the foreskin of a child on the eighth day after they're born.

[7 : 41] And notice what God says here to Abraham about those who do not keep the covenant. And specifically, and we're going to see that this covenant expands later on.

Right now, the only requirement, the only thing to keep as part of this covenant, is this practice of circumcision. But he says, if you don't do this, if the child is not circumcised, what is the consequence?

That that child will be cut off from the people, from this new people that God is establishing. Later on, we see in the Bible there's an emphasis on this whole concept of circumcision.

Abraham was circumcised. He circumcised Isaac. Jacob was circumcised. All of Jacob's sons were circumcised.

But then later on, we get to a man named Moses. And God called Moses to be a leader to Israel and to ultimately give them, to basically expand this covenant.

[8 : 53] But there was a problem. We read this in Exodus chapter 4. Moses was traveling. And the Bible says, and it's a funny little kind of aside almost.

There's just a few verses, but it says that the Lord sought to kill Moses. Did you know that? In the Bible, in the book of Exodus, Exodus chapter 4, 24, it says that the Lord sought to kill Moses. What in the world? Why? Why did God want to kill Moses? Well, it says this, verse 25, Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses' feet and said, surely you are a husband of blood to me.

And so he, God, let him go. Then she said, you are a husband of blood because of the circumcision. Now, this is kind of an odd little just three sentences, three verses in the Bible.

But it shows that this covenant sign of circumcision was highly critically important to God. So much so that he sought to kill Moses and his wife.

[10:07] I mean, maybe he was too sick or something. We're not sure exactly what was going on to do it himself. But she took action into her own hands and performed the circumcision on her own son.

She wasn't very happy about it, as you might imagine. But this is something that was important to God. And so what we find here is that when God created this brand new group of people, there were a few things that were a part of it that made up the identity of who this group of people was. One was that they are the children of Abraham. There is a biological or an ethnic piece to it.

There is a sign, the sign of circumcision, and there is a covenant that must be kept. And you can imagine, right, that the children, are they circumcising themselves?

No, it's their parents, right? That are doing that on their behalf. But when the children get older, they must keep the covenant themselves.

[11:24] Continuing on with Moses, Moses comes into the picture and he brings the Israelites, this new group of people, out of Egypt, out of slavery, and brings them to Mount Sinai.

And in Exodus chapter 19, this is right before we come to the Ten Commandments, this is what God speaks to the nation of Israel through Moses.

Exodus 19, verse 5. Now, therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to me above all people, for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Holy just means separate, set apart, as special. You are to be a special treasure to me above all people. So there are other people on the earth, but this group of people will be special, and they will be above the other people in God's eyes.

They will be beloved, more beloved in God's eyes. And shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy or set apart nation, group of people. In Deuteronomy 7, 6, you don't have to turn there.

[12:44] Moses says, For you are a holy people to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

And as we read through the law of Moses, we see that this covenant, the expectations of the covenant, what needs to be kept for this covenant, expands.

It's not just this ritual of circumcision. It grows into other things. And along with these other things are the requirement that if you keep these things, then you will be my special people.

If you don't, you will be cut off. And so we see this even before the Ten Commandments, when the Passover practice was introduced.

It was given, and this is in Exodus 12, in which God instructed the Israelites that they ought to practice every year a weekly festival or a weekly feast called Passover.

[13:49] And it says this in Exodus 12, 15, seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

If you don't do this right, if you don't perform this ritual in the way that I have presented it, in the way that I have asked you, if you eat leavened bread instead of unleavened, then you will be cut off from this group of people.

And on and on and on. If you search through the scriptures, especially the Old Testament, and just search for the phrase, you can do this online or a Bible tool you might have, and just look for the phrase cut off, and you'll find over and over and over again, here is the covenant, here is the law, and if you don't do these things, you'll be cut off from my people.

So this people group is the focus of most of the Old Testament, from Genesis 17 all the way to the very end, to the book of Malachi.

But as we've mentioned before, is this where things change? Is it from Malachi to Matthew, where there's a transition to maybe a different people, or there's a change to how God is working with this group Israel?

[15:12] Well, actually, no. Jesus himself says during his ministry, that is recorded in the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, he says this to the, or in Matthew 15, 24, he says, There is this house, this people group called Israel, and that is the people that Jesus was sent to.

And then, like we talked about with our messengers, our message on the messengers of God, God's, or Jesus' disciples, his 12 disciples, we eventually called the 12 apostles, continued to go to the same group of people, this people called Israel.

If you open up to Acts chapter 2, go ahead and turn there in your Bibles. And we're just going to kind of skim over, but we're going to look at when Peter preaches his very first sermon after Jesus ascended into heaven.

This is on the day of Pentecost, one of the Jewish feasts, and they're in Jerusalem. And there was, the Holy Spirit came into that upper room, there was speaking in tongues, a lot of the people who were in Jerusalem from all over the world heard people speaking in their own language, and they were amazed, and this provided a platform, an opportunity for Peter to speak to them.

And I just want to point out a few things. Who was it that was here in Jerusalem? This shouldn't be a surprise, but it says this in verse 5, Acts chapter 2, verse 5, and there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

[17:03] These were Jewish people that were there in Jerusalem. They were there to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, and they'd come from all over the world, not because they were ethnically from these places, but because, as we know from the history of the Scriptures, that the Jews had been dispersed throughout all the world.

Just like we have Jews today who might be originally from Germany, or the U.S. or Russia, or all kinds of different parts of the world. They were dispersed, but they maintained their Jewish identity. Skip down to verse 14. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, Men of Judea, and all who dwell in Jerusalem.

He's speaking to men of Judea, people of Israel. Skip down to verse 22. He says, Men of Israel, hear these words.

And he speaks to them about Jesus, and the mission of Jesus, to be the Messiah of Israel. Skip down to verse 29. Men and brethren, would Paul call the Gentiles his brethren?

[18:16] No, he was talking to his brethren, the Jews. And skip down to verse 36. He says, Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

He is speaking this message to a particular group of people. The house of Israel. Even sometime later, probably, I'm not sure exactly how much time, but it's in the next chapter, chapter 3.

We see that Peter and James go to Solomon's porch. And there's a layman there, and he ends up being healed by the two, and so provides another platform for another message.

And who is it that Peter is preaching to? Acts chapter 3, verse 25. This is part of Peter's message. He says, You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers. Peter is speaking in this next message, in chapter 3 here, he's speaking to the people of Israel, the ones who were given the covenant of Abraham and the covenant which Moses gave to the people of Israel.

[19:43] The covenant that God made with their fathers. If we go back a few verses, we'll see what Peter was speaking to them about.

In Acts chapter 3, go back to verse 19. He says this, Repent, therefore. This is his message to this Jewish people, the house of Israel.

Repent, therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord and that he may send Jesus Christ who was preached to you before whom heaven must receive until the time of restoration of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all of his holy prophets since the world began.

God wants to fulfill his promises to this household of Israel, that he promises that he gave to this specific group of people. Jesus came to the Jew first, the Bible says, to Israel first.

Peter even points this out even in this message and wants to do something for that group of people.

[21:03] He has promises for that group of people that they may have what he calls here a time of refreshing if they will repent.

And we talked about, you know, the mystery and how they didn't repent and because of that there was a shift, a change. And there was a transition from this one people group, the Jewish people, the household of Israel, to a different people group.

And just to kind of reiterate that and try to solidify that in our minds, turn to Acts chapter 18. Acts chapter 18. Paul had been raised up as another messenger of God, but as we pointed out last week, he was different from the previous messengers of God.

Different from Jesus himself, different from John the Baptist, different from even the 12 apostles. disciples, Jesus' 12 disciples. Their mission was to go to the Jews only.

But when God raised up Paul, he told Paul, I'm going to send you as a light to the Gentiles. He said, I'm going to send you to the Jewish people, my people, but I'm going to also send you to be a light to the Gentiles.

[22:26] And so during his ministry, we see that Paul always goes to the Jewish synagogue first, and then, if he's rejected, which happened most of the time, then he would go then to preach to the Gentile people.

Here in Acts chapter 18 is another one of these instances. Acts chapter 18, verse 5, it says this, when Silas and Timothy had come to Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.

But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and he said to them, your blood be upon your own heads. I am clean.

From now on, I will go to the Gentiles. From now on, I will go to the Gentiles. And this shows us that there is this transition in which God is sending messengers to the Jewish people and there is refusal after refusal, opposition after opposition.

And finally, Paul says, I'm done. I'm going to the Gentiles. Paul explains this shift, this change in Romans chapter 9, 10, and 11.

[23:45] Go ahead and turn to Romans chapter 9. Paul here is grieving.

He really loves his Jewish brethren, his people who he shares blood with, biology with. But he says this, Romans 9, starting in verse 1, I tell the truth in Christ.

I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises, of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all the eternally blessed God.

Amen. Here Paul is speaking of the Jewish people and how he is grieving because they have, for the most part, right, not every single one of them, but for the most part have rejected their Messiah. But this was the group of people that God had made his special people. They, to them, belonged the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, he says, the service of God.

[25:18] He's talking about the temple service and the promises, what God would do in them in the future. But, and there's a lot in Romans chapter 9, 10, and 11, but if we skip to Romans chapter 11, we kind of see a summary of what happened with this group of people, the Jews.

Romans 11, verse 11. I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? He's talking about his Jewish brethren. Certainly not, but through their fall to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

And so, God has transitioned here from making the Jews his special people a covenant people to bringing salvation to the Gentile people, the non-Jews in the world.

And he does it for a purpose, not because he's finished with Israel, by the way, but because he wants to continue to pursue them and make them jealous because of the affection, because of the love that he puts on the Gentile people.

You know, Romans 9 is all about God's right. God has a right to shift his affection, to shift who he wants to designate as his special people whenever he wants.

[26:55] You know, he can do that. That's what Romans 9 is all about and it shows how, well, God promised that he would bless Abraham and his children, but, well, it wasn't all of Abraham's children, right? It was just Isaac.

And then it wasn't all of Isaac's children, it was Jacob and Esau. It was actually just through Jacob. And so it's all a defense of how God can move his affection, his love from one group to another, specifically to the Gentiles.

Now, our Calvinist friends tend to confuse all that with God, you know, electing certain individuals to salvation. but really this is about people groups, nations.

And so the Gentiles become God's people. And in Romans 9, this is Romans 9, chapter 25, Paul references a prophecy from Hosea in order to defend this idea that God can make a special people from non-Jews, from the Gentiles.

this is Romans 9, verse 25, Paul quoting Hosea. As he says also in Hosea, I will call them my people who were not my people and her beloved who were not beloved.

[28:16] It shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, you are not my people, there they shall be called sons of the living God. And that is what happened.

There was a special people called Israel with a covenant to keep, with a sign of circumcision biologically to children of Abraham.

And because of their resistance as a people group, God put their covenant promises on hold and he transitioned for a time to a new group of people, a new group of people made up of Gentiles. Turn to Ephesians chapter 2. Ephesians chapter 2. Paul calls himself the apostle to the Gentiles. The apostle to the Gentiles. So, we might imagine that if we want to find out some details about this new group of people, where might we get them from?

[29:21] Well, from the apostle to the Gentiles. Ephesians chapter 2, Paul is explaining to these Gentile believers in Ephesus their salvation, how they came to be part of the family of God.

He starts in verse 1, Ephesians chapter 2 verse 1, he says, and you he made alive who were dead in your trespasses and sins. and then he continues on and on about their salvation and how wonderful it is.

And then he transitions a little bit to talk about this change that happened. Go to verse 11, Ephesians 2 verse 11. Therefore, remember that you once Gentiles in the flesh who are called uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision made in the flesh by hands, that at that time you are without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

He's pointing to a time past when there was two groups of people, the household of Israel and the rest of the world. We use the term Gentiles to describe the rest of the world.

Anybody? who's not a Jew. He says, once you were once Gentiles in the flesh. He says, at that time you were without Christ. You were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.

[30:58] You were strangers from that house, from that people group. You were strangers from the promises and the covenant that was made with them and you had no hope and you were without God in the world.

Now, we know that there were people that were Gentile in the flesh that were not part of Abraham's children, but they did eventually, there were some people that joined themselves to that family. I think about Rahab, the prostitute. She joined herself to the family of Israel. Ruth, who eventually married Boaz, who was married into the nation of Israel.

And both of these women, by the way, were part of the lineage of Jesus Christ. And so people could join themselves to this nation of Israel, but unless you did that, you had no covenant, you had no promises, you had no pathway to God.

If you wanted to get to God, you had to go through a nation, a people, the people of Israel. But notice that he says this in the next verse. This is verse 13, Ephesians 2.13.

[32:15] But now something has changed. But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

You were far off from God and now you've been brought near because of something that Jesus accomplished on the cross. continuing on in verse 14.

For he himself is our peace who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of separation. Both Jew and Gentile is what he's talking about.

Now there is just one group of people made up of both of these. He says having abolished in his flesh the enmity that is the law of commandments contained in ordinances so as to create in himself one new man from the two thus making peace.

So out of two peoples he created one new man one new group. Verse 16 and that he might reconcile them to them both to God in one body through the cross therefore putting to death the enmity and he came and he preached peace to you who were far off and to those who were near.

[33:39] To the Gentiles who were far off and he preached Christ to the Jews who were already near through their covenant. For through him, this is verse 18, for through him we both have access by one spirit to the Father.

Notice this that Paul doesn't say here that well there's this house of Israel, this people of God and the Jews were just kind of added in.

He says no, he says there is something called a new creation, a new group, a new body of people. He created in himself says in verse 15 one new man from the two.

This is a new group of people with a new identity. It includes both Jew and Gentile. In Colossians 3:11, you can write that scripture down if you want to look at it later.

He says this, Paul says this to the Colossians, neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, but Christ is all in all. And in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul says this, this is a big passage on this concept of the body of Christ.

[34:57] He says this, 1 Corinthians 12, 13, for by one spirit we were all baptized in to one body, one group, whether Jews or Greeks. There is one new group that is composed not just of people who are ethnically the children of Abraham, not just those who were given a covenant to keep, but all men, Jew or Gentile.

And here's an important point. If we go back up to Ephesians where'd it go? Verse 14 says this, for he himself is our peace and he has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of separation.

There was this wall that separated the house of Israel from the house of the other nation. It was a wall. It made a distinction, a separation between the two peoples and that was the law, the covenants, circumcision, the Sabbath days, all the feasts and festivals, all the holy relics and all the different things that were part of temple worship.

All of those things created a separation, a distinction between the people of Israel and the people of the rest of the world. But those things, that wall was broken down.

That law, the law of commandments and ordinances, was taken out of the way for this new group. So there would be nothing that would separate Jew from Gentile.

[36:37] So if we continue on in Ephesians 2 here, verse 19, now therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

Both Jew and Gentile are now members of this household. Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building being fitted together grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

There is a new creation here, a new people, a brand new household. It's not the one that Moses built. It's not that house.

It's not that temple with all of its furniture and the sacrifices and the priesthood, its basins and ritual washings and its furniture.

It's a different household, a different foundation, one built on Jesus Christ and the blood that he shed for the sins of the world.

[37:53] And there's a new type of temple being built, not a physical temple that lives in a physical location in Jerusalem, but a temple made up of the individual people that make up that group or that household.

That is the identity of this new group of people. Paul calls it here a household, but later on in Ephesians chapter 4, he gives a very specific name to this group of people.

Ephesians chapter 4, verse 12. He's talking about how these Christians need to grow and how there's gifts given among men, people who are teachers and pastors and things like that, evangelists and teachers.

Jews. And he says this in Ephesians 4, 12. He says, these leaders are given for the equipping of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

That's the name that he gives to this group of people, the body of Christ. Not just anybody, but the body of Christ himself. In back to 1 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul says this to the Corinthians, now you are the body of Christ and members individually.

[39:15] He goes on and on and actually talks in great detail about this group of people that he calls the body of Christ. I want you to remember, what was the requirement to be the people of God under the old covenant?

Well, you were born of Abraham. You were one of the children of Abraham. There was the sign of circumcision. And then there was keeping of the covenant.

But this new people, this new people group has a different method of entry. It's not how you're born. It's not what rituals you keep. It's something else. Galatians chapter 3 verse 26. Here's the requirement. Galatians 3, 26.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ. And that's it. Through faith in Jesus Christ, you are the sons of God.

[40:20] It doesn't matter who your parents were. It doesn't matter what rituals you keep, whether you keep these many, many different rituals that were given to the Jewish people. That was their household of faith that was appropriate for the time in which it was.

But now there is a different group of people and there are different requirements for how to enter the family and how to be the people of God.

In Ephesians, Paul makes this faith even more explicit. the faith that provides entrance into the sons of God or the household, this new household of God.

He says this, in him you also trusted. This is Ephesians 1.13. In him you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

So he says you trusted in him after you heard a certain word, a message of truth and he calls that message the gospel of your salvation.

[41:34] The gospel message is that Jesus Christ has died for the sins of the world. That's the message. Jesus Christ has died for the sins of the world.

And so anyone who believes that message, puts their faith in that message, can be part of this new creation, this new household of God.

God, and it says this, continuing on, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. There is this seal or a sign given to this new people group.

Remember, what was the sign that was given to the people of Israel? It was something fleshly, something that they did in their flesh. It was this sign of circumcision.

That was the designator. That was the thing that marked them as God's special people. But for this new group, this new group under grace, God has a different sign, a different seal.

[42:40] He says, you are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. God's Spirit himself takes up residence in you, and that is the sign that you are God's people.

because of time, I'm going to skip a few things.

I was going to talk about some covenant theology and get into some details about what maybe some different denominations believe and how that impacts everything here, but we're going to have to save that for the future here.

But I want to finish up with this. One of the reasons this is important is because people do make a difference, a distinction.

They think, in fact, we'll just briefly touch on this. There is a theological perspective called covenant theology. You may have never heard of it before, but it is a prevailing perspective that is different from the dispensational view.

[43:55] And in today's context, the big difference is they would say, no, there's only ever been one people of God throughout all of history. And just one household of faith.

And God has just kind of built on top of that. And so what that logically leads to, or necessarily leads to, is that the things that were in that old covenant are carried on and continued and practiced or taught to be practiced even on into the current day and age in which we live in.

There's not a distinction made. There is a unification attempted. And because of that, people might think, oh, there's still a covenant for us to keep.

A covenant for us to keep. But there isn't. There is no covenant for us to keep. All there is, is a faith, something to believe.

Something to believe. I'll just wrap up with this. You know, in this Jewish economy, your birth mattered, how you were born, who you were born to.

[45:12] Along with the rituals of your family, the rituals that you would practice, the traditions that you would practice. But under grace, in this age of grace that we live in, there is a new and a different way to be joined to God's family.

We all need to understand what that is and, by the way, also what it isn't. And so today, being joined to the family of God is not about rituals or traditions.

It's not circumcision. Or, what many people see as the kind of transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament, they see that baptism was something that replaced circumcision.

That's why you see so many different Christian groups out there, they practice infant baptism. Even though the practice of infant baptism isn't something you see anywhere in the Bible.

You don't see it taught anywhere in the Bible at all. not a single scripture. So why is it so commonly practiced? It goes back to this Old Covenant.

[46:22] We are just continuing on this line of this Old Covenant. We are part of the same group of people, these Israelites. And so they had circumcision and, well, Jesus or somebody along the way made just this slight little tweak and instead of doing the circumcision, now we are using water baptism in its place.

And so people teach that, well, you have to baptize these infants, these children or otherwise they will not be considered part of God's people. But that's not how this new group of people works. It's not baptism, it's not anything about your heritage, your birth, it's nothing about the rituals that you keep, even the prayers that you speak, that you pray.

It doesn't matter whether you live in a Christian home or not. It doesn't matter whether you're a citizen of a Christian nation or not. There's this saying that I love so much that is so important and is especially in this context.

And the saying goes like this, God today has no grandchildren. Have you ever heard that? God has no grandchildren. Now, the rest of us have, I have a grandchild now.

[47:37] I have a grandchild, but God doesn't have any grandchildren. Nobody inherits sonship today because you are part of a people group. Every person, every individual, needs to decide to make a decision of faith for themselves to join God's family.

As Paul says in Galatians, for you are all sons of God through what? through faith in Jesus Christ. And so, if there's anybody out there that is putting your faith or your trust in your heritage, and I'm looking at the children today.

If you are under the age of 20 this morning, look at me. Your Christianity is not based on your parents' faith because you were born in a Christian household.

God has no grandchildren. You need to put your trust and your faith in Jesus Christ for yourself to be part of God's family.

family. And if you haven't done that, if you've just been trusting that, well, I just belong to a Christian household, I want to encourage you this morning. Put your faith, your own personal faith in Jesus Christ.

[48:57] And parents, take the opportunity. Talk to your kids this week about it. Are you trusting in your parents' faith, in the faith of this household? Or have you put your trust, your personal trust and faith in Jesus for yourself?

Have that conversation. Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, so grateful this morning that even though we Gentiles who are not a special people in the past, you have made us a special people, not because we deserved it, but just because of your great love.

I thank you for all the blessings that you've bestowed on us. Help us to understand who we are in Christ, the identity that you have given us, the promises that we have, the future that you have promised us, the mission that we have on earth, the way that we ought to love and worship you. Help us to understand those things clearly by helping us to rightly divide and understand these scriptures that you've given us. I thank you for doing that work in us each and every day as we open up the scriptures.

In Jesus' name, amen. Everybody stand up on your feet. We're going to sing the doxology to close out. By the way, I've mentioned this before, I forgot to mention it at the beginning, but there are many questions that may come up along the way.

[50:20] There's so many details that I just have to leave out because there's just a lot. If you have any questions that are lingering in your mind, you can either write it on your bulletin or there's little note cards.

Write down your question. We're going to get to it at the end of this series. You can put it in our little offering box in the back and it'll get to me and we'll compile them and try to answer as many questions as we can at the end.

All right, here we go.