

A Covenantal Method in Bible Interpretation

Questions... and more questions:

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1: Holy (Crusade) Wars?

- Should the church take up arms and spread the gospel by military force?

Yes??

1 Sam.25:28, Ex 15:2, Ps 24:8, Ex 17:16, Ex 14:14, Dt.20:1-20, 21:10ff, 23:9ff).

In the Bible, war between Israel and the nations can be referred to as “Yahweh’s War” (1 Sam.25:28). God is often regarded as a “warrior” who goes into battle with the armies of Israel (Ex 15:2,

Ps 24:8, Ex 17:16, Ex 14:14, etc) More than the mere justification of “defensive war”, we see in the Bible a command to war against the inhabiting nations for the sake of acquiring land (crusading war) as instructed in Dt.20:1-20, 21:10ff, 23:9ff). Is then the concept of “holy war” (crusading war) as to involve geo-political-military involvement applicable to us today? Should a country, for the sake expanding its faith, war against other nations? Without mere “proof-texting”, what biblical hermeneutic (method of interpreting scripture) would you use to justify your answer?

NO!!!

John 18:36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”

‘2Cor. 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

Eph. 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

#2: Health/Wealth?

- Is it promised in the Bible that if you are Holy and Faithful that God will prosper you materially/physically?

Yes???

Psa. 37:25, Deut. 29:9

David once said that he “never saw the righteous forsaken, nor their seed begging bread’ (Psa. 37:25). And the law of God promises that if you “keep the words of this covenant and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do” (Deut. 29:9). Is this true for Christian’s today? Can we expect the righteous to prosper in material ways even? Without mere “proof-texting,” what biblical hermeneutic (method of interpreting the scripture) would you use to justify your answer?

NO!!

2Cor. 4:16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is **wasting away**, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

2Cor. 12:9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Romans 5:3-5 ... we exalt in hope of the glory of God, and not only this, but we also exalt in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance,

proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Romans 8:18-25 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ... For in Hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

1 Peter 1:6-7: In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in the praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 12:5-11ff: ...All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

James 5:15 And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

#3: Israel?

- Is Israel (the nation) still God's chosen people?

Yes???

1 Kings 6:13

Today there is much publicity given to America's role in the Israel-Palestinian conflict. The Bible promises that God will forever "dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel. (1 Kings 6:13). Should Christians have a bias for a pro-Israel position due to our religious conviction that the nation of Israel is God's covenant people? Does the nation of Israel have a special status with God in comparison to other nations? Should we expect the nation of Israel to be the agent of God's redemption plan today and/or in the future? Again, without mere "proof-texting," what biblical hermeneutic (method of interpreting the scripture) would you use to justify your answer?

NO!!!

Rom. 9:6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,
1Pet. 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

#4: Who Participates in Lord's Supper

- If a person has sinned, should they not participate in the Lord's Supper unless they have stopped sinning?

Yes???

Matt. 5:23-24

Christ taught in the "Sermon on the Mount" that "if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matt. 5:23-24). Does this mean that we should not partake of the Lord's Supper if there is any un-reconciled relationship in our lives? Again, without mere "proof-texting," what biblical hermeneutic (method of interpreting the scripture) would you use to justify your answer?

NO!!

Key: According to the gospel, the Lord's Supper by grace through faith not through works.. thus, confess-believe is condition, not stop sinning...

1Cor. 11:27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.

What is an unworthy manner?

28 Let a person examine himself... 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

E.g. Examine ourselves IN RELATION TO CHRIST'S SACRIFICE FOR OUR SINS!!

NOTE: EPH. 2:1-10

6) MORE on Covenantal Hermeneutic Applied!

What is a covenant?

1. It is a gracious condescension by God in order to establish a redemptive relationship with humanity that is based on objective terms objectively satisfied in order to preserve the gracious nature of human redemption in relationship with God. (WCF 7.1)

The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto Him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of Him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which He hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.

2. The Biblical Form of Covenant assumes the ancient Near Eastern (Hittite) Treaty context of its own era. c.f. Meredith Kline, "What is a Covenant" and Addendum "Covenant Treaty Format, Ancient Near Eastern Kingdoms.

AS illustrated by Meredith Kline in his The Treaty of the Great King, the following six covenant elements common to the Ancient Near East are perfectly reflected in a literary structure of Deuteronomy. There would have been:

- The Preamble: Wherein the treaty maker is named in a way to motivate respect and loyalty ("I am..." Dt. 1:1-5).
- The Historical Prologue: Wherein a survey of history relative to the great accomplishments of the treaty maker is presented in order to encourage respect and trust (Dt. 1:6-4:49).
- The Covenant Requisites: Wherein "laws" or "stipulations" themselves are presented as conditions relative to the reception of the covenant sanctions (Dt. 5-26).
- The Covenant Sanctions: Wherein a description of the curses or blessings is given related to either breaking or keeping the treaty respectively (Dt. 27-30).
- The Instructions Concerning Covenant Renewal and Succession: Wherein there were instructions about how then to utilize the treaty document itself is in so far as covenant renewal and safe keeping was concerned (Dt. 31-34).
- The Covenant Oath Ceremony: Wherein there is the oath ceremony itself wherein the two parties would take their vows in so far as a promising covenant faithfulness.

These same elements are likewise reflected in the literary framework of the Genesis-Exodus narrative of redemptive history. In poetic fashion,

- Genesis 1-2: 3 functions as the covenant preamble of the Mosaic covenant itself wherein the seventh day-framework names the great creator God as "sovereign King of Kings and Lord of Lords" over the lesser kings (day-frame 2, 4, 6) who rule over their related kingdom spheres (day-frames 1,3,5). As Meredith Kline describes it in his Kingdom Prologue, the covenant preamble of Genesis 1 presents a "pictorial framework of a Sabbath-crowned week whereby God identifies Himself as the one for whom all things are and were created, the Lord worthy to receive glory and honor and praise." That is, the first creation account is less "history" as it is poetic theology for the purpose of "naming" God as the covenant King within the Covenant Preamble.
- The first creation account is then followed by a second creation account presented as the first of ten histories that make up the historical prologue portion per the above description.

In Genesis 2:4 the first “history” itself is a redemptive historical sequence of “covenant making-covenant breaking-covenant keeping” by a promised penal substitute as received by faith. Adam’s faith is expressed most especially in the naming of his wife “Eve” as to anticipate the fulfillment of the promise concerning the savior born of the seed of a woman. Altogether the ten “histories” (or “generations”) tell the history of a sovereign God who elects some by grace vis-à-vis five “elect” lines of human history in contrast to the five non-elect lines of human history. The tenth “history” itself carries over to Exodus and God’s miraculous salvation of Israel from Egyptian slavery.

- Upon completion of the historical prologue, the covenant pattern is continued in Exodus 20 with the Covenant requisites, sanctions, covenant renewal instructions and oath ceremony vis-à-vis covenant sacrifices as to fill out the rest of Exodus and its instructions.

Moving into the prophet era, we discern how prophets are less foretellers of history (less than 2%) as they are often thought of as covenant executors. When they did prophesy about the future, it was almost always a mere application of the promised sanctions of the Mosaic covenant itself to the realities of Israel at the time. That is, a prophet by definition was a covenant executor wherein the “law” and “sanctions” portion of the covenant treaty was applied to the ground conditions of Israel. The prophets didn’t so much receive new revelation as pertaining to covenant stipulations, sanctions, and rites of covenant renewal as they received new revelation relative to the divine execution of these things into the fluid history of Israel. Sometimes they did this in the form of a covenant “lawsuit” (Is. 3:13-26; Hos. 3:3-17, etc).

For example, Isaiah and Hosea brought a covenant lawsuit against Israel in the 8th century BC, and both Jeremiah and Ezekiel brought a covenant lawsuit against Judea in the 6th century BC wherein each prophet addressed the generation on which the Covenant curses would fall. And so whether in the form of a covenant lawsuit or in the form of a covenant renewal oracle (such as in Amos 9:11-15), the focus was on “divine law” as expressed in the classic covenant treaty framework and grounded in the Mosaic covenant especially. Here again, so essential was the covenant orientation to pre-Christ redemptive history, we see how the book of Hosea was carefully patterned again after the classic covenant treaty format (c.f. Preamble: Chapter 1, Historical prologue: Chapters 2-3, Requisite stipulations: Chapters 2-7, 4. Sanctions: Chapters 8-9, Succession Arrangements: Chapters 10-14).

The Issue of Old and New: Two Covenants or One?

Covenant of Works (WCF 7.2) “Pre-Redemptive”

The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

Covenant of Grace (WCF 7.3-4) “Redemptive”

Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.

Hmmm... “second” as to scrap the first??

Or “second” as to in addition to the first in order to complet/satisfy the first?

Perhaps better: “Promise of Grace” which then maintains the importance of “works/obedience in gaining the blessings of the covenant -e.g. It is called by Paul a “promise” rather than a “covenant” in Gal.3:18 as related to God’s taking upon himself the obligations of the eternal treaty on behalf of humanity in the work of Christ!

Note Kline:

“The difference between the pre-redemptive and redemptive covenant is not then that the latter substitutes promise for law. The difference is rather that redemptive covenant adds promise to law. Redemptive covenant is simultaneously a promise administration of guaranteed blessings and a law administration of blessing dependent on obedience, with the

latter foundational. The weakness of the traditional designation, "Covenant of Works" for the pre-redemptive covenant is that it fails to take account of the continuity of the law principle in redemptive revelation and therefore is not a sufficiently distinctive term. The principles of "works" continues into redemptive covenant administration, not only in the sense already stressed that the blessings of redemption are secured by the works of a federal head who must satisfy the law's demands, but, in the sense, too, that none of the many represented by Christ attains to the promised consummation of the covenant's beatitude except he attains to that holiness without which man does not see God." (p.13-14)... "Coherence can be achieved in Covenant Theology only by the subordination of grace to law." (p.17) (Meredith Kline, "Law Covenant")

Key Interpretative Observation: The issue of who swears as the "guarantor" of the covenant:

le. Depending on who "swears," the covenant is "gracious-righteousness" vs. "works-righteousness."

"Every divine-human covenant in Scripture involves a sanction-sealed commitment to maintain a particular relationship or follow a stipulated course of action. In general then a covenant may be defined as a relationship under sanctions." (p.3)... "It is this swearing of the ratificatory oath that provides an identification mark by which we can readily distinguish in the divine covenants of Scripture between a law covenant and one of promise. For it is evident that if God swears the oath of the ratification ceremony, that particular covenantal transaction is one of promise, whereas if man is summoned to swear the oath, the particular covenant thus ratified is one of law. " (p.3-4) (p.5) Meredith Kline, "Law Covenant")

- Compare then the First Adam's failed oath (Gen 1 to the Second Adam (succeeded)
 - the first recorded covenant "oath" is located in the marriage of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:23ff.
 - Adam's oath (bone of my bones) wherein he consigns himself to the responsibility of guaranteeing the marriage success. These words constituted a solemn oath of covenant faithfulness based upon the union of covenant solidarity
 - That the phrase is a standard covenantal oath in the ancient near eastern context is demonstrated by the use of the exact same phrase "bone of my bones" in other oath taking ceremonies such as in Genesis 29:14. (See also the use of this formula in Judges 9:2, 2 Samuel 19:12-13).
 - And we also discern how Adam's marriage with Eve is explicitly related to the human-divine "marriage covenant" evidenced by Paul's use of Genesis 2:23 in Eph. 5:31 saying this is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church (vs. 32).
 - Adam's failure and a movement from "naked and not ashamed" to "naked and ashamed involving cover up.
 - Christ, depicted as second Adam, assumes the burden of covenant guarantor per Romans 5
 - Romans 5, Paul explicitly introduces us to the eternal typifying nature of Adam as the covenant guarantor in a way that is then being satisfied in Christ by way of substitution. The whole logic assumes a legal-objective transaction FOR us, even if entirely outside of us in the subjective sense. We notice first of all the "just as.. so" logic being applied to the conclusion that what Adam failed to do as the first covenant guarantor, Christ did(c.f. 5:12-20).¹ In Romans 5:18, Paul explains,
 - Therefore, just as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.
 - And the result of this legal transaction as entirely based on "law" is really amazing! Paul will conclude with a grace so radical it is almost unbelievable (see the objection in Romans 6:1) for he says, based upon this entirely

¹ Of course, this succession principle of headship is demonstrated throughout redemptive history (Ex. 34:1-9, 27-28 for instance).

objective and legal transaction, “so that where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more!” (5:20)

- And the explicit reference of Christ as “second Adam/husband” in Romans 7
Or do you not know... speaking to those who know the law... that a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage... Likewise, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may be married to another.
- Compare also the Abrahamic Promise in Gen. 15 where oath is taken by God (flaming torch) vs. where oath is taken by people (Ex. 19) Note also the oath of man in Gen. 2:23ff vs. the promise oath of God in Gen. 3. 14ff)

C.f Paul’s discussion in Galatians— Promise is added to law and can’t then be annulled by Law...

Gal. 3:15-17 Brothers and sisters, I give an example from daily life: once a person's will has been ratified, no one adds to it or annuls it. 16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring; it does not say, “And to offsprings,” as of many; but it says, “And to your offspring,” that is, to one person, who is Christ. 17 My point is this: the law, which came four hundred thirty years later, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. 18 For if the inheritance comes from the law, it no longer comes from the promise; but God granted it to Abraham through the promise.

II. The Principle of Continuity and Discontinuity Explained)

1. First, the “Big Picture” (c.f. Review Diagrams in Addendum, “A Summary of the Covenants by Brian Lee)
 1. Creation Covenant-- Informed by the principle of works between God and humanity of which humanity failed.
 2. Redemption Covenant -- the eternal agreement between the Father and the Son of the Holy Trinity in order to save the elect from humanity, still informed by the principle of works, albeit the works of Christ on behalf of the elect.
 3. Abrahamic Covenant-- The promise of Grace initially given to Adam after the fall is predicated upon the redemption covenant between the Father and the Son as was ratified explicitly in the Abrahamic covenant bases upon justification by faith. The gracious principle is emphasized as ultimately related to the promise given to Abraham concerning a multi-national, multi-ethnic redeemed community as was recorded in Genesis 15. Here, it is God himself who is bound by oath to fulfill his promise. And yet, the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant would be both typological as in the land given to Israel, but ultimately in the heavenly inheritance given to all true believers.
 4. Typological Covenants meant to typify (foreshadow) the redemption covenant that would be accomplished by Christ whereby, as informed by the principle of works, temporal blessings and curses are predicated upon various "works" stipulations.
 1. Noahic Covenant-- although Noah was saved by grace through faith-- his temporal salvation was conditioned upon his obedience.
 2. Mosaic Covenant-- again, although Moses was saved by grace as was typified by the temple/sacrificial system itself, the nations of Israel, as a geo-political theocracy, was either blessed or cursed as a nation based upon works. The Mosaic context was ethnic specific as related to temporal prosperity or curse based on works (note Israel's pledge of performance in Ex.24:7).
- The Telos Fulfillment in Christ-- Christ fulfills the ultimate purpose of all previous typological covenants in continuity with Abraham albeit mediated through new administrative means of grace(see ordinance chart). The Church becomes the "new Israel" (see The Israel of God in Prophecy, LaRondelle). The royal, priestly nation is not multi-ethnic as spiritual vs. temporal, albeit visibly manifest by the three defining marks of the church in her prophetic, priestly and kingly aspects in the present age.
- The now/not yet completion of redemption whereby in the present age, the kingdom of

God has been inaugurated and completely secured by the work of Christ, but it is not yet fully completed in that we live in the "last days" as the church under discipline/humiliation awaiting her final exaltation/glorification when Christ returns. I.e. We are presently living within tribulation out of which is built the kingdom of God.

Important Observations Summarized: (c.f. diagrams)

- Covenant of Creation and the "Works" Principle: (see earlier)
 - Subsequent Covenants of Work Typologized in TEMPORAL (Geo/political) terms.
 - i. Noatic
 - ii. Mosaic
 - Subsequent Promise of Grace Added and Mediated through Typological Rituals
 - i. Clothing Ritual (Gen 3)
 - ii. Abrahamic Blood Ritual Gen 15)
 - iii. Temple Sacrifice Ritual (Exodus)
 - Fulfillment In Christ—e.g .Mt. 5:17ff, Hebrews
Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets, I did not come to destroy but to fulfill...not one jot or one tittle will be passed from the law till all is fulfilled...
 - i. "Saved by Works Fulfilled"
 - ii. Saved by Grace through Faith Alone in Christ"
2. III. Covenant in Redemptive History APPLIED! (The Principle of Discontinuity and Continuity Applied)
e.g. A General Review Illustrated by Paul's Argument in Galatians and the WCF Consensus:
That we should expect BOTH continuity and discontinuity between the covenants is clear if by a very simple comparison of the following two passage taken from the same New Testament book of Galatians.

1. Continuity:

Gal. 3:7-9 so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you." For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed.

Principle of Continuity in WCF ("covenant of grace" differently administered) (WCF 7:5)

- One Church under different administrations (Rom. 9:1ff)
- One Promise fulfilled in Christ (Gal 3:7-9)
- "Moral law" as a rule of faith and practice still (WCF 19:6, yet...
- Temple, albeit administered differently (Eph. 2, c.f Sabbath (7th to 1st) , entrance rite (circumcision to baptism,(renewal rite: Sacrificial system to Lord's supper
- Note then WCF summary in 7.4-6)
 - fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory,
 - yet, in them, it is held forth in more fullness, evidence and spiritual efficacy, to all nations.

Some Aspects of Continuity:

- Salvation by Grace through Faith Alone
WCF 7.4: This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in Scripture by the name of a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the Testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.
WCF 7.6 ... There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations.
WCF 11.6 The justification of believers under the old testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the new testament.
c.f. Above Illus. in Galatians, also Romans 4

Not Law vs. Gospel!

- NOT: Law vs. Gospel corresponding to Old and New Respectively.

- RATHER, Law/Gospel in Temporal Typifying Aspects vs. Law/Gospel in Eternal/Spiritual fulfilled in Christ
- A Salvation of Mediated “Presence” (Temple Theology) (C.F. Preston Graham Jr, A Sacramental Theology of the Gospel, in *The Assembling of Ourselves Together*, ed. John Vance (2005) (later)
 - WCF 7.5 This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing Christ to come; which were, for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the old Testament.
 - NOT Temple vs. No Temple:
 - Rather, *Geo-political temple of specific nation vs. non-geo-political temple “no distinction” and in the socio-cultural form of the people according to apostolic foundation...*

In the language of Thomas Torrance, the church is nothing less than “Christ’s “vis-à-vis in history!” In the Old Testament, it is the church of God’s presence in the temple of Creation, Bethel and Jerusalem. In the New Testament, it is the church of God’s presence linked to the ascended ministry of Christ acting through the Holy Spirit given at Pentecost and the formation of the New Covenant temple, even the church of a living God. So then, for instance, Thomas Torrance has remarked how “we cannot pay too much attention to the fact that the Holy Spirit was sent upon the church after the crucifixion, resurrection and the ascension of Christ. In that series Pentecost belongs as one of the mighty salvation events, and to that series the parousia will belong as the last.”² Applied then to the ministry of the church, Torrance continues:

The spirit operates by creating out of the word a body that St. Paul calls the Body of Christ.... It is the sphere where through the presence of the Spirit the salvation-events of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension are operative here and now in history, the sphere wherever within the old creation the new creation has broken in with power.”³

God’s salvation of a people is first and foremost not presented as a logically ordered series of propositions, or merely as stories about the existential and personal quests for meaning on the part of individuals. God’s salvation of a people is revealed by a unified corporate history, one that is most essentially about God in the midst of His people-- a corporate fellowship with God! As such Leslie Newbigin remarks how

The Bible is not the story of ideas about God, but the story of the people of God...the gospel does not come to each of us in isolation. It comes to us through a particular book and through a particular fellowship... it is a false spirituality, divorced from the whole teaching of the Bible which regards this visible and continuing church as of subordinate importance for the life of Christ... God meets us through his people here and now in the form of an actual invitation into the fellowship of a body of people calling themselves one Church?⁴

The gospel according to Paul is not a transition from temple to “no temple” as some would have it. In this regard, Paul’s teaching for us under the New Covenant is no

² T. F. Torrance, *Royal Priesthood*, (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd LTD, 1955), p. 23.

³ *Ibid*, p.23.

⁴ Leslie Newbigin, *The Reunion of the Church*, (NY, NY: Harper & Row, 1948)p. 27, 29

different than the prophetic teaching under the Old Covenant, that salvation is described with the promise "I will dwell with them" (2 Cor. 6:16). This is also Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 3, even as Richard Hayes has observed,

Paul dares to assert [that] the community is the place where God dwells. "Do you not know," he asks, "that you [plural] are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you [plural]?" (3:16). To read this last sentence as though it spoke of the Spirit dwelling in the body of the individual Christian would be to miss the force of Paul's audacious metaphor: the apostolically founded community takes the place of the Jerusalem temple as the place where the glory of God resides.⁵

NT, see below temple"

- A Salvation Mediated in Prophetic, Priestly and Kingly Aspects corresponding to "Word (Confessionalism), Ritual Worship (Sacramentalism), Governed Covenant Community (Communalism)
WCF 7.6 Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance, was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory, yet, in them, it is held forth in more fullness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the new Testament. There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations.

Continuity in Presence/Sacramental Spirituality albeit different form:

As Mediatorial Priest:

- From Sabbath—7th day to 1st (Hebrews)
Acts 20:7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread,
Heb. 4:9 So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God,
Heb. 10:25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.
- Converting/entrance Sacrament: circumcision to baptism (note same meaning-- 2 Peter 3:5-7 and 1 Peter 3:18-22
Col 2:9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. 11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.
- Renewing/Confirmation Sacrament:
Luke 22:13 And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover. 14 And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. 15 And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. 18 For I tell you that from now on I will

⁵ Richard B. Hayes, *Ecclesiology and Ethics in 1 Corinthians*, (located on the web.) N.p.

not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” 19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

- As Mediatorial King: From 2 Office Sanhedrin to Two Office Eldership (1Tim 3:1ff, 5:17) 1Tim. 5:17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. c.f. 1P 5:1ff

2. Discontinuity:

Gal. 3:15-17 Brothers and sisters, I give an example from daily life: once a person's will has been ratified, no one adds to it or annuls it. 16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring; it does not say, “And to offsprings,” as of many; but it says, “And to your offspring,” that is, to one person, who is Christ. 17 My point is this: the law, which came four hundred thirty years later, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. 18 For if the inheritance comes from the law, it no longer comes from the promise; but God granted it to Abraham through the promise.

Principle of Discontinuity in WCF:

- No longer under the law (works righteousness principle) as temporal “covenant” (Mosaic) or even as a eternal covenant (Creation)
 - E.g. Temporal (Geo.Political works-righteousness conditioned) vs. Eternal (Heavenly faith-righteousness conditioned) (Gal 3:19-29 “no longer Nation “Jew” vs. “Greek”, Gal 4:1ff—not according to “elemental spirits” (seasons, etc),
 - E.g. Fulfillment Motif: Shadows/Types vs. Real/Antitype (Mt. 5:17, Heb. 10:1ff “only a shadow”...) WCF

Explanation:

1. Whatever the “law” is for Paul, it was that which came after the covenant made with Abraham and not such as to annul that previous covenant. I.e. For Paul, the “law” (nomos) was exclusively used in reference to the covenant transacted through Moses whereby “old” covenant references “previous to present/new covenant.” As we shall see, it will be a great mistake then to equate “law” as Paul uses it with merely “works,” although there was most certainly a “works” aspect to the “law” which related to the benefits and curses of the old covenant, especially in a typological application with respect to the benefits of land, etc. I.e. Paul’s “law” is a covenantal term, less a term that describes “works” vs. “grace.” For Paul, “law” is synonymous with “Sinai Covenant.”

2. There is something relative to the Mosaic covenant that has ceased, but not so as to annul the Abrahamic covenant that was according to Paul kept in tact in the Mosaic covenant. This is also illustrated by the author of Hebrews:

Heb. 10:1 Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who approach. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased being offered, since the worshipers, cleansed once for all, would no longer have any consciousness of sin? 3 But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin year after year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. 5 Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; 6 in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. 7 Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’ (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).” 8 When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), 9 then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. 10 And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all

See also Romans 7:1-6

Note: Other Biblical Support For Understanding the Sinai Covenant In A Typological Way

1. The nation, land and people as numerous as sand are typologically fulfilled under the covenant of Moses

1 Kings 4:20-21-- note that Abraham is the Father of Israel, Abraham's blessing is typified in Israel's favored status as sovereignly chosen out from other nations as a "holy nation."

2. Mosaic covenant "typifies" the "covenant of creation based upon the meritorious actions of representative Adam in that all the temporal blessings of land, national status and covenant membership is based upon the principle of works. (See also Galatians

3. Mosaic covenant "typifies" the covenant with Abraham in that a sacrificial substitute is being offered. (Lev.16:13-15)

4. Mosaic covenant retains the "sign" of circumcision

5. Mosaic covenant was self-consciously "temporal" as in Dt.4:1, Dt. 18:15-16.

6. Mosaic covenant "typified" the New Covenant in continuity with Abrahamic...

Acts 3:22 (Dt.18:15-16)-- Moses declared the coming of another lawgiver like unto himself (See then Rom.10:5-8)

1. The Nation of Israel is the church in NT(Rom.9:6-8)

2. The Land of Israel is Heaven in the NT (Heb12:22-24)

3. People of nations is the 'assembly of the first born" (Heb.12:23) the "remnant and the sands of the sea" (Rom.9:27)

4. The veil guarding entrance into the "holy of holies" and the symbolic presence of God-- which contained an embroidered picture of the cherubim with swords) is torn upon in NC (Heb.10:19-20)

5. Christ become the once and for all substitute for the propitiation of God's wrath against sin(Heb.9:23ff)

6. Christ become the one typified by one like Moses (Rom.10:5-8) so as to circumcise the heart. (Dt.9:4, 30:11-14)

7. Baptism, as a sign of judgment replaces circumcision (Col.2:11ff)

8. The Lord's Day, as the day of New creation, replaces the "sabbath" as instituted in Creation... I.e. a return to the presence of God as through the sword of God's judgment...

9. The Old Covenant (typological/temporal under Moses) is no longer operative.

Therefore, the Mosaic covenant (old in relation to the new) is in discontinuity with new covenant along geo-political lines but in continuity with respect to the shared Abrahamic line. (See chart)

1. Discontinuity with temporal aspects of the Mosaic law-- Gal.2:19, 3:24, 4:21ff

2. Continuity with the promisory aspects from the line of Seth through Abrahamic through Mosaic to Christ (Gal.3:14-18)

So here is the principle that will unlock the mystery of continuity and discontinuity. There is in short a temporal aspect to the Mosaic covenant that has ceased, even as there is an eternal aspect of the Mosaic covenant in continuity with the promise made to Abraham and even Adam before him that is fulfilled by Christ. For when God promised a "seed" who would guarantee the creation covenant stipulation on behalf of the elect, this was again ratified to Abraham in the covenant rite of the slain animals. This promise did not annul the creation covenant based upon works, it merely added to this creation covenant the promise of substitution whereby God's grace would be revealed so as to be in harmony with his justice. We should not then think in terms of "covenant of grace" vs. "covenant of works"-- rather we should think in terms of a COVENANT between God and humanity, a covenant that we have broken by our willful disobedience such as to deserve the curse of the covenant. This covenant was never annulled. Rather God added to the covenant a promise to meet its demands on behalf of those chose by his sovereign grace.

The Relation Between Obedience and Temporal Well-being

A. The "Natural" Relation: Since God created the world in a particular manner, and each part of the created order for specific purposes, there are, as it were, "natural" consequences to certain behaviors. Totally apart from any miraculous intervention on God's part, certain behaviors tend to have certain consequences.

Examples:

1. Slothful people do not achieve as much as hard-working people.

2. A soft answer turns away wrath.

3. People who are indiscreet find that others will not confide in them.

Note that these are “natural” relations. In terms of human nature, and the nature of the created order, we are created to labor, and those who labor reap (ordinarily) the fruit of their labor, whereas the indolent have nothing to show for their indolence. Similarly, it is just human nature that the raised voice tends to increase interpersonal tension, whereas the softer, moderated voice tends to dispel tension. Again, it is just “natural” that indiscrete people find that others do not trust them.

B. The Sinai Relation: God instituted a particular covenant at Mount Sinai. As part of that covenant, God instituted a special relation between obedience on the one hand, and temporal prosperity in the land of Canaan, on the other hand.

1. “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.”

2. “And if you will obey my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, he will give rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. And he will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you shall eat and be full. Take heed lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, and the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and he shut up the heavens, so that there be no rain, and the land yield no fruit, and you perish quickly off the good land which the Lord gives you....Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day, and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you this day” (Dt. 11:13-17, 26-28).

3. See the lengthy description in Deuteronomy 28

Note that there is no “natural” relation between rain and obedience, or draught and disobedience. God pledges here to intervene supernaturally, miraculously, if you will, in Israel’s history in Canaan. He pledges to withdraw rain if Israel is disobedient, and to bless with rain if she is obedient.

C. The New Covenant Relation: There is no longer a holy land or a holy people (at least not in the geo-political sense; the church is both international and intra-national), and there are no special covenant blessings/cursings related to temporal prosperity in a given land. In fact, following the example of Christ and the apostles, there appears to be, if anything, an inverse relation between faithfulness and temporal prosperity. Saints in the New Covenant “fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ” (Col 1:24), they intend to know Christ, not only in the power of his resurrection, but also “in the fellowship of his suffering, becoming like him in his death” (Phil. 3:10).

D. The Sacrilege Relation: It appears that, across covenant-history, God often vindicates his own honor by visiting special curses against profound acts of sacrilege by his visible covenant community (e.g. Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5, and the believers being made ill at Corinth for their abuse of the Lord’s Supper).

E. Divine Discipline- Not necessary directly related suffering as consequence to sin per se (e.g. not one to one correlation), but divine providence wherein we are awakened to our spiritual brokenness and need for Christ and God renewing grace and where God’s grace is shown sufficient over what we thought would bring us happiness. (Heb 12, 2 Cor 4:16, 2 Cor 12:9)

Summary: A Covenantal Reorientation in Method:

1. We will want to interpret Scripture by scripture in its organic unity: The entire counsel of God’s word must take the whole story into account at all times! Again, reading the Bible backwards much like a novel.

The pervasive meaning of Scripture should be brought to bear on any single portion. Biblical revelation is self-elucidating because it has an organic, unified structure. (R. Gaffin, p.xviii)

2. God’s revelation IS God known vis-à-vis redemptive history such that biblical interpretation must be the interpretation of redemption history.

“God’s word invariably has his redemptive deeds for its subject matter. Indeed, apart from redemption revelation has nothing to say, ‘it would be suspended in the air.’

Revelation is a function of redemption.” Gaffin, quoting Vos, p.xvi, (from Biblical Theology,p.24)

“The burden of biblical theology is to orient biblical interpretation to the history of redemption in a pointed and programmatic fashion. Revelation has its structure and serves its (undeniably multiple and diverse) functions as the progressive attestation and interpretation of the ongoing work of redemption. Any theological reflection basing itself on biblical interpretation must recognize and work from out of this redemptive-historical framework.” (Gaffin, p.xx)

1. Step One: To relate the text to its immediate covenantal context.

- How does the passage fit into the Covenant Treaty Framework (see below) and how would this inform the use of the passage in its original context
- Who is God’s representative “covenant guarantor” acting IN OFFICE as God’s mediatorial presence and how then does this inform the way the text is presenting the key players in the narrative (e.g. Judge acting as second Moses, pre-David... forshadowing of Christ such that “how you treat judge is how you treat God... etc.)
- What are the typological aspects of the covenantal context that need to be translated into covenant fulfillment in Christ as toward the search “for a better country”(Heb 11)
- What patterns of a geo-political nature translate to a spiritual nature
 - Cycles of Sin/Renewal applied in OT to nationalism now applied to church
 - Holy War translated into spiritual warfare, Etc.
 - Sanctions/Curses/Blessings realized “in Christ” etc.

2. Step Two: To understand the text in light of God's total revelation especially as ultimately revealed in the New Covenant.

- How does law lead to grace
- How is Christ both the covenant guarantor and head of the church

2. God's revelation unfolds over time through successive "covenant" makings that reach a climax and fulfillment in Jesus. (Lk 24, Epistles)

3. Different stages account for different covenant circumstances that must be taken into account (Eternal Typifying (OC) vs. Eternal Spirituality (NC) See below the issues of continuity vs. discontinuity within an otherwise single redemptive historical narrative.

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Conclusion: How would you answer the introductory questions NOW?

INTERPRETIVE KEYS:

#1: Holy War?

John 18:36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”

2Cor. 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

Eph. 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

c.f. Revelations

#2: Health/Wealth?

2Cor. 4:16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is **wasting away**, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

2Cor. 12:9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Romans 5:3-5 ... we exalt in hope of the glory of God, and not only this, but we also exalt in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Romans 8:18-25 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ... For in Hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

1 Peter 1:6-7: In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in the praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 12:5-11ff: ... All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

James 5:15 And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

#3: Israel?

Rom. 9:6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,

1Pet. 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

#4: Revival of nations?

Rom. 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewal** of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and **renewal** of the Holy Spirit,

#5: Leave the altar - is this about the Lord's supper or OT application to exasperate Jews to Faith?

Note: According to the gospel, the Lord's Supper by grace through faith:

1Cor. 11:27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.

What is an unworthy manner?

28 Let a person examine himself,
(with respect to what- our good works or faith in Christ?)

.29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

e.g. whose Body of sacrifice—ours, or Christ's?

#6: Give to the Poor to be saved- (works-righteousness)

Eph. 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace

you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

#7: Temple:

Mt 16:17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”
Eph 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.
1Cor. 3:16 Do you not know that you (pl) are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.

8: Laws to no laws/codes?

Eph. 4:17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, ... 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.... (proceeds to review the 10 commandments in Christ)

#9: Christ in the Old Testament?

- Adam
- Patriarchs (c.f. Jacob, Joseph etc)
- Moses
- Levitical Priesthood and Temple architecture and design itself
- Judges
- David
- Wisdom and Psalms (personification)
- Prophetic Servant (Isaiah)
- Apocalyptic “son of man” (Daniel)’,... Etc. etc. etc.