

## INTRODUCTION TO COVENANT THEOLOGY

*The Bible is a covenant book, and to be read well it needs to be read covenantally. Have you ever noticed that “covenant” is written on the title pages of the two parts of your Bible? They read: “Old Testament” and “New Testament.” Testamentum is a Latin word for covenant. How did that title get there? The earliest Christians saw a big chunk of the history of God’s people as divided up between the old covenant (that God made with Moses before Israel entered the promised land) and the new covenant (which was accomplished by Christ). (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/covenant-theology/>)*

### **DEFINITION OF A COVENANT:**

*When considering the category of covenant, an obvious question emerges: What is a covenant? In Scripture, a covenant is a binding relationship among parties that involves both blessings and obligations (e.g., [Josh. 9:3–21](#)). In many ways, marriage is a good example of a covenant relationship. Marriage is a relationship to which both parties are solemnly committed, and that relationship brings both blessings and obligations to husband and to wife. Stated differently, a covenant is a relationship within parameters.*

*If a covenant is a relationship within parameters, what is covenant theology? Covenant theology seeks to use the biblically prominent covenants to inform our knowledge of God and of His work. Specifically, covenant theology contends that God has been working throughout history to gather His people to Himself through covenantal relationship. (<https://tabletalkmagazine.com/posts/what-is-covenant-theology-2/>)*

### **OBJECTIONS TO COVENANT THEOLOGY:**

"Word concept fallacy"

Words or phrases not found in Scripture:

- Great Commission
- epistemology
- theology
- omnipotence,
- omnipresence
- omniscience
- aseity
- incomprehensibility
- providence

- theodicy
- Christology
- hypostatic

These are "descriptor" words. They describe large portions of scripture categories in one word. Covenant theology is simply a way to look at Scripture and categorize its meaning.

## TRI-COVENANTALISM

Tri-covenantalism is a way to describe how the Bible is structured to help us better understand the meaning of the text.

### Tri-Covenatalism:

- Covenant of Redemption
- Covenant of Works
- Covenant of Grace

## COVENANT OF REDEMPTION

(The Pactum Solutis)

*Simply stated, the covenant of redemption is a covenant God the Father made with God the Son before the foundation of the world was laid, that if the Son would offer Himself up as an offering for sin, the Father would give Christ all those for whom He would die as a love gift. The elect, then, are a gift from the Father to the Son for suffering and dying to redeem them.*

*God the Father chose from all eternity past, in His eternal and unchangeable decrees, to save some people. God the Son, from all eternity past, agreed to redeem those people from the fallen state that God ordained, from all eternity past, they would be in. If you ask why God ordained the fall of man and the sinful state into which he would go, the answer is that God ordained sin so that we would know Him in the fullness of His revelation of Himself. If God had not ordained sin, we would know Him only as the Creator; because God has ordained sin we can know Him as the Redeemer. Our knowledge of God is much more complete because of sin.*

*(<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/redemption-planned>)*

### Verses to demonstrate COR:

*John 17:6 ¶ "I have manifested your name to the people whom **you gave me** out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.*

*Heb. 12:2 looking to Jesus, the **founder** and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

*1Pet. 1:20 He was **foreknown** before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you*

*Eph. 1:4 even as he chose us in him before the **foundation** of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love*

*Eph. 1:5 he **predestined** us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,*

*2Tim. 1:9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own **purpose** and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,*

*Rev. 21:27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

## COVENANT OF WORKS

Biblical Argument for a Covenant of Works:

### Introduction to COW

Genesis 1-3

- Adam was given a set of agreements
- Adam was promised a set of outcomes
  - Eat of the forbidden fruit and die
  - What if he didn't eat?

Is Genesis 1-3 the only place that talks about the covenant of works and its nature?

### Used as an example:

Hos. 6:7 ¶ But like Adam they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me.

### Identified by Jesus:

John 17:4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

### What is the work Jesus is referencing?

#### Biblical concept: *Federal Headship*

One person who represents a larger group. What would be some examples?

#### Adam as federal head for all of humanity:

*Rom. 5:12 ¶ Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—*

*1Cor. 15:21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.*

*1Cor. 15:22 For as in Adam all die*

#### Christ as the federal head of God's elect:

*1Cor. 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*

*1Cor. 15:21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.*

*Rom. 5:18 ¶ Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.*

*Rom. 5:19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

Paul identifies Jesus' obedience as the reason why we are declared righteous.

### **What did Jesus earn for us? GLORY!**

*Rom. 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

*Heb. 2:10 ¶ For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.*

*In conclusion, in the Covenant of Works God delegated dominion over Eden to Adam through covenant, making him a king of that realm. God established Adam's federal headship, His laws of obedience, His promises of reward, and His threats of curse through a Covenant of Works. The Covenant of Works was designed to take creation to consummation. Eden would extend until there is no distinction between the temple of God's presence and the cosmos. Creation would have been filled with a holy and righteous seed, working to the glory of God in a crescendo of progress and praise. The Covenant of Works, therefore, established and governed the kingdom of creation. And because Adam broke the Covenant of Works, all creation remains governed, and thus cursed, by the Covenant of Works. It is the inescapable government and reality of human existence. God, however, promised deliverance from this curse, and what follows is a major step towards that deliverance.*

*Samuel Renihan, The Mystery of Christ His Covenant and His Kingdom*

## **COVENANT OF GRACE**

### **Definition:**

*The covenant of grace is the means by which God gave eternal life to men after the fall; it brings together all the elect of all times. This covenant is introduced by the confession [1689 LBCF chapter 6] at paragraph 2:*

*Moreover, man having brought himself under the curse of the law by his fall, it pleased the Lord to make a 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.*

*The covenant of grace is, simply put, salvation by grace alone, by faith alone, through Christ alone. Basically, any man is either under the curse of the broken covenant of works in Adam or under the blessing of the covenant of grace in Christ.*

Quote from: *From the Covenant of Works to the Covenant of Grace*

<https://founders.org/2017/04/26/from-the-covenant-of-works-to-the-covenant-of-grace/>

## TRACING COVENANT OF GRACE THROUGH BIBLICAL HISTORY

### 1) The Seed of Eve (Gen 3:15)

*Gen. 3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."*

### 2) From Abraham (Gen 12, 15, & 17)

*Gen. 12:1 ¶ Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.*

*Gen. 12:2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.*

*Gen. 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

### 3) From David (2 Samuel 7; 1 Chron 17:11-14; 2 Chron 6:16)

*In Genesis 17:6 and 16, God promised Abraham and Sarah, and later to Isaac, that kings would come from them. This promise was narrowed down to the tribe of Judah when Jacob blessed his sons. The scepter would not depart from Judah. A covenant that establishes a kingship in Israel is therefore a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham and a direct development of the kingdom of Israel.*

*(Renihan, Samuel. The Mystery of Christ, His Covenant, and His Kingdom (p. 151). Founders Press. Kindle Edition.)*

*2Chr. 6:16 Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, 'You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk in my law as you have walked before me.'*

### 4) Clarified by the Prophets (Jeremiah 31:31-34;

*Jer. 31:31 ¶ "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,*

*Jer. 31:32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.*

*Jer. 31:33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

*Jer. 31:34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."*

*Ezek. 36:26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*

*Ezek. 36:27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

## 5) Fulfilled in Jesus, the Christ

*Matt. 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*

*Matt. 1:2 ¶ Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,*

*Heb. 9:15 ¶ Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.*

## The New Covenant and Baptism:

### NEXT CLASS READING:

#### 1) Articles/Videos

- a. <https://theocast.org/intro-to-law-and-gospel-distinction/>
- b. <https://theocast.org/intro-to-three-uses-of-the-law/>
- c. <https://theocast.org/is-the-law-relevant-today/>
- d. <https://www.wscal.edu/blog/basics-of-the-reformed-faith-the-law-and-the-gospel>
- e. <https://founders.org/articles/the-lawgospel-contrast/>

### READING RECOMMENDATIONS:

Book:

The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel (American Lutheran Classics) by [C.F.W. Walther](#) (Author)

Law and Gospel: A Theology for Sinners (and Saints) by [William McDavid](#) (Author), [Ethan Richardson](#) (Author), [David Zahl](#) (Author)