

# Biblical Worldview-American Covenant & Its Impact

## *Assertion of The Question of The System of Government in America*

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### I. THE CONCEPT OF THE AMERICAN COVENANT

The topic of an American Covenant is a significant aspect of American history, particularly relevant in discussions about the United States as a "Christian nation" and within "Fundamental Conservative Evangelical Christian" circles. According to scholar Os Guinness, nations can be categorized by three types of founding: **Organic** (clans, tribes), **Hierarchical** (empires, conquests), and **Covenantal**. The American Covenant theory places the United States in the latter category, alongside ancient Israel, as a nation established by God.

#### Definition and Terms

The American Covenant is defined as a national agreement or contract that God established with America. This belief holds that God created and called the nation and its citizens to be unique and to follow His commands. The terms of this covenant are conditional:

- **Obedience:** If the citizens adhere to the covenant, the nation will experience freedom and prosperity.
- **Disobedience:** If the citizens neglect or reject the covenant, the nation will face divine punishment and judgment from God.

The essential elements required of the citizens under this perceived covenant are:

- To acknowledge Almighty God.
- To obey His will.
- To be grateful for His blessings.
- To humbly seek His aid and protection.

A modern expression of this belief is captured by Glenn Beck in his "Restoring Hope" address: *"...God loves all lands but there is something special about this one, and our founders knew that. The pilgrims knew that. They thought they were completing the trip that the Israelites made when they first crossed the Red Sea. But to have this land, as rich as it is with everything that is abundant in this land, only a good and righteous people could possess it..."*

#### Historical Basis and Evidence

**The Mayflower Compact (1620)** The signatories pledge to *"solemnly and mutually, in the Presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick."*

**John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" (1630)** Winthrop explicitly uses covenantal language to describe the Puritan mission in the New World: *"...We are entered into covenant with him for this work... now if the Lord shall please to hear us and bring us in*

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*peace to the place we desire, then have he ratified this covenant and sealed our Commission and will expect a strict performance of the articles contained in it but if we shall neglect the observation of these articles... the Lord will surely break out and wrath against us; be revenged of such a [sinful] people and make us know the price of the breach of such a covenant..."*

**He further warns of the consequences of failure, famously invoking the "city upon a hill" metaphor:** "...For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God and his work we have undertaken... we shall be made a story in a by-word through the world."

**Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (1639)** This early constitution asserts that its purpose is to establish "an orderly and decent Government established according to God" to "maintain and preserve the liberty and purity of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus."

### George Washington

**Day of Humiliation Order (May 17, 1776):** As General, Washington commanded his forces to observe a day of "fasting, humiliation and prayer, humbly to supplicate the mercy of Almighty God, that it would please him to pardon all our manifold sins and transgressions, and to prosper the Arms of the United Colonies."

**First Inaugural Address (1789):** Washington's speech is filled with references to divine providence and the link between national virtue and divine favor.

## II. BIBLICAL ANALYSIS OF COVENANTS

### The Nature of a Biblical Covenant

The Hebrew word for covenant, *bereeth*, appears 284 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. It signifies an agreement, alliance, or contract between two parties with binding stipulations. While covenants can be made between humans, the analysis focuses on those initiated by God with humankind.

| Covenant  | Initiator | Recipient(s)                                      | Key Terms & Benefits                                                                                                          | Sign / Solidification      | Scripture Reference |
|-----------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Noahic    | God       | Noah, his descendants, and every living creature. | God promises never again to destroy all flesh by a flood.                                                                     | The rainbow in the clouds. | Genesis 9:8-17      |
| Abrahamic | God       | Abraham and his descendants.                      | God promises to make Abraham the father of a multitude of nations, give his descendants the land of Canaan, and be their God. | Circumcision.              | Genesis 17:1-14     |

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|---------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Mosaic</b>       | God | The nation of Israel, via Moses. | Israel will be God's own possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, <i>if</i> they obey His voice and keep His covenant. | The sprinkling of blood.                  | Exodus 19:1-8, 24:8 |
| <b>Phinehasic</b>   | God | Phinehas and his descendants.    | God gives Phinehas a "covenant of peace" and a perpetual priesthood for his zeal.                                                 | Divine promise.                           | Numbers 25:10-13    |
| <b>Davidic</b>      | God | David, his house, and Israel.    | God promises to establish David's kingdom and throne forever through his descendants.                                             | The promise of an heir from David's line. | 2 Samuel 7:10-16    |
| <b>New Covenant</b> | God | The house of Israel and Judah.   | God will forgive their iniquity, remember their sin no more, and write His law on their hearts.                                   | The fixed order of celestial bodies.      | Jeremiah 31:31-34   |

### III. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

#### The Missing Divine Initiative

The foundational element of every biblical covenant is that God initiates it, either appearing directly or speaking through a prophet. He then dictates the terms, parties, and signs.

- There is no historical record in American history where God appeared to the American people collectively or by means of a prophet to establish a covenant.
- Consequently, there is no record of God initiating specific details or outlining specific outcomes (blessings and curses) for America. No divine sign was given to underscore such an agreement.

The Apostle Paul, in Romans 9:1-5, reinforces the unique covenantal relationship God has with Israel: *"...who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises..."*

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### The Distinction of Theological Economies

A crucial theological point is the distinction between the "economy of Law" and the "economy of grace."

- All biblical covenants were established in the **economy of Law**.
- America was founded in 1776, an era under the **economy of grace**.
- Therefore, the framework of national blessings and curses tied to a conditional covenant, as applied to Israel, is not applicable to any nation in the current era.

### IV. FINAL CONCLUSION

The analysis leads to a multifaceted conclusion regarding the relationship between biblical principles and the founding of the United States:

1. **Biblical Influence is Undeniable:** There was a heavy and positive influence of biblical truth in the founding of America, evident in the language and ideals of its early leaders and documents.
2. **Founders Borrowed a Concept:** The Founders of America more than likely borrowed the idea and language of covenant from the biblical accounts of Israel, which they knew well, to frame their own political and social compacts.
3. **No Formal Covenant Exists:** There is no historical or biblical evidence to support the claim that God established a formal, conditional covenant with the early American citizens or the nation itself.
4. **Not Under a System of Blessings and Curses:** From a biblical standpoint, because no such covenant was divinely initiated, America is neither uniquely "blessed" nor "cursed" in the covenantal sense that applied to ancient Israel.