

Lesson #1



Ever since the fall of mankind, man has been seeking the answers to three major questions:

- #1 Where have I come from?
- #2 Why are we here?
- #3 Where are we going?



Throughout time people have attempted to answer these questions...

- Using a variety of different frameworks...
...though which they can work out their answers.

For example:



Super-famous physicist Stephen Hawking & Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg
Nasa did twice with their spacecraft...
are working on a project that will send spacecrafts, which they call
"nanocrafts," into the universe to explore and discover.



They are not the first to try something like this.

- Pioneer #10 on March 2, 1972
...and again with...
- Pioneer #11 on April 5, 1973



Ultimately what is driving them to do this is to answer our the three questions!



Bible Scholars have attempt to answer these questions...

- ✓ In much more cost effective way
- ✓ By interpreting history...

...through a Biblical systematic framework.



But these Biblical frameworks...



Have also been influenced
By other philosophical frameworks...

...that are not so Biblical!



And these not so Biblical frameworks...

- Effect how people interpret God's Word

AND THUS...



These not so Biblical frameworks...



Effect what people believe & practice.



So that is why...

● There has been quite a big difference...

...in how a people understand our world
...and our purpose for life.



Paul tells Believers to...

2nd Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.



It is important then to...



Have a working knowledge of Scripture



So that when we come across...

...any framework

...that is contrary to the Scriptures



We can recognize it and not be misled.



1st John 4:1

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.



2nd Timothy 4:1-5

¹ I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom; ² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. ⁵ But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.



2nd Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.



In this course we are going to look at...



Two opposing Theological frameworks...

...that are used today in our churches

...to interpret Scripture

WRONG!

Covenant Theology

RIGHT!

Dispensational Theology.

Covenant Theology



History of Covenant Theology:

- 👎 Covenant Theology did not exist in the Apostolic Era.
- 👎 Covenant Theology did not exist in the Early Church.
- 👎 Covenant Theology did not exist in the Middle Ages.
- 👍 Covenant Theology first began a system in the 16th & 17th Centuries.

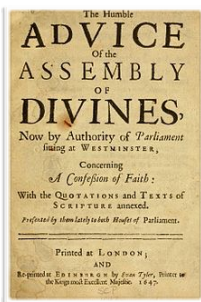


It got its start in the Reformed churches of...

- Switzerland &
- Germany

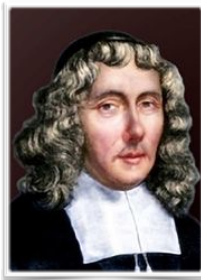
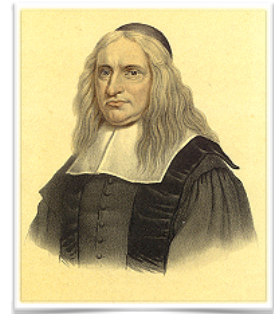
🌐 And then quickly spread to churches in...

- The Netherlands,
- Scotland &
- England.



➡ In 1647 the Westminster Confession became the first confession of faith to refer to Covenant Theology.

In the Netherlands, Johannes Cocceius' publication in 1648 played a big role in getting Covenant Theology accepted where he stated... "The whole development of sacred history is governed by this covenant theology".



➡ Herman Witsius gave rise to the idea that in eternity past God determined to govern the whole course of history on the basis of one or two covenants.

Covenant Theology defined:

A system of theology that attempts to develop the Bible's philosophy of history on the basis of two or three covenants.



Interestingly...

➡ Covenant Theologians disagree about number of Covenants!



Some say there are three:

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



Others say there are two:

- The Covenant of Works
- The Covenant of Grace
(Combines with the Covenant of Redemption)

* Most Covenant Theologians favor the Three-Covenant view...
...and this is what we will be looking at.

The Covenant of Redemption



In eternity past...

- God knew that man would sin.
- God thus decided to provide redemption...
...for those He elected.



God the Father then established a covenant with God the Son.

- Where the Father granted the Son...
...to be Head & Redeemer of the Elect
- The Son agreed to take up those positions

Details of the Covenant of Redemption:



The Covenant of Redemption required the Son to...



- Make amends for the sin of those God the Father elected to redeem.
 - By becoming human...
 - Without sin
 - Under the Mosaic law



The Covenant of Redemption required the Father to...

- Resurrect the Son and the Elect (Psalm 16:8-11 + Acts 2:25-28)
- To Elect a Numerous Seed (Psalm 22:27 + 72:17)
- To give the Son all power in Heaven & Earth
(Matthew 28:18 + Ephesians 1:20-22 + Hebrews 2:5-9)
- To give the Son great glory (John 17:5 + Philippians 2:9-11)

There are three ways that the Covenant of Redemption is related to the Covenant of Grace:

#1

Covenant of Redemption is the eternal model...
...which the historical Covenant of Grace is patterned.

#2

Covenant of Redemption is the foundation...
...of the Covenant of Grace.
...it makes the Covenant of Grace possible.

#3

Covenant of Redemption provides the means...
...for the establishment & execution of the Covenant of Grace.

The Covenant of Works



Established between the triune God and Adam



Established between the time of creation & the fall of man.

⇒ It's a conditional Covenant

* Essentially it was like God was putting Adam through a probationary period...
To determine if Adam would willingly obey God's will



The Covenant of Works required Adam to...

⇒ Obey God perfectly



The Covenant of Works required God to...



If Adam obeyed God's will perfectly...

⇒ God would provide Eternal life (not natural life) to Adam & his descendants.



If Adam disobeyed God's will...

⇒ God would punish them with physical, spiritual & eternal death.



Note:

→ There is no passage in the Bible that states that God made this Covenant of Works

→ They believe it is implied.

The Covenant of Grace

-  Established because Adam broke the Covenant of Works.
-  Established when God made His covenant with Abraham (*Genesis 12*)
-  Marks the beginning of the institutional church



Note:

→ *Although the Covenant of Grace was not formally established until Abrahams time, the elect before then are also considered to be under the Covenant of Grace.*

The Covenant of Grace requires God to...

- Provide salvation...
...to the elect
- Jesus is the mediator of the Covenant of Grace



Note:

- *Covenant Theologians disagree who the second party of this covenant is !*
- *Some say the second party is the elect !*
- *Some say the second party is the elect & their seed !*



What this means is that...

WRONG!

God has elected in eternity past those whom He would save

WRONG!

Regardless if the person ever accept Christ as their Savior through faith.

I.A.W

WRONG!

Some people who never become regenerate...
...are included in the Covenant of Grace !



So how can the Covenant of Grace...

...include regenerate & un-regenerate?



Well they answer this question by saying that...

- ⇒ The Covenant of Grace exists in two aspects:
 - I. It exists as "A Communion of Life"
 - II. It exists as "A Legal Relationship"

 Thus...

➡ Only **the regenerate** experience...

- The Covenant of Grace as "**A Communion of Life**"...
 - ...because only **the regenerate**
 - ...enter into the **spiritual** life
 - ...intended by this covenant.

➡ **The regenerate** & their **un-regenerate** children...

- ...also experience the covenant
- ...as "**A Legal Relationship**".



How the are the un-regenerate children of Believers in the Covenant?

FALSE As a result of...

- Their physical birth...
 - ...to parents who are in the Covenant already.
- God promised to produce spiritual life...
 - ...in the seed of those He elected.
- Un-regenerate children are...
 - ...constantly being admonished
 - ...and exhorted by God
 - ...to turn to Him.
- The Holy Spirit constantly...
 - ...strives, admonished, exhorted, & enlightens them.
- The Holy Spirit blesses them...
 - ...with the blessings of Common Grace.

FALSE When these children of the elect...

- Reach their years of discernment.
- They are responsible for accepting their covenant obligations voluntarily...
 - ...by entering into the "**Communion of Life**"
 - ...through a true confession of faith.

FALSE If the children of the elect...

- Do not voluntarily enter into the "**Communion of Life**"...
 - ...through a true confession of faith
- They are still saved due to their "**Legal Relationship**".
- Thus they are still under the protection...
 - ...of the Covenant of Grace regardless.

The Relationship of the Covenant of Grace to the Dispensations & Progressive Revelation.



Covenant Theologians believe:

- ✗ The Covenant of Grace...
 - ...is the same in all dispensations
 - ...although the administration of the covenant does change.
- ✗ The Abrahamic Covenant & The Mosaic Covenant...
 - ...are essentially the same thing.
 - ...they are only a little different in their form.
- ✗ The Old Covenant & The New Covenant...
 - ...are essentially the same thing.
- ✗ Each Dispensation or Covenant...
 - ...is simply another stage
 - ...of the progressive revelation
 - ...of the nature of the Covenant of Grace
 - ...thorough out history.

For example:

George N.M. Collins - Minister of the Free St. Columbia Church in Edinburgh Scotland wrote...

Throughout the OT period there were successive proclamations of this covenant. We find it in the proto-evangelium of [Genesis 3:15](#). Certain of its provisions were later revealed to Noah ([Genesis 9](#)). It was then established with Abraham ([Genesis 12](#)), and with his descendants after him, thus becoming a national covenant. Although in the New Testament this covenant is described as "new", such passages as [Romans 4](#) and [Galatians 3](#) show are essentially one with the covenant under which believers lived in the Old Testament times. But although they are the same covenant, it is described as a better covenant in the New Testament dispensation, because it is now administered not by Moses, a servant, but by Christ the Son ([Hebrews 3:5-6](#)).

Proofs Presented by Covenant Theologians for the Existence of the Covenant of Grace throughout history...

#1

- The summary statement: "I will be thy God" is the same in the OT & NT.
See: [Genesis 12:7](#) + [Exodus 19:5](#) + [Exodus 20:1](#) + [Deuteronomy 29:13](#) + [2 Samuel 7:14](#) + [Jeremiah 31:33](#) + [Hebrews 8:10](#)

#2

- The Bible teaches that there is but a single gospel by which men can be saved.
- The gospel is nothing more than the revelation of the Covenant of Grace.

#3

- The Mediator of the covenant is the same yesterday, today, & forever - [Hebrews 13:8](#).
- If the Mediator, Jesus Christ, is the same throughout history...
...then the covenant which He mediates
...must also be the same throughout history.

#4

- The way of salvation revealed in the covenant is the same.
Compare [Genesis 3:16](#) with [Romans 4:11](#) + [Hebrews 2:4](#) + [Acts 15:11](#) + [Galatians 3:6-7](#) + [Hebrews 11:9](#).
- The promises for the realization of which the believers hoped are also the same.
Compare [Genesis 15:6](#) + [Psalm 51:12](#) with [Matthew 13:17](#) + [John 8:56](#)
- Circumcision & Baptism...
...although different in form
...have essentially the same significance
...throughout history.
See [Romans 4:11](#) + [1st Corinthians 5:7](#) + [Colossians 2:11-12](#)

Key Elements of Covenant Theology's view of God working throughout History...

#1

Covenant Theology emphasizes the Covenant of Grace...
...as God's means of working His purposes throughout history.

#2

Covenant Theology sees the ultimate goal of history...
...as being the glory of God through the redemption of the elect.

#3

Covenant Theology sees each new body of truth revealed in Scripture...
...as simply another stage
...of the progressive uncovering
...of the nature of the Covenant of Grace.

#4

Covenant Theology's unifying principle for history after the fall of man...
...is the Covenant of Grace.



Problems with Covenant Theology

Covenant Theology's Ultimate goal of history...

...is too limited & narrow !

WRONG!

Covenant Theology sees the ultimate goal of history...

...as being the glory of God

...through the redemption of the elect.

RIGHT!

The redemption of the Elect is only one part of God's plan for history.

- ✓ God also has a plan for the non-elect ([Romans 9:10-23](#))
- ✓ God also has a plan for nations ([Job 12:23 + Daniel 2:36-45](#))
- ✓ God also has a plan for Satan ([John 12:31 + Revelation 20:1-3](#))
- ✓ God has a plan for nature ([Romans 8:19-22](#))

WRONG!

Covenant Theology denies some of the major distinctions in the Bible.

✗ It nullifies the distinction between the Abrahamic & Mosaic Covenants

RIGHT!

Paul actually emphasizes their distinctiveness in [Galatians 3](#)

✓ See: [Galatians 3:18](#)

WRONG!

Covenant Theology denies any distinction between...

...the Mosaic Covenant (The Law) and the New Covenant !

RIGHT!

Paul actually EMPHASIZED in [2nd Corinthians 3](#) the FACT that...

...the Mosaic Law & the New Covenant are NOT THE SAME !

☹️ [2nd Corinthians 3:3](#) - The Law of the Mosaic Covenant was written on tablets of stone (external).

😊 [2nd Corinthians 3:3](#) - The Law of the New Covenant is written on tablets of human hearts (internal).

☹️ [2nd Corinthians 3:6-7](#) - The Mosaic Covenant Law was a ministry of death.

😊 [2nd Corinthians 3:6](#) - The New Covenant is a ministry of life.

☹️ [2nd Corinthians 3:9](#) - The Mosaic Law is a ministry of condemnation

😊 [2nd Corinthians 3:9](#) - The New Covenant is a ministry of righteousness

RIGHT!

The language of [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#) also indicates that...

✓ The Mosaic Law & the New Covenant are not the same.

✓ See: [Jeremiah 31:31-32](#)

WRONG! Covenant Theology denies the distinction between...
...the nation of Israel & the Church !

- ✗ Covenant Theology teaches that the Church existed in the Old Testament times.
- ✗ Covenant Theology teaches that Israel was a major part of the Church in the Old Testament.
- ✗ Covenant Theology defines the Church as...
 - 🗨 All peoples throughout history who have a covenant relationship with God.

RIGHT! Jesus placed the building of His church in the future !

- ✓ Jesus said the church would exist after He spoke in **Matthew 16:18**
- ✓ See: **1st Corinthians 3:11**

“Christ is the stone, and He says on this rock He *will build* His church. The church was still future when the Lord made this statement. And please don't tell me there was a church in the Old Testament because the church did not come into existence until after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit. There could not have been a church until all of these things had taken place. “I will build my church” - this is future.”
J. Vernon McGhee

WRONG! Covenant Theology teaches that...
...each of the biblical covenants are a continuation & newer phase
...of the Covenant of Grace

- ✗ They believe the New Covenant...
 - ...is the same as the Covenant of Grace
- ✗ They believe that the the New Covenant & Covenant of Grace...
 - ...has been in existence
 - ...since the fall of man or Abraham
- ✗ Covenant Theologians believe the word “NEW”...
 - ...does not indicate that there is a difference
 - ...between the New Covenant in the New Testament
 - ...and the Old Covenant in the Old Testament

RIGHT! SERIOUSLY ! Come on now !!!

- ✓ See: **Hebrews 12:24 + Hebrews 8:8-9**
- ✓ See: **Hebrews 8:13 + Hebrews 9:15**

WRONG!

Covenant Theology uses a double hermeneutic...

...to make it's system work !

✓ Covenant Theology recognizes that the...

...HISTORIC

...GRAMMATICAL

...method of interpreting the Bible is correct.

✗ BUT...



Covenant Theology uses the...

...ALLEGORICAL method of interpreting the Bible

...When the Scriptures don't agree

...with Covenant Theology



For Example...



The word "Israel"...

...does not have to refer to the Nation of Israel.



It can also refer to the church !