

**Theology 1: WCF 7 & 19**  
**# 14: Covenant Theology**  
**Preston Graham Jr.**

General Introduction to Issues in Covenant Theology

The tension, “no new religion” (Mt. 5:17, Heb.1:13, Gal.3:17) and “new covenant” (Rom.7:1-7, Heb. 8:13)

Questions... and more questions:

#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 is 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.

#### WCF 19 Introduction

##### ○ **WCF Use of "Covenant"**

- A gracious condescension by God (**WCF 7.1**)
- Condescension in the form of an ancient Near Eastern (Hittite) Treaty: (Eg. Gen-Exodus and Deut.)
  - Preamble: Name, title, etc-- to motivate fear and respect... "I am..." (Dt. 1:1-5)
  - Historical Prologue: What the sovereign has done to motivate love, respect, etc. (Dt. 1:6-4:49)
  - Stipulations: commitments from vassals, both general and specific (Dt. 5-26)
  - Sanctions: Curses and Blessing or Covenant Ratification as qualified by the breaking or keeping of the covenant (Dt. 27-30)

e. Document Clause and Witness: what to do with the treaty document-- where and when to read it, who witnesses the oaths made... (Dt. 31-34)

f. Oath of Ratification and "Cutting" (Berith) Ceremony.. those the word "covenant" derived from the word "to cut"

Important Interpretive Observation: We see the "covenantal" nature of Biblical revelation if by the mere fact that the Hebrew word for covenant ("berith") is used 289 times in the Old Testament, The "berith" language is used explicitly to summarize the Genesis histories in Exodus 2:24, God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Clearly God was acting in covenant through Moses as noted in Exodus 24:7 Then he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." **8** Moses took the blood and dashed it on the people, and said, "See the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words." As we will see, even the prophets themselves were those appointed by God as the covenant executors, to proclaim the terms of the covenant as especially related to the curses and blessings attached to them-- this will account for the prophets constantly applying the curses of Deuteronomy to the sufferings of the Israel people and the hope for blessings to the future Israel.

iii. Two Covenants

1. Covenant of Works (**WCF 7.2**) "Pre-Redemptive"

2. Covenant of Grace (**WCF 7.3-4**) "Redemptive"

a. 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!

o **The WCF Interpretive Principles**

Summary by T. David Gordon:

**A. The decalogue is a timeless expression of God's moral will. see WCF 19.1**

Here is a principle which profoundly influences all else the Assembly did with the decalogue. They affirmed a relationship between the commands given to Adam and the commands given at Sinai. Some such relationship undoubtedly exists, especially the reward for obedience and the curse for disobedience. There is no apparent justification, however, for assuming that the ten *particular* commands were given to Adam. Yet it is this assumption, justified or not, which influences the Assembly to view the decalogue as a comprehensive summary of God's moral will, valid in the same way for every covenantal administration. Augustine, Calvin, and Luther, for instance, would have denied this statement categorically.

**B. Other passages of scripture illuminate how to interpret the decalogue.**

This is implicit in the proof-texts which the divines attached to their discussion of each of the commandments, many of which came from various passages of scripture. It is also implicit in the statement that the will of God is "summarily comprehended" in the ten commandments.

**C. Laws which are negative (forbidding something) are implicitly positive as well (requiring the contrary), and vice versa.**

*LC 99...That as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded...*

**D. Attitudes, speech or overt behavior which encourage a particular sin are also sin.**

*LC 99 ...That under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded; together with all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances thereof, and provocation's thereunto. That what is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places, to endeavor that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of their places....*

**E. The law is "spiritual," directing us in our entire person, not merely in overt behavior, thus revealing the**

**condition of our soul or heart. see WCF 19.6**

Most evangelical Christians, if they do not deny the previous paragraph outright, deny this one. Even if they concede that in some sense, the “aforementioned uses of the law” exist, they believe in practice that such uses are “contrary to the grace of the gospel,” and that they do not “sweetly comply with it.” Most evangelicals would consider it injurious to the progress of the gospel to preach the law in such a way that it had the effect of “discovering also the sinful pollution's of their nature, hearts, and lives”, or showing “what even their sins deserve”.

**F. The law is “perfect” in the old English sense of “unified” or “complete,” so that, failure in one area contributes to failure in all the others. see LC 99**

**G. Threatenings and promises endure with the laws themselves.**

*LC 99 ...where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included; and, where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included....*

**H. Some parts of the OT law are either particularly or exclusively suited to the covenant administration at Sinai. See**

***WCF 19.3** Beside this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly, holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the New Testament.*

***WCF 19.4** To them also, as a body politic, he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people; not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require.*

***WCF20.1** The liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law; and, in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin; from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation; as also, in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto him, not out of slavish fear, but a childlike love and willing mind. All which were common also to believers under the law. But, under the New Testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged, in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected; and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.*

The Assembly recognized that, whereas the NT continues to affirm many of the laws from the OT, it abrogates others. The letter to the Hebrews, for instance, discards the levitical laws with the levitical priesthood--(7:12) “For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.” Consistent with this, the Assembly also noted that those laws which were designed to govern Israel as a peculiar people, distinct and distinguished from other nations, would not and could not oblige those in the NT who were members of an international covenant. In these two statements, the Assembly established categories of OT law which endure and do not endure.

*Note: Items B. through F. have been embraced by the Reformed tradition in all generations. These principles have been adopted and followed widely. A. and G. are the debated ones. E.g all orthodox theologians have agreed that there are commands in the scriptures which, though given within a given covenantal context, reflect the moral perfection of God, and are therefore reiterated in other covenants, as obligatory on all who would follow God.*

More specifically however, Westminster viewed the Ten Commandments as a timeless expression of God's (unchanging) moral character. And yet the Assembly recognized the changing covenantal circumstances of God's people. They referred to this reality in the Confession of Faith, 19:3:

*God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly, holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the New Testament*

WCF 19: 1-5

1. God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience, promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

2. This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables: the first four commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six, our duty to man.

3. Beside this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly, holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the new testament.

4. To them also, as a body politic, he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the State of that people; not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require.

5. The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that, not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it. Neither doth Christ, in the gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.

- Observations on WCF Use of “Law”
  - i. Law= Covenant of Works Generally or “Creation Covenant” (**WCF 19:1**)
  - ii. Law= Mosaic Covenant differentiated into three types/aspects (**WCF 19:2-4**)
    - 1. Rule of Faith and Practice (Moral)
    - 2. Rule of Worship (Ceremonial)
    - 3. Rule of Geo-Politic (Civil)(Note: Categories are clear enough, but differentiating between them is not always so clear—e.g. is all of ten commandments “moral” and if so, how to understand #1 and #4—see below on continuity/discontinuity)
  - iii. Moral Law “for ever bind all” (**WCF 19:5**) whereas the ceremonial and civil, in so far as they are typological as per the ceremonial laws are fulfilled in Christ” and “OT geo-political laws are fulfilled in eternal heavenly kingdom life” these are therefore “abrogated under the new covenant.” (**WCF 19:3**)
- Not then to be confused with Paul’s Use of “Law”: “Mosaic Covenant” compared to “gospel”
  - i. Principle of Continuity ( “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 (7<sup>th</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup>) , entrance rite (circumcision to baptism),(renewal rite: Sacrificial system to Lord’s supper*
  - i. Principle of Discontinuity
    - 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
  - **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.
- Purpose of Mosaic “Law” (“*Law as a covenant of works-righteousness*”(WCF 19:6) as a basis for temporal blessing or curse) served as a tutor to discover “spiritual poverty leading to faith in Christ’s sacrificial atonement for sins.

#### Sections 6-7

*6. Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life informing them of the will of God, and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin, together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience. It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin: and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve; and what afflictions, in this life, they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof: although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works. So as, a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law; and, not under grace.*

*7. Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely, and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.*

4. These two sections of chapter 19 essentially make five points:
  - a. believers are not under the law “as a covenant of works”;
  - b. the law nonetheless is useful as a rule of life;
  - c. the law nonetheless is useful to *expose* the remaining pollution of their “nature, hearts, and lives”;
  - d. the law nonetheless is useful to *restrain* sin by its threats for disobedience and rewards for obedience;
  - e. such usefulness of the law “sweetly” complies with the grace of the gospel.
  
5. How does the confession understand new covenant believers in their relation to the law as a covenant?
 

Believers are not under the law, “as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned.” The Assembly employed the expression “covenant of works” six times, twice in this passage, and also in LC 30, LC 97, WCF 7:2, WCF 19.1. For the Assembly, there is such a reality as a “covenant of works.” Adam was related to God by a covenant of works (as was the last Adam, Christ). In the state of innocence, Adam was not yet indebted to God as a law-breaker, and, had he obeyed God’s law regarding the tree, his obedience would have been rewarded with a confirmed state of bliss (what we ordinarily call “heaven”). Adam, however, disobeyed, meriting God’s wrath and punishment. Since Adam, no one born from him by natural descent has been free of Adam’s guilt, or free from Adam’s rebellion. Thus, none born by natural descent from Adam can find a confirmed state of bliss with God by virtue of their own personal obedience. The covenant of grace is instituted so that, through the person of Christ, sinners’ penalty might be paid, and the requirement of obedience might be paid through Another, through a Substitute. The Assembly notes that the law, therefore, is not useful as a “covenant of works,” by which individuals are justified or condemned. Nonetheless, the law is useful to us in the three ways described: as containing directions for life; as a means of revealing our remaining pollution; and as restraining sin by its threats and promises. (T. David Gordon)

6. Concerning "e" above, how do new covenant believers relate to the threats and promises that were attached to the law according to Westminster? How does this relate to Bolton's discussion concerning the proper motivation for doing good? Should we expect temporal blessings if we live faithful lives?

The curses and blessings of the Sinai covenant, while revealing what sin and obedience deserve, are not germane to New Covenant believers. For Israel, if the nation were obedient, it would prosper in the land God gave it. This is not true for New Covenant believers; the land of Canaan plays no typological role in our covenant-administration as it did in Israel's. (T. David Gordon, see also Gordon, p.7)

7. Summary: How to distinguish two covenants:

***"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")***

Note: 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 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.*

The Fulfillment Motif:

That God entered into a "works covenant" with all mankind as represented by Adam and that all mankind fell when Adam fell in violation to the works covenant of creation. Adam and all mankind were then "excommunicated" from the garden as representing the curse of the law. Yet in anticipation of redemptive history fulfilled in Christ, God made a promise, not to annul the works covenant, but rather attached to this covenant-- that He would himself satisfy the stipulations of the works covenant albeit by one born of the seed of a women. This promise was re-affirmed (ratified) with Abraham. (It is called by Paul a "promise" rather than a "covenant" in Gal.3:18) The oath of promise was ceremoniously depicted by a Christophony (flaming torch) passing through the cut halves of the animal which indicated God's intention to satisfy the curse of the law together with its required stipulations. The

promise would result in God's crediting Abraham and all his "spiritual" descendants as being legally righteous and this only by faith in God's *promise* to fulfill the law rather than human fulfillment in order to satisfy the works of the law-- this was of course an act of God's free grace.

We should note that the works covenant of creation is kept in tact if but for the simple evidence that God did in fact execute an oath ceremony which assumed the works covenant as depicted by the curse represented by the slain animal-- yet it was promised that God would take it upon himself to satisfy the works of the creation covenant for the elect.

Mosaic covenant: There are two aspects of the Mosaic covenant—one "typological" as pointing back to Adam (human probation applied to temporal benefits) and the other "typological" as pointing to the Second Adam (divine satisfaction of law applied to spiritual/eternal benefits). Moses and all "true Israel" of the OC participated in both levels, although Paul will argue that some of Israel only participate in the temporal level. (Rom.9)

As applied then to ethics: The fundamental approach by Westminster is amazingly consistent with the covenantal dynamics, even if not "perfectly" so. The basic approach was to distinguish "temporal-typifying" aspects as per Col 2:16 vs. eternal-spiritual as say Ephesians 4-5 as seemingly related to the ten commandments at least generally.

#### **Col. 2:16**

Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. **17** These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

#### **How then should we live? The ethics of Fulfillment... thus continuity and discontinuity**

- Temporal Typifying to Eternal: Expect no necessary "covenantal" relationship (not to be confused with a "natural relationship") between obedience and eternal blessing (c.f. —in fact "suffering" is the motif of New Covenant faithfulness! (C.f. Dt. 11:13-17, 26-28 compared with Philip 3:10, Col. 1:24, 1 Peter, etc)
- Israel Nation to Israel Church: Ecclesial Ethics vs. Individual or Political Ethics (e.g. Epistles and New Covenant "temple" ethics (Rom 12:1-5)

#### **c.f. Illustration (handout)**

#### **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... foreshadowing 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,