

GOD'S COVENANTS

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God's Covenants

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This book is dedicated to the McDurmon children:

R.J., Jed, Max, Dominic, Lucy

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PREFACE

This is a book about God's covenants, written for Christian laymen. Laymen rarely study these covenants in detail or even superficially. Even more rare is their consideration of the covenants of rival worldviews. Yet every worldview has a doctrine of the covenants that parallels the Bible's doctrine. They differ only in content. In short, covenants are inescapable concepts. It is never a question of covenant vs. no covenants. It is always a question of whose covenants.

I have learned over many years of advertising my commercial books and reports that consumers offer two reactions to sales offers that a marketer must overcome: disbelief and apathy. For consumers, these reactions are revealed in two brief questions: "Says who?" and "So what?" If a seller cannot overcome these two universal objections, he will not make a sale.

In Part 1, I deal with the first question. In Part 2, I deal with the second.

Part 1 deals with the structure of God's covenants. To overcome "Says who?" I have quoted extensively from the Bible. I have included many direct quotations, so that the reader will not have to look them up. Readers tend not to look up passages whose book, chapter, and verse number are merely mentioned.

Part 2 reveals the nature of the contemporary debate over the interpretation and application of the Bible's covenantal

categories: Christianity vs. Darwinism. The battlefield is society. Each outlook has a specific view of society that results from its interpretation of the covenants. These rival social outlooks cannot be reconciled, because their rival interpretations of the covenants cannot be reconciled.

I have learned from over five decades of interaction with Darwinist intellectuals that Christians are more likely to accept the Darwinists' definitions and applications of the covenants in social affairs than Darwinists are likely to accept the Christians' definitions and applications of the covenants in social affairs. The Darwinists are far more self-conscious than the Christians are. They are far more ready to do battle to have their view of the covenants adopted by, or imposed on, society. Darwinists constantly battle in every area of life to extend their agenda. Christians rarely do. Darwinists battle to get their definitions accepted by society, which enhances their ability to get their agenda accepted. Christians do not and have not for about three centuries.

Until Christians understand, accept, and begin to implement the Bible's definitions of the covenants and their judicial content, they will continue to ride in the back of humanism's bus.

INTRODUCTION

This is a book about two covenantal eras: (1) the Old Covenant, which God established with Adam, which ended forever at the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in A.D. 70; and (2) the New Covenant, which God established with the second Adam, Jesus Christ, which began with His resurrection from the dead.

This book also deals with a rival covenant, established between Satan and Adam, which will exist until the final judgment.

This book discusses three covenantal units that have operated in history from the beginning: individual, church, and family. It then discusses a fourth covenantal institution, civil, which began after the Fall of man.

I hope this is an easy book to understand. It should be. The Bible is very clear about these covenantal issues. Unfortunately, Bible commentators reject some of the conclusions that the Bible makes regarding the continuing authority and relevance of God's covenants. They also reject most of the implications of biblical teachings regarding the covenants. So, they have on many occasions deliberately obscured the clarity of the biblical texts. For example, a major and continuing muddying of the textual waters has been implemented for this passage:

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should

not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence (John 18:36).

I cover this passage in Chapter 10.

I divide the book into two sections: (1) the biblical covenant model; (2) social theory. For my development of Part 1, I rely heavily on Ray R. Sutton's book, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant* (1987).

With respect to Part 2, I begin with a presupposition: *Social theory is an inescapable concept*. It is never a question of social theory vs. no social theory. It is always a question of whose social theory. Nevertheless, hundreds of millions of Christians prefer to ignore the fact that what the Bible teaches about many topics has major implications for society. It is a useful exercise to remind Christians that there are rival views of the covenants. It is also useful to remind them that there are rival views of society, which are themselves inescapable implications of rival views of the covenants. Rival social theories lead to conflict, especially over implementation.

As you read this book, please pay close attention to the cited biblical texts. What they say is far more important than what I say about them.

I have used the King James Version throughout. The language of the KJV is both powerful and unique. I find it easier to remember ancient English words in specific passages, which makes it easier for me to locate these passages in online Bible sites. I search for a word, and then I add KJV. I usually find the verse I am looking for.

PART 1

THE BIBLICAL COVENANT

INTRODUCTION TO PART 1

Beginning with the researches of George Mendenhall in the 1950s, Bible scholars, liberals and conservatives, have come to recognize that the Mosaic covenant has a particular structure. It has five points. There have been various attempts to label these five points, but they boil down to these: God's transcendence and presence, hierarchical authority, ethics, oath, and succession. This can be expressed by an acronym: THEOS. This is the Greek word for God.

In 1963, a book by Westminster Seminary's Meredith G. Kline appeared: *Treaty of the Great King*. It was a brief commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy. Following Mendenhall, Kline divided Deuteronomy into five sections. He then made comparisons of this structure with suzerainty treaties of the Middle East in the second millennium, B.C. They, too, had the same five-point structure. He concluded that this is evidence that Deuteronomy was written in the second millennium, B.C., and not almost a millennium later in the first millennium, B.C., which liberals have long insisted. Kline reprinted this commentary in his larger book, *By Oath Consigned* (1972).

In writing my economic commentaries on the five books of Moses (Pentateuch), I discovered that two other books are structured by this five-point model: Exodus and Leviticus. The Pentateuch itself is structured in terms of it.

1. Genesis: origins (sovereignty)
2. Exodus: covenant (authority)

3. Leviticus: boundaries (law)
4. Numbers: sanctions
5. Deuteronomy: inheritance (succession)

David Chilton showed in *Days of Vengeance* (1987) that the book of Revelation is structured in terms of this model.

In social theory, I have classified these categories as sovereignty, authority, law, judgment, and time. Time refers to the kingdom of God in history. In this book, I refer to point five as kingdom.

In economics, I have classified them in terms of these questions:

1. Who's in charge here?
2. To whom do I report?
3. What are the rules?
4. What happens to me if I obey? Disobey?
5. Does this outfit have a future?

I presented these in my Publisher's Preface to Ray Sutton's 1987 book, *That You May Prosper*.

In each chapter, I present one of the biblical covenant model's five points. Then I describe briefly how this category applies to each of the four covenantal units: individual, church, family, and civil.

1

TRANSCENDENCE/PRESENCE

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

GENESIS 1:1

Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

JEREMIAH 23:23–24

A. Dominion Covenant

The God of the Bible is the Creator. Genesis 1:1 tells us that God existed before He spoke the universe into existence. He created it out of nothing. This doctrine of creation—unique to the Bible—implies that God is separate from His creation. He is not an extension of the creation, nor is the creation an extension of Him. This is the Bible’s definitive answer to all variations of the religion of pantheism. The passage in Jeremiah tells us that the God of the Bible is infinite. He is omnipresent. There is nowhere in the creation where He is absent and does not see. There is no place to hide. This is the Bible’s definitive answer to all variations of the religion of deism.

God is simultaneously transcendent to the creation, yet present with it. This makes biblical religion unique.

In pantheism, God is said to be immanent in the creation,

meaning a part of it. He shares its being, and it shares His. Pantheism confuses God's presence with His immanence. It denies the Creator/creature distinction, which is fundamental for biblical religion.

In deism, God is said to be transcendent over the creation, but completely removed from it. Its supreme analogy is a wound-up clock. God created the cosmic clock and then departed. The clock is impersonally ticking away. This is the logic of deism. It is doubtful that any deist argued for a distant, uninterested God, because deism arose in seventeenth-century Europe within the culture of Christianity. But this is the logic of deism's mechanistic theology.

Christianity teaches cosmic personalism—a universe that inescapably reflects God. Paul wrote:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things (Romans 1:18–23).

The god of pantheism is personal, yet not fundamentally different from any other living being. All creation shares some element of the same being. Pantheism's god is therefore not infinite. God is understood to be more powerful than other beings, wiser, more versatile, but He is not inherently different from the creation or from man. He is Dr. God, while the rest of humanity is merely Mr. But any man or woman in principle can earn a doctorate one of these days. So, God's person is essentially the same as any man's person: more powerful, at

least for now; ethically superior, at least for now; but not fundamentally different. The universe is therefore personal, but it reflects only itself, not a higher, sovereign, separate being. The universe is seen as a cosmic organism. "We're all in this together!" God's mercy is not sure, for He is not omnipotent. God's final judgment is not sure, for He is not omnipotent. The universe is therefore autonomous, answering only to itself.

The God of deism is personal, yet totally removed from the creation. He is transcendent, but not present. Deism's god is not infinite, for He shares existence with the creation. The creation does not reflect the comprehensive personhood of the God of the Bible; at most, it reflects His orderliness. The universe is seen as a cosmic mechanism. Ethics is irrelevant to a machine. God's mercy is irrelevant. Final judgment is irrelevant. The universe is therefore autonomous, answering only to itself.

In contrast, the Bible teaches cosmic covenantalism. The universe is not autonomous. It is the creation of God. It reflects God. It therefore testifies to the ethical perfection of God. It therefore condemns fallen man. Man in his rebellion against God has no excuse. The universe is not autonomous; it answers to God.

B. Individual Covenant

Each individual is made in God's image. Man is defined as God's image. In this respect, he is unique in creation.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth (Genesis 1:26–27).

But God did not leave it at this. He added other stipulations.

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:16–17).

Why did this constitute a covenant? Because it had the five points of every covenant: sovereignty, authority, law, judgment, and kingdom. A sovereign God created Adam and Eve to serve as His agents in history. He gave them an assignment and the authority to complete it: rulership. This assignment had a law attached: do not eat of one tree. This law had a judgment attached: death. Finally, the arrangement had a kingdom offer: multiplication.

Adam and Eve rebelled. God extended grace to them: extra years of life and coverings, plus a promise: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15).

Men rebelled again. So, God brought the great Flood: a negative sanction. But there was also grace: Noah’s ark. Because of the image of God in man, God after the Flood established a new sanction: execution for murder.

And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man (Genesis 9:5–6).

Men understand this restriction on their own actions because of their own hearts, on which *the work of God’s law* (not the law) is engraved.

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another (Romans 2:14–15).

Everyone knows that he is not God. God therefore holds everyone accountable because of this knowledge. First, because of God's *transcendence*. God is above man, different from man, and sovereign over man.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:7-9).

Second, because of God's *presence*. This presence is judicial.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings (Jeremiah 17:9-10).

So, every person is in covenant with God. Man is a covenant being, made in God's image from the beginning.

C. Church Covenant

The people of God are spoken of in Scripture as the bride of Christ.

And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints (Revelation 19:5-8).

This is the church. The church extends into eternity.

And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And

he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal (Revelation 21:9–11).

There is no marriage apart from a covenant. Yet the church covenant is the model for the marriage covenant.

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:23–27).

So, it is incorrect to view God's covenant as restricted to the individual alone. It applies to at least one corporate entity: the church.

As we shall see, it also applies to two other corporate entities.

D. Family Covenant

The family is often said to be the basic unit of society. This assertion is wrong. First, every society also has civil government (Romans 13:1–7), so the family has at least one equally authoritative, equally universal institutional rival. Second, the family is a derivative institution, as we have already seen. The church is the model for the family. The love of a husband for his wife was said by Paul to be modeled after Christ's love for His church. Equally important, the church extends into eternity. The family does not.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven (Matthew 22:29–30).

So, the family, while a universal human institution, along with civil government, is not the primary institution in history. The church is. The argument that the family is the most basic unit of society is usually associated with the social philosophy of organicism. Organicism is wrong. The Bible teaches covenantalism. The Bible teaches that the family must always be understood as one aspect of God's overall general with mankind—the dominion covenant (Genesis 1:26–28)—which in the post-Fall age encompasses individuals, churches, families, and civil governments.

God made a covenant with Abraham. This covenant involved Abraham's descendants. Abram, whose name in Hebrew meant high father, had his name changed to Abraham, father of nations. Yet he was childless at the time. God told Abraham,

And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee (Genesis 17:2–7).

God deals with families as corporate entities. He makes His covenant with them.

E. Civil Covenant

The civil covenant is the fifth covenantal arrangement. Unlike family government, civil government was God's covenantal response to sin. It did not exist prior to the Fall.

Paul spoke of the civil magistrate as a minister of God. The magistrate's assignment under God is to bring negative sanctions against law-breakers.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour (Romans 13:1-7).

Notice that Paul spoke of higher powers and the powers that be: plural. There are multiple covenantal powers, as well as multiple civil authorities. There is no single covenantal institution that can lawfully claim total obedience and monopolistic jurisdiction. Such authority belongs only to God.

The civil government acts on behalf of God. It brings negative sanctions against evil-doers, so that God need not intervene against the entire society. Under the Mosaic law, whenever a body that had died violently was discovered in a field, and no one knew who had committed this murder, the civil authorities were required to call in the priests.

If one be found slain in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him: Then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain: And it shall be, that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take an heifer, which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not drawn in the yoke; And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown, and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley: And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the LORD thy God hath chosen

to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the LORD; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried: And all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley: And they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O LORD, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them. So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the LORD (Deuteronomy 21:1-9).

The judicial legacy of Sodom and Gomorrah is with us still. There, the civil government did not deal with flagrant evil. God brought corporate sanctions against all those who resided within their boundaries.

And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass growth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath: Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt: For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them: And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book: And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day (Deuteronomy 29:23-28).

Conclusion

God covenants generally with mankind as a species, for man is made in His image. This began in the first week of history. Man is defined in terms of the dominion covenant.

God in the post-Fall world covenants specifically with individuals, with called-out assemblies of disciples, with fami-

lies, and with people under the authority of lawfully ordained civil magistrates.

Covenantalism is biblical. God is separate from His creation, yet present with it. Above all, He is present with it *judicially*. He is the Creator and the Judge.

Organicism and mechanism are rival views. The first is associated with pantheism; the second is associated with deism. They are united on this issue: The universe is operationally autonomous.

HIERARCHY/AUTHORITY

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

GENESIS 1:26–28

A. Dominion Covenant

First, God is talking to Himself. That means He is plural. This is an unpleasant fact for monotheists of the Jewish and Islamic variety, not to mention Unitarians, but the fact is presented clearly, early in the Bible: *God is plural*. This is not the only passage in Genesis that teaches this truth. Consider Genesis 11: the story of the tower of Babel.

And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech (Genesis 11:5–7).

Second, this leads to a conclusion: There is unity in plurality. God is one, yet plural. He is as plural as He is unified. Conclusion: *Unity and plurality are equally ultimate.*

Third, this plural though unified God decided in joint consultation to create mankind, which is also a plurality. Male and female created He them. Yet He dealt with them as a unit: mankind. Mankind as a species is different from every other species.

Fourth, the male-female distinction is common to most other species.

God placed mankind over the creation. Man is under God and over the creation.

God even established the heavens to serve as cosmic clocks for mankind to measure the passing of time.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also (Genesis 1:14–16).

This means that in the grand scheme of things, the heavens serve mankind. The sun and the moon have a purpose: to serve mankind. This was true even before the creation of man. This means that the universe is not impersonal. It is personal. It also reveals purpose. There is no doctrine more foreign to modern Darwinism. The heart of Darwinism is the denial of all purpose until the advent of man.

God placed man over the environment, which includes inanimate resources and living things. They exist to serve man, as surely as the sun and the moon exist in order to serve man. The Psalmist sang God's praises for this hierarchical arrangement.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas (Psalm 8:3–8).

Man reports to God. The rest of the creation reports to man. God has delegated authority to man to act on His behalf. Man serves as a mediator: representing nature to God and God to nature. When Adam and Eve fell, nature suffered. This has not changed. “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans 8:22).

B. Individual Covenant

God made a covenant with Adam (Genesis 2). Eve was included in this covenant as Adam’s wife. Adam answered directly to God under His examination (Genesis 3:12). Next, Eve answered directly to God (Genesis 3:13). Each received a punishment that was designed to fit the specific crime (Genesis 3:16–19).

Responsibility is individual. Each individual possesses comprehensive responsibility: thought, word, and deed. First, thought:

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell (Matthew 5:27–30).

Jesus spoke of the sins of the eye and the hand—perception and deed—to drive home this point. Second, word:

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned (Matthew 12:36–37).

Such responsibility implies authority: the authority to speak eternally meaningful words. There are no idle words if each word will be judged by God. Third, deed:

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works (Revelation 20:11–13).

This means that membership in a lawfully covenanted organization does not remove anyone's personal responsibility for his individual actions. Final judgment is individual because the resurrection is individual. This is the doctrine of *the one* as it applies to hierarchy.

The doctrine of the Trinity implies the equal ultimacy of the one and the many. The fact that men are responsible individually does not mean that they are not responsible corporately. They are responsible both individually and corporately to the God who is sovereign both individually and corporately. This is why all governments are responsible corporately to God.

C. Church Covenant

The church is corporately covenanted to God, and therefore it is responsible to God. It answers to God.

In Leviticus 4, we see corporate hierarchy in action: church and state. The unintentional sins of officials had to be atoned for by animal sacrifices. The priests possessed greater responsibility than the civil rulers, so their sacrifice was more valuable: a bullock (verse 3) rather than a male goat (verse 23).

When the priest sinned, he brought the entire nation under the threat of God's negative sanctions. So, civil representatives—the congregation—of the holy commonwealth participated in the sacrifice.

And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the LORD: and the bullock shall be killed before the LORD (Leviticus 4:15).

Under the New Covenant, elders act on behalf of church members. They possess a claim on double honor because of their added responsibility.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward (I Timothy 5:17–18).

Revelation 3 is the passage wherein John was told by God to write letters to angels at each of seven churches. These were not supernatural angels, for whom there was no postal zip code. They were messengers—the same Greek word used for angel—meaning pastors.

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth (Revelation 3:14–16).

This is corporate responsibility, which is mediated by pastoral authority.

D. Family Covenant

Eve was responsible to God through Adam. There is no text that indicates that God spoke to her directly prior to His examination of her after the Fall. She was also less responsible for her sin than Adam was for his. This, for two reasons. First,

Adam was formed first. “For Adam was first formed, then Eve” (I Timothy 2:13). God spoke directly to Adam. There was less likelihood of his not knowing exactly who God was. He received God’s instructions first. He worked alone initially, naming the animals, learning about God and the garden. He possessed greater knowledge. With greater knowledge comes greater responsibility (Luke 12:47–48). Adam was then placed over Eve by God. Eve heard about all this from Adam, not from God or from first-hand experience. Second, Eve was deceived. Adam sinned knowingly. “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (I Timothy 2:14).

So, the degree of personal responsibility differed because of family hierarchy. Those who are lower on the ladder of family responsibility have less responsibility. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church:

Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children (II Corinthians 12:14).

This has to do with the covenantal issue of inheritance. Children are supposed to inherit assets from their parents. This is an aspect of the expansion of the kingdom of God. It is also part of the process of extending man’s dominion over nature.

Women in the family are subordinate to men: “For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man” (I Corinthians 11:8–9).

Responsibility is always individual.

The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin (Deuteronomy 24:16).

Nevertheless, in a case of family sacrilege, Achan and his entire household were put to death. The father’s sin, with the

connivance of family members, had put the entire nation at risk: the wrath of God.

And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day (Joshua 7:24–26).

Achan represented his family before God. His family in turn represented the nation. In this system of hierarchical responsibility, God enforced His law through civil government.

E. Civil Covenant

Moses' father-in-law suggested that Moses set up a series of appeals courts, so that the long line of disputants in front of his tent would be shortened. Moses took this advice (Exodus 18). This was not a top-down system of rule. It was bottom-up.

We have seen that Leviticus 4 teaches that civil rulers were responsible for their own inadvertent sins. The priests had to offer sacrifice on behalf of the civil rulers' sins and on behalf of the nation. The rulers were representatives of the nation before God. They were mediators.

David numbered the people of Israel, despite the fact that holy war was not imminent. Joab warned David not to do this (I Samuel 24:3). David ignored Joab's advice (verse 3). David soon paid the price, but only indirectly. Seventy thousand men paid it directly.

For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. So Gad came

to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man. So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men (II Samuel 24:11–15).

David preferred to avoid the embarrassment of being pursued by his enemies. He even misinterpreted Gad's message. Gad had not said that David's enemies would capture him, only pursue him. David was willing to accept, on behalf of the nation, seven years of famine.

God was comparatively merciful. He sent a pestilence that killed "only" 70,000 men—not a gender-neutral distribution. These men had been numbered by David. Their commander, David, had sinned. Of course, so had they. God was really after them. He used David, the civil mediator, to get to them. "And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah" (II Samuel 24:1).

Lesson: There is a civil hierarchy of responsibility. When civil rulers do the wrong thing, the people represented by them suffer the consequences.

This has not changed in the New Covenant era. Pontius Pilate attempted to frighten Jesus because he possessed the power of life and death over Him. "Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" (John 19:10). Jesus' response was to insist that Pilate possessed such power only because God had granted it to him. "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11a).

Pilate was a Roman official. He was not under the Mosaic Covenant. Jesus then drew a conclusion: "Therefore he that

delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin” (John 19:11b). Implication: The Jews were under the Mosaic law and were therefore more responsible than Pilate was, as Rome’s agent. This two-part argument convinced Pilate to try once again to persuade the Jewish rulers not to ask him to crucify Jesus (verse 12).

The rulers of Israel insisted that Jesus be crucified. “But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus” (Matthew 27:20). This leadership decision proved costly.

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children (Matthew 27:24–25).

This self-maledictory oath—a covenant oath—sealed Israel’s doom. About 40 years later, Israel revolted against Rome. The Roman legions invaded Israel, burned the temple, and scattered the people.

Paul wrote of civil magistrates that they are ministers of God (Romans 12:4). A minister ministers, that is, he mediates between God and man.

Conclusion

Hierarchies are inescapable. The covenant has an element of hierarchy. This means judicial representation. Adam spoke for God to Eve. Adam and Eve together spoke and acted on behalf of the creation. When God cursed them, He also cursed the creation (Genesis 3:19).

ETHICS/LAW

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

GENESIS 2:15–17

A. Dominion Covenant

Adam faced a positive command in the garden: to dress it. This was stage one in the comprehensive command given to all mankind:

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth (Genesis 1:28).

God gave Adam a negative command: Do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Everything else was permitted. But God placed a “no trespassing” sign around one tree. This was God’s private, exclusive property. Around it was an ethical boundary.

Law is an invisible boundary. It declares certain thoughts, words, and deeds to be off limits.

Every covenant has boundaries. Without boundaries, there is no covenant. Before the Fall, there was a boundary. After the Fall, God added two more boundaries: around the tree of life and around the garden.

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life (Genesis 3:22–24).

The history of mankind until the advent of Jesus was a history of additional boundaries. There were boundaries around prohibited sacrifices. Cain violated this boundary, so God rejected his sacrifice.

But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him (Genesis 4:5–7).

In each case, there was grace before there was law. God gave Adam life and the garden. Then He imposed a law. God gave Adam and Eve animal coverings for their bodies before He set up the two new boundaries. He gave Cain agricultural bounty before He imposed the sacrificial system. This points to an important biblical conclusion: *Grace precedes law*. Man is always in debt to God. God is never in debt to man. But is grace a debt? Yes, for it increases our responsibility. “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:48).

Jesus described the history of mankind in terms of the parable of the talents. An owner delegates responsibility over

economic assets to his servants. This is an act of grace. Then he departs. This provides an arena for testing. God did the same with Adam in the garden.

For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey (Matthew 25:14–15).

There were boundaries around each servant's capital. Each servant had an equivalent degree of responsibility. Each would be held accountable in terms of the original allocation of capital.

There are laws of commission and laws of omission.

For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin (Romans 7:19–25).

B. Individual Covenant

Begin with the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). These are two sets of five commandments each: priestly (verses 2–12) and kingly (verses 13–17). The five commands in each of the two sets parallel the five points of the biblical covenant model.

The commandments are directed at individuals. They are followed in the next three chapters by a series of representative case laws that are also individual laws.

God made a covenant with Noah, who represented his family:

But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee (Genesis 6:18).

After the Flood, Noah represented more than his family. He represented all of creatures on earth.

And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth (Genesis 9:9–11).

To get to this extension of Adam's covenant, there had been boundaries. They were the supreme physical boundaries in man's post-Fall history: the boundaries of the ark. Inside, there was life. Outside, there was death.

As soon as the water receded, Noah offered a sacrifice. "And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar" (Genesis 8:20). He imitated Abel, not Cain.

God made a covenant with Abraham. There were boundaries involved: anatomical.

And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised (Genesis 17:9–10).

Citing Jeremiah 31, the author of the epistle to the Hebrews described God's covenant in terms of laws written on individual hearts.

For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them

by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people (Hebrews 8:8–10).

The promise was to a people, but the fulfillment is manifested in individuals. The principle of the one and the many—unity and diversity—is maintained.

C. Church Covenant

Church law is seen most clearly in Paul's warnings to the church at Corinth to honor the Lord's Supper, which was a positive sanction.

Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come (I Corinthians 11:33–34).

There are also negative requirements.

But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils (I Corinthians 10:20–21).

Paul challenged the church at Corinth for its lax attitude toward sexual sins (I Corinthians 5).

Paul told Timothy to exercise leadership in the church at Ephesus (I Timothy 1:3). This meant that he should teach the church to enforce the law ecclesiastically.

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured

persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine (I Timothy 1:8–10).

The first church council debated the Mosaic law as it applied to gentiles. The council then sent this letter to the regional churches:

For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well (Acts 15:28–29).

Then there is the Great Commission:

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matthew 28:18–28).

There can be no church without a covenant, and no covenant without law.

D. Family Covenant

There are boundaries in marriage. They include and exclude. Jesus was clear about this: one man, one wife, permanently, unless one of them breaks the marriage covenant by breaking the law against adultery.

And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso

marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery (Matthew 19:5-9).

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews wrote: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).

There are economic requirements. "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Timothy 5:8).

There are hierarchical requirements.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:1-4).

There are emotional requirements.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself (Ephesians 5:25-28).

There is no covenant apart from laws. This applies to the marriage covenant.

E. Civil Covenant

Under the Mosaic Covenant, the civil government enforced a multitude of laws. The civil government was enforced through a system of courts (Exodus 18). After Moses had implemented Jethro's suggestion, the nation covenanted with God (Exodus 19). Then God gave them the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). Then He gave them case law applications (Exodus 21-23).

John the baptist was asked by tax collectors and Roman

soldiers about the morality of their callings. He warned them that they were under restraints.

Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages (Luke 3:12–14).

The Pharisees tried to compromise Jesus by making Him say something negative about the hated Roman rulers. They failed. He made it clear that Caesar, representing the civil government, possessed valid claims to obedience. Jesus used a coin that had Caesar's image on it to make His point: Private property rights are bounded by valid ownership claims by the civil government.

Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's (Matthew 22:19–21).

Paul wrote to Timothy that God's law is good. Then he provided a list of Mosaic civil case laws that he regarded as good.

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine (I Timothy 1:8–10).

Conclusion

Every covenant is marked by laws. These laws serve as boundaries for thought, word, and deed. There are limits beyond

which men may not lawfully pass. The archetype is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Some laws are positive, such as the archetype positive law: Exercise dominion.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth (Genesis 1:26–28).

Some laws are negative, such as the archetype negative law: Do not eat from this tree. But there are always laws.

OATH/SANCTIONS

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

EXODUS 19:5-8

A. Dominion Covenant

The nation of Israel had assembled at Mt. Sinai. God was about to renew His covenant with them, the covenant that He had established with Abraham 430 years before (Galatians 3:17). This covenant renewal began with an oath.

The oath bound the people as a nation to God. He in turn bound Himself to the nation of Israel. It was a mutual promise. After the oath was ratified, it was followed by the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). To these were added specific laws that applied the principles of these commandments to specific circumstances (Exodus 21-23). But before the law came an oath.

When we look at the covenant God made with Abraham, we find that this oath was unique. God promised that He

would honor it. He confirmed this is a unique way. He gave Abram—not yet re-named Abraham (father of nations)—special instructions.

And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. (Genesis 15:9–11).

That night, an amazing event took place.

And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates (Genesis 15:17–18).

What was this all about? Like the fire that went before the escaping Israelites by night, so did this fire consume the pieces of the dismembered animals. Symbolically, the cut animals represented both parties of the covenant, Abraham and God. He who violated the covenant would be cut up and consumed: negative sanctions. The sacrificial animals on the fiery altar symbolized the broken covenant.

There was a promise of positive sanctions: “Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.” There would be a great multitude of heirs. “And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:5–6).

There had to be an *oath sign* to ratify this covenant. For God, it was the fire passing through the cut-up animals. For the men of Israel, this oath-sign was circumcision. “This is

my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you” (Genesis 17:10–11). Without this sign on his flesh, no Israelite could claim the promises of the covenant.

The promise was that in the fourth generation after Israel went down to Egypt, the nation would conquer Canaan. “But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Genesis 15:16). The fourth generation, born in the wilderness, had not been circumcised. So, as soon as they had crossed the Jordan River into Canaan, Joshua ordered the men circumcised (Joshua 5:8).

Israel was given another oath-sign: Passover. Here, the nation one night each year celebrated their deliverance from Egypt.

Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee: But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt (Deuteronomy 16:5–6).

Passover was an act of covenant renewal. Only those who had been circumcised had lawful access to this rite. “And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof” (Exodus 12:48).

B. Individual Covenant

A covenant is sealed by an oath before God. This oath is a special kind: self-maledictory (“bad speaking”). The oath-taker calls down God’s negative sanctions himself, should he

ever break the law of the covenant. But, by ratifying the oath, he claims legally the promised positive sanctions. This is what Abram did on behalf of his heirs. He had no heirs, but he believed God's promise. "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:6).

Abraham exercised faith in God's promise. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews cited this passage.

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:8-10).

He had no city. He trusted God to provide a city, not for him but for his heirs: the fourth generation after Jacob's descent into Egypt. God fulfilled His promise in Joshua's day, right on schedule.

The gentiles became the heirs of the promise to Abraham: "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). Paul wrote to the church of Galatia:

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:26-29).

We are heirs of the Promise to Abraham. But the oath sign has changed from circumcision, which was restricted to Israelite males, to baptism, which is open to all: Jews, gentiles, slaves, freemen, men, women. But there is a mandatory oath.

But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt

believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:8–10).

Peter told the assembled crowd at the temple:

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call (Acts 2:36–39).

John the baptist had warned: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36).

Abraham believed God, and God accounted this for righteousness. It is no different today. The covenant comes in the form of a promise that involves sanctions, positive and negative. It is sealed by a formal verbal oath before God: a confession of faith in God’s promises of either blessing or cursing. Ever since the days of Abraham, the personal covenant has had an oath-sign: circumcision or baptism.

The other oath-sign is the Lord’s Supper. It is a corporate act of covenant renewal. But the covenant’s negative sanctions for sin fall on individuals.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause

many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged (I Corinthians 11:26–31).

C. Church Covenant

God made a promise to Israel: “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exodus 19:6a). Peter quoted this passage and applied it to the church. “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (I Peter 2:9). But didn’t this promise apply only to the nation of Israel? No, for it was a conditional promise, meaning an “if... then” promise. “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine” (Exodus 19:5).

Repeatedly, Israel had disobeyed God. With the crucifixion of Christ, God finally severed His covenantal relation with the nation of Israel. Jesus had warned the leaders of Israel that this would happen. “Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matthew 21:43). What was this new nation? The church. Paul wrote: “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16).

What is the church’s oath? Paul provided one:

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory (I Timothy 3:16).

What is the church’s oath-sign? The administration of baptism. The church does this in the name of God.

There is also covenant renewal: the Lord’s Supper. He who is judged by the church as being in sin is judicially separated

from this rite. He becomes an excommunicant, i.e., a former communicant. This is the church's most fearful sanction. It means being handed over to Satan.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (I Corinthians 5:4–5).

D. Family Covenant

The family begins with a marriage. Two individuals make mutual promises under God. In doing so, they become one. Paul compared this with the love of Christ for His church.

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it (Ephesians 5:23–25).

To deny that the mutual promises of husband and wife are permanently binding is necessarily to argue that Christ's promise to His church is not permanently binding, and that the church's promise to Him is not permanently binding.

There is a covenant oath. It is public and verbal. Mutual promises are made by the parties. In most cultures, some sort of exchange is made, such as rings. There may be other traditions marking the "cutting" of the covenant. The Bible does not mandate any form of oath, but because the family is established by covenant, societies have marriage vows. These are legally binding promises. The common Christian oath in English is the promise "to have and to hold 'til death do us part"—old English, surely.

Unlike the church covenant, there is no covenant renewal ceremony.

E. Civil Covenant

The civil government is a covenant institution because God has appointed its officers as ministers (Romans 13:4). The question is: Where in the Bible is a civil covenant oath described?

Under the Mosaic covenant, a king was anointed by a prophet or a high priest. Samuel anointed Saul and David. In Solomon's case, David had already sworn as king that Solomon would inherit. He told this to Nathan the prophet and Zadok the priest.

Even as I swear unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day. Then Bath-sheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever. And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon (I Kings 1:30–34).

With Israel's kings, death was the judicial basis of the transfer. The anointing of the next king was an act of covenant renewal.

Prior to the first Israelite king, there were judges. They possessed the power of life and death. We have no information on the formal ceremony involved in establishing a judge in his office.

Jesus Christ—as prophet, priest, and king—formally ended Israel's offices of prophet, priest, and king. This became final in A.D. 70 with the fall of Jerusalem. Church ministers have at times been called priests, but they are not priests. They do not offer blood sacrifices. High civil officers used to be called kings, but after 1918, kings have had no power in the West.

Post-Mosaic priests and kings may have the trappings of the Mosaic offices, but in fact they are merely ordained officers of very different institutions. Civil officers are no less ministers just because there are no supreme officers called kings.

In planning a revolt against his father David, Absalom sought support from the people of Israel, pretending to be a just man (II Samuel 15:2–6). So, there was some form of public investiture of civil authority. After Solomon was anointed, someone told the dying King David, “And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is the noise that ye have heard” (I Kings 1:45). The public verbally affirmed the anointing of the king.

In the modern world, naturalized citizens swear allegiance to the nation. Military recruits swear allegiance to the nation. Common citizens do not take a formal oath, but it is implied, which is why they are allowed to vote. Voting is modern politics’ act of covenant renewal.

Conclusion

There are positive and negative sanctions in every covenant. There is also an oath, either verbal or implied. Those who want to gain the benefits of the covenant must accept the penalties of breaking its stipulations.

God promises to uphold a covenant by intervening to enforce its sanctions if the enforcing agency fails to enforce it, so a covenant is more than a contract. God does not promise to enforce a contract if one of the parties violates its stipulations. A covenant is a monopoly in the way that a contract is not. A contract resembles a covenant, which is a model, but a contract is not a covenant. There is no lawful binding oath to God. God will not enforce it. It is not like a vow to God, which has much greater authority (Numbers 30).

SUCCESSION/INHERITANCE

And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

GENESIS 9:8–11

A. Dominion Covenant

This passage contains the first explicit reference to “covenant” in the Bible. It confirms the assignment given by God to Noah, which in turn re-confirmed the assignment that had been given to Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:26–28).

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things (Genesis 9:1–3).

This covenant extends from Adam to those born in the final generation in history.

And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth (Genesis 9:15–16).

This is the dominion covenant. It defines mankind in terms of man's exercise of dominion over the creation and under God. It is a hierarchical covenant, as all covenants are.

Because of Adam's rebellion, which carried with it the negative sanction of death, God added a redemptive element to the covenant, in order to extend it through history. The redemptive element was based a promise. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15).

The next covenant in the Bible after Noah's was between God and Abraham. It involved the promise of land and descendants. It was a covenant of inheritance, as all covenants are.

As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations (Genesis 17:4–9).

God made a promise to Abraham: The Canaanites would be disinherited by the fourth generation of Israelites after Jacob's descent into Egypt. "But in the fourth generation they

shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Genesis 15:16). So, the guaranteed inheritance of Abraham’s heirs would be at the expense of the guaranteed disinheritance of the Canaanites. This illustrates a fundamental principle of covenantal inheritance: It always comes at the expense of covenantal disinheritance.

Next, God made a covenant with the people of Israel under Moses. It extended the covenant made with Abraham. It reconfirmed the promise made to Abraham. It explicitly promised the negative sanction of disinheritance.

And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God (Deuteronomy 8:19–20).

This was not a prophecy in the sense of a forecast. It was a conditional promise: “If . . . then.”

The written New Testament says that there has been a replacement covenant for the Mosaic covenant (Hebrews 8:6–7). This covenant is said to be an everlasting covenant. “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant” (Hebrews 13:20). So, it has to be the same covenant as the one God made with Noah. Rainbows still shine. Then what is different about this covenant? Jesus Christ has replaced the high priest of the Mosaic covenant.

This covenant is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. So said Zacharias, a priest, the father of John the baptist. He announced this at the birth of his son, a relative of Jesus through his mother, Elizabeth. It is a covenant filled with blessings for the heirs of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for

us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways (Luke 1:68–76).

Who are these heirs? Paul said they are all those who believe in Christ.

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham (Galatians 3:6–9).

B. Individual Covenant

Jesus said that the supreme covenantal inheritance is eternal life. Eternal life involves this life, too.

Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life (Mark 10:28–30).

How can this be? Because a covenantal relationship is always hierarchical. God is supreme. Jesus taught that He, as the good shepherd, will give eternal life to His subordinate sheep.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand (John 10:27–29).

How could He guarantee this to His followers? Because of this: “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30).

The Bible teaches that individuals who are covenanted with God will, through their heirs, inherit the earth. Those who are meek before God can and will exercise dominion over creation.

What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth. The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant (Psalm 25:12–14).

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace (Psalm 37:9–11).

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5).

C. Church Covenant

The church will survive through the ages. Then it will enter eternity. It is the only human institution that will. The family won't—no marriage or reproduction (Matthew 22:30). The civil government won't—no sin to suppress. Jesus told the disciples:

Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:28–30).

He told them that the extension of the kingdom cannot be thwarted—not even by hell, which the church, through

the gospel, puts under siege. “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). (Note: The church is not under siege by hell. The reverse is true.)

A promise was made by David in the Psalms.

A Psalm of David. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:1–4).

This was a messianic prophecy. Jesus fulfilled it, as He told the Pharisees. This silenced them permanently.

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions (Matthew 22:41–46).

Therefore, the process of subduing the earth continues. It will continue until death is overcome at the end of time.

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (I Corinthians 15:25–28).

Jesus is in heaven. So, the extension of His kingdom rule has not been done by Him in person. It has been done by His

church, whose members will inherit the earth. Satan also does not rule his kingdom in person on earth. It is no less real than Christ's kingdom.

D. Family Covenant

The strongest statement in the Bible of the family covenant is found in the account of God's covenant with Abram. God changed his name to Abraham: father of nations.

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee (Genesis 17:1-7).

Paul interpreted this promise in a unique way. He identified the promised seed as Jesus Christ.

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise (Galatians 3:16-18).

He was making a theological point: the promise of inheritance that was part of God's original covenant with Abraham was not based on law, but by the grace of God. This grace has now come to the gentiles. So, while the Abrahamic covenant sounded as though this covenant was made with a family

unit, this was not a biological family. It was a covenantal family. The covenantal family unit is established by confession of faith. The church is the heir of the promise to the Abraham's family. This is how the gentiles inherit the promises given to Abraham.

The heir of Abraham was not Ishmael, his firstborn son. It was Isaac. The heir of Isaac was Jacob, the second-born son, not Esau. Biology was not the basis of the inheritance. Confession of faith was.

Family units become part of God's covenant by way of church membership, which is publicly announced by baptism. This is why Paul baptized all the members of the household of the jailer in the city of Philippi.

And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed [their] stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway (Acts 16:27-33).

E. Civil Covenant

Where there is crime, there must also be civil government (Romans 13:1-7). God does not let criminals go unpunished and unthreatened.

But what about crime? Will it get worse? Will good people be increasingly besieged by evil-doers, even as Lot was besieged in Sodom? The Bible teaches otherwise.

But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall

flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it. For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever (Micah 4:1-5).

But when will these last days be? The author of the epistle to the Hebrews said that they had already begun in his day.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (Hebrews 1:1-4).

Jesus is the heir of all things. His inheritance is greater than the inheritance of angels. So, what can Christians expect in the future? The extension of God's justice, including civil justice, across the face of the earth.

Conclusion

The covenant with the first Adam and the covenant with the second Adam, Jesus Christ, both offered an inheritance to God's people. This inheritance necessarily involves *the progressive disinheritance of the enemies of Christ*, as surely as the inheritance of the Israelites involved the disinheritance of the Canaanites.

The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit (Psalm 34:15–18).

For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off (Psalm 37:22).

For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off (Psalm 37:28).

Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off (Psalm 37:34–38).

This is one of the continuing themes in the Bible. Covenant-keepers cheat themselves and their heirs by not believing these passages and by not planning their lives in terms of the fulfillment of these promises. This is what Bible prophecy is all about: believing the promises of God and then working to implement them.

CONCLUSION TO PART 1

God deals with His creation by means of covenants. The primary covenant is the dominion covenant (Genesis 1:26–28). God created man to rule over creation on His behalf. This covenant defines mankind. It also defines the creation's relationship to God. It was re-confirmed with Noah (Genesis 9:1–3). It has never been repealed. In this sense, there is only one covenant. It will never end. It will extend into eternity, for it defines both man and the creation.

It was disrupted by Adam's rebellion. We commonly call this modified covenant the Old Covenant, but this is misleading if it is not seen as an extension of the original Adamic covenant in the garden.

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:16–17).

God did not tell Adam to subdue the earth and multiply. He did not have to. That was already part of the covenant. What God added was a test, which had a negative sanction: death. Death marks men's covenants in history.

The Edenic covenant in turn was an extension of the pre-Adamic covenant, where God spoke on Adam's behalf before Adam's creation. God spoke representatively for Adam, meaning covenantally. This is good news. We should rejoice in the fact that Christ, as high priest, speaks representatively

for us again. “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:34). So does the Holy Spirit.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:26–27).

There were modifications in the post-Fall Adamic covenant. The main one was this: The civil covenant was added to deal institutionally with sin.

The dominion covenant is still in force. The Adamic post-Fall covenant had a promise: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15). This promise was re-confirmed with Abraham. It was fulfilled by Christ, the promised Seed. Paul specifically said that Christ was this Seed. “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Galatians 3:16).

So, with the fulfillment of the promise made to Adam, the New Covenant began. Christ crushed Satan’s head at the resurrection. The New Covenant replaced the post-Fall Adamic covenant. But the post-Fall Adamic covenant was not strictly a replacement of the pre-Fall Adamic dominion covenant. Neither does the New Covenant replace the dominion covenant. Men are still under God, still over the creation, and still bound by the terms of that covenant.

So, there is a single covenant with four manifestations so far: pre-Adamic, pre-Fall, post-Fall, and post-resurrection. In the final three, the distinctions have to do with the covenantal sanction of death: promised, imposed, and definitively removed, though not finally removed. Paul was clear about

the centrality of Christ's resurrection—so adamant that he repeated himself in the same passage, which is unique in all of his epistles.

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins (I Corinthians 15:12–17).

There will be a fifth manifestation after the final resurrection. Death will cease for resurrected covenant-keepers (I Corinthians 15:26). The civil covenant will be removed: no sin to suppress. So will the marriage covenant.

The dominion covenant is the primary covenant, for it defines mankind and the creation. It was announced before man was created. It was implemented after Adam but before Eve. Its implementation began with the additional announcement of the boundary of the tree and the sanction of death. There had been no boundaries and no negative sanction in the pre-Adamic announcement of the covenant. So, in this sense, the post-final judgment manifestation of the pre-Adamic dominion covenant will be the restoration of that original version of the covenant: no defining test of a boundary restriction and no negative sanction. We can get on with our work.

There was another covenant: the covenant with Satan. I discuss this covenant in Part 2.

PART 2

COVENANTAL SOCIAL THEORY

INTRODUCTION TO PART 2

We have seen that the biblical covenant model is divided into five sections. In this section, I apply this insight to social theory. The five aspects of the biblical covenant model establish the five major categories of social theory: sovereignty, authority, law, judgment, and kingdom. There are other aspects of social theory, limited only by the imaginations of social theorists. But these five categories are inescapable for social theory. All social theorists either invoke them or assume them.

If I am correct about my assertion that these five points are inescapable in developing social theory, then they must also be used by non-Christian social theorists. Their five points must be applied in ways that are consistent with the structure of the Bible's five points, yet different from the Bible's conclusions regarding the applications.

There is a second covenant in history. This is Satan's covenant. When the serpent tempted Eve, and Eve tempted Adam, a tree was involved. That tree was an aspect of point three of the biblical covenant model: boundaries. To violate its boundaries would be to break God's law.

It would do something else. It would inaugurate Satan's covenant. Why? Because the prohibited meal was an oath sign for Satan's covenant: point four. It would place Adam and Eve under a new, rival covenant. Just as eating from the tree of life would have been an oath-sign, one which would have given them eternal life—the supreme positive benefit for covenant-keepers—so was eating from the forbidden tree.

So, whenever Adam and Eve ate from either tree, they would necessarily participate in a communion meal. God was not in the Garden. Satan was not in the garden. But eating from either tree would have constituted a covenantal act: their public, judicially binding acceptance of God's covenant or Satan's. Either way, the communion meal would have served as a formal rejection of the rival covenant. This is why Paul taught that eating at the table of Satan is prohibited.

But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils (I Corinthians 10:20–21).

In this section, I survey the implications of both covenants for social theory.

I believe that it would be academically fruitful to examine specific theorists' social systems in terms of these five points. It would also be useful to classify varying conflicting approaches to social theory in terms of these five categories. This book suggests some preliminary questions to ask of the writings of "dead white male" social theorists—as well as other shades and gender preferences.

I focus here on the dominant alternative to biblical social theory in the modern world: Darwinism. Because virtually all academically serious and politically influential humanistic social theories in the West are Darwinian to the core, I paint with a broad brush—or tar and feather, as the case may be.

The Bible begins with a theory of the origin of the universe: the six-day creation. So does modern cosmology: the Big Bang. I cover this in Chapter 6. Second, I deal with the resulting fundamental debate: creationism vs. evolutionism. Third, I cover the area of law: theonomy vs. autonomy. Fourth, I deal with the debate over judgment: casuistry vs. ideology. Finally, I explore the debate over civil government: theocracy vs. democracy.

To call democracy into question today is to commit sacrilege—political sacrilege. Modern humanism acknowledges only one kind of sacrilege: political. This is a matter of a deeply felt religious faith in politics. It is the heart of the covenantal conflict today.

Biblically speaking, voting in civil government is legitimate. Voting is a form of covenant renewal. Voting enables those who are under civil sanctions by way of a civil oath, whether implicit or explicit, to replace their covenantal representatives. As a way to empower covenant members, voting is legitimate. The covenantal question is this: “Which god does the civil government represent: the God of the Bible or the god of collective mankind?” Humanism affirms the latter. Christianity should affirm the former, but it no longer does.

As you will see, there is a war between the two concepts of the covenant as applied to social theory. This is because there is a war between God’s covenant and Satan’s. *There is no way to reconcile these rival interpretations of the covenant.* But there have been many attempts to reconcile them in the field of social theory, always offered by Christian academics. This tradition goes back to the post-apostolic church, when Christian defenders of the faith adopted Greek philosophical categories in preference to the Bible’s categories. They claimed there was no contradiction. But there was.

Today’s Christian defenders of reconciliation propose what they say are practical compromises, usually in politics, but they rarely or never discuss the underlying covenantal bases of their proposed compromises. There is a reason for this: *The content of their underlying covenantal frameworks is some variation of the humanists’ content.* So, the proponents of reconciliation prefer not to discuss their presuppositions in detail. Tactically speaking, I can hardly blame them. Ethically, I do blame them. They are leading the sheep astray.

To see how far astray, read Part 2.

CREATION VS. EVOLUTION

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

GENESIS 1:1

This is the covenantal issue of **origins**.

The concept of origins is an inescapable concept. It is never a question of origins vs. no origins. It is always a question of what origins.

There is a doctrine of origins in every cosmology. To understand any cosmology, begin with its doctrine of origins.

Why is this issue so important? Because *origins identify the source of sovereignty in history*. Rival theories of origins reveal rival theories of sovereignty. Rival theories of origins reveal rival covenants.

To answer the question, “How does the world work?” we must have a theory of origins. We ask: “How did the world work at the beginning?” The answer to the question leads to the next: “Does the world still work this way?” All theories of origins offer this answer: “Yes and no.” The “yes” answer reveals a theory of continuity. The “no” answer reveals a theory of discontinuity, also known as change. Every theory of the world contains both continuity and discontinuity.

Are you the same person you were on your day of birth? Yes and no. Genetically, there is great continuity. Your fin-

gerprints are the same. So, if you were to say, “No, I’m really someone else entirely,” people might suspect that you are insane (or else think you are a philosophy professor—which in some ways can be a similar condition). Still, in many ways, you are different from the day you were born.

What is true of you is also true of the universe.

I. Christian Covenantalism: Divine Creation Out of Nothing

Sovereignty. The Bible teaches that God was here before the universe. It also teaches that God is different from the universe. He created it by speaking it into existence. He did not assemble it out of bits and pieces of pre-existing matter. He also did not create it as an extension of His own being. He spoke, day by day. It appeared, day by day—not, be it noted, week by week or eon by eon. The universe reflects the Creator.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened (Romans 1:20–21).

The universe is therefore cosmically personal.

There is a fundamental difference between the Creator and the creation. Biblical thought should begin with this presupposition. Whenever it doesn’t, it begins to resemble anti-biblical thought.

Authority. “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:2). God was above the waters. This is because God was above the creation. There is a hierarchy in the cosmos. God was above the creation in every sense. He ruled it as a king rules a kingdom.

Here, the Bible teaches continuity. God is still above the creation. Probably the most eloquent affirmation of this is

the final section of the book of Job, chapters 38–39. God describes Himself as absolutely sovereign, beginning with the creation.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:4–7)

Law. The first chapter of Genesis describes the week of creation. God commands; the universe responds. God lays down the law. The universe obeys.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good (Genesis 1:11–12).

Judgment. Day by day, God commands. Day by day, the universe responds. Day by day, God offers His evaluation of His day's work.

And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good (Genesis 1:10).

And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good (Genesis 1:21).

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day (Genesis 1:31).

God is the supreme evaluator. That is, He is the supreme judge. He evaluated the results of His work, and He pronounced them good. God asked Job rhetorically: "Shall he

that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it" (Job 40:2).

As the supreme sovereign, God delegates authority, establishes law, and imposes sanctions in terms of the degree of authority (Luke 12:48–49). These sanctions are positive and negative. He does this in history, not just in eternity. His sanctions have effects in history.

Kingdom. There is only one kingdom of God. It has two realms: heaven and earth. It was created this way. God's throne is in heaven. His footstool is on earth.

And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left (I Kings 22:19).

The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men (Psalm 11:4).

Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? (Isaiah 66:1).

Jesus called the kingdom of God in history "the kingdom of heaven." This kingdom operates the arena of history, where those who are covenanted to God are engaged in spiritual and cultural warfare against those who are covenanted to Satan. There will be no interruption of this perpetual and full-time conflict until the final day of judgment.

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first

the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn (Matthew 13:24–30).

Matthew 13 is the major New Testament section that deals with the kingdom of God/heaven. But several of His parables do, too. In all of them, we learn that God's kingdom is not exclusively or even mainly an inner kingdom. It is a visible kingdom in history. Yet it has an invisible realm in heaven, where God's throne is (Revelation 4).

God's kingdom develops in history. It does not evolve into something different.

Conclusion. The doctrine of God's special creation insists that the rate of change of geological and biological development in history is radically discontinuous from the week of origins. God created the earth in six days. He did not create it over eons of time. He created it in a specific sequence, and He placed man over creation on the sixth day. From the Fall of man onward, the world has been in sin and under God's curse (Genesis 3:17–19). This will not change until the final judgment: the final discontinuous event in history.

The Bible teaches linear history: creation, fall, redemption, progress, and final judgment.

II. Non-Christian Covenantalism: Self-Creation Out of Something

Sovereignty. There are many rival theories of origins. Eastern religions offer a theory of an eternal god who is impersonal. It is conscious only of itself. Out of this god's being came the creation. Into that god creation will eventually return. Eastern religion tends to be cyclical because its theory of origins and its theory of the final end is impersonal.

Modern evolutionary theory offers a theory of origins called the Big Bang. Approximately 13.7 billion years ago, a tiny compressed speck of matter-energy exploded in a tiny fraction of a second. The universe is the result of that cosmic explosion. Time elapsed: about three seconds. But the basic

explosion took place, scientists tell us, in 10^{-43} seconds. That is a fraction of a second: specifically, 1 divided by 10 times 43 zeroes. That was the Plank Epoch. (I am not kidding; they call this an epoch.) Then came the Grand Unification Epoch. It lasted 10^{-33} seconds. This was followed by the Electroweak Epoch, a long, drawn-out epoch of 10^{-12} seconds. That's drifting along at about 12 trillionths of a second. Then came the Hadron Epoch, which clocked in at 10^{-6} seconds, a mere ten millionth of a second. "We were sailing along, on Moonlight Bay..." And so forth.

No one is allowed to ask, "But what existed before the speck?" He is dismissed as a child who might ask his parent: "What existed before God?" A parent is wise enough to reply: "God always existed." This answer is not available to the evolutionary cosmologist. His answer is much closer to Topsy's view of her origins: "I just growed." Call it *Uncle Tom's Universe*.

Authority. Evolutionary theory insists that, prior to man, there was no cosmic purpose. The universe was not directional. It was not personal. It just grew.

Then, much later in the impersonal process (13.7 billion years), there was a leap of being: man. Man has at long last brought purpose to the universe. He is self-conscious. He understands the laws of evolution. He can manipulate his environment to achieve his goals. So, while man did not create the universe, he has inherited it. By default, he is now in charge. He has moved into a position of sovereignty—no higher court of appeal—at least until the earth is invaded by a more powerful species, or a plague wipes all men from the earth, or a supernova kills everything on earth. In any case, the heat death of the universe will take place in about "one followed by 200 zeroes" years (pessimists), or perhaps 1,000 zeroes (optimists), down the road. This final event is regarded by scientists as close to inevitable: the culmination of the second law of thermodynamics. (Universe: fast origin, slow development, even slower eschatology.)

The concept of “divine right” is simple to describe: *no higher court of appeal*. Man possesses divine right in the conventional Darwinian cosmology. The only major exception is the “deep ecology” movement, which asserts that nature possesses superior authority. However, because nature is not able to defend itself self-consciously in the court of public opinion, since it is devoid of consciousness, a defense of nature requires men—deep ecologists—to speak on nature’s behalf. Mankind will then judge the cogency of the deep ecologists’ arguments. So far, mankind is not paying much attention to these arguments.

Law. Originally, there was only impersonal law: the law of cosmic evolution. This was a combination of unbreakable astrophysical laws and subatomic random changes.

Then life appeared—a supremely discontinuous event. This occurred about 3.77 billion years ago, we are told. Life is said to be governed by impersonal biological and genetic laws that are interrupted by random genetic mutations, most of which are destructive, but some of which occasionally produce a more hardy species.

Man now is gaining greater understanding of the laws of impersonal nature, so he has become a source of directional change in nature. Cosmic impersonalism has therefore become cosmic personalism in this sector of the cosmos. It’s a start. As the prophet Zechariah said, “For who hath despised the day of small things?” (Zechariah 4:10). Certainly not Darwinian evolutionists.

Judgment. There was no judge of the universe prior to the advent of man. The universe was impersonal. It was heading nowhere in particular. It was and remains headed in general toward the heat death of the universe, when the second law of thermodynamics will complete its cosmic work: the complete consumption of kinetic (residual) energy. The eternal night of frozen matter will begin. But, on that day, there will be no Judge who pronounces final judgment on the history of the universe, for there is no Creator who launched it. It just grew. It will die. Ashes to frozen ashes, dust to frozen dust.

The universe is cosmically meaningless in the Darwinian worldview. It has temporary meaning only because mankind pronounces judgment, day by day. But mankind is divided. No one speaks finally for mankind. Not yet, anyway. So, mankind cannot issue a final word of judgment, except against God: the God who cannot possibly be there.

Kingdom. The kingdom of man is a favorite doctrine of Darwinian evolutionists. It is the product of a leap of being: man's ascent from the lower animals. Man's brain was a radical leap, something that could not have evolved from minute steps imposed by his environment. This evolutionary leap cannot be explained by original Darwinism. Alfred Wallace was the co-discoverer of the principle of biological evolution through unplanned natural selection. To make sure that Charles Darwin got credit, his friends arranged that an obscure academic journal publish some extracts of Darwin's journal in the same issue that Wallace's essay appeared. This was in 1858. He later became a spiritualist. He argued that the evolution of man's mind could not have taken place as their theory had asserted that natural selection must always operate: slowly. Man's mind must have evolved in one discontinuous leap.

The kingdom of man only exists in the sense of the dominion covenant: God's command to all mankind to subdue the earth (Genesis 1:27–28). From the time of Adam's rebellion (Genesis 3), the kingdom of man has been divided into two parts: Satan's and God's. Each part has two realms: historical and trans-historical, which in turn is divided into heaven and hell. Each kingdom corporately seeks inheritance in history. Only one will inherit in history: God's.

Satan has a kingdom. It began early: at the time of his rebellion against God. Most people are not formally covenanted to Satan by a verbal oath in history, but they are covenanted by their rebellion against God through Adam. His kingdom exists alongside God's kingdom, and it will do so until the day of final judgment. It develops, as does God's

(Matthew 13:24–31). It does not develop into something different from what it was in principle from the rebellion of Adam in the garden. This means that it does not evolve. It does develop or mature.

Conclusion. The Darwinian evolutionist insists that everything has happened in a continuous way ever since the Big Bang. This is the doctrine of uniformitarianism, which asserts that rates of geological change have not changed. This was the bedrock foundation of original Darwinism, which rested on Charles Lyell's uniformitarian geology. But the doctrine is being abandoned by modern Darwinists in order to account for observed changes of prehistoric species in the paleontological record—changes that cannot be explained by a theory of small, uniformitarian changes. In any case, the Big Bang was an incomparably discontinuous event.

Conclusion

Christian cosmology begins with God, who is a Creator God. He relied on nothing outside Himself. He invoked no higher authority. He was alone until the first day of creation. He shared space with no one. More than any other system of cosmology, the Christian doctrine of origins is personal.

Darwinian cosmology begins with an impersonal speck of matter-energy. It is not quite a theory of the cosmic egg, which is found in many pagan cultures, but it is close enough so as to fulfill the explanatory function of the cosmic egg. Its main advantage over the cosmic egg is that no one goes looking for the cosmic chicken.

Christian cosmology has a theory of divine providence. God, who created the universe, has established secondary laws governing the cosmos. Yet He actively sustains it. He sometimes intervenes personally to provide direction for it. This is not deism.

Darwinian cosmology also has a theory of divine providence. Mankind is the source of this providence, for man has appeared on the scene late in the evolutionary process to

provide meaning, direction, and purpose to what had been a meaningless, directionless, and purposeless autonomous process. But why is this providence divine? By default. There is no higher court of appeal than man's court. This is the doctrine of the divine right of man.

God deals with nature and man as a sovereign over His realm. He has established the laws of nature. He has also established the laws of human society. He enforces these laws.

Darwinian man deals with nature as a sovereign over his realm. He dismisses God as a product of the human mind—a not-too-bright mind—that has importance only to the extent that people believe in God. God is said to possess no claim of sovereignty over either nature or man, especially scientific man, meaning the scientific elite that controls the institutions of higher education.

The battle for the souls of men is fought in modern society in the institutions of higher education. This is a replay of Israel's young men in the court of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 1). The outcome will be much the same. The kingdom of Babylon fell (Daniel 5).

REVELATION VS. REASON

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

JOHN 17:17

This is the covenantal doctrine of **authority**.

Authority is an inescapable concept. It is never a question of authority vs. no authority. It is always a question of whose authority.

Every worldview has a doctrine of authority. Authority is the repository of truth. Every worldview has a concept of truth. If there were no truth, there could be no worldview—no integrating coherence in the midst of disintegrating incoherence. There could therefore be no society. A society's worldview is the officially designated basis of everyone's coherence and understanding. It holds together the pieces, meaning pieces of information but also the perspective of those who gather them and analyze them.

The concept of authority is always hierarchical. Someone always speaks in the name of the source of truth. The supreme authority does not speak to everyone directly all of the time, or even most of the time. In every society, there is always at least one official voice of authority, and usually more than one. The voice of authority is widely believed to speak the truth. The voice of authority is the most reliable source

of accurate knowledge. It stands above all other sources of information, wisdom, and coherence. By means of its access to the truth, the voice of authority declares judgment.

The voice of authority speaks in the name of the sovereign. He possesses legitimacy, or hopes to gain legitimacy, through his connection to the sovereign, as the sovereign's designated representative. He possesses delegated sovereignty, as a vassal possessed authority under an emperor. This is the meaning of all authority.

I. Christian Covenantalism: Knowledge from on High

Sovereignty. Prior to the completion of the Bible, God spoke through prophets, judges, priests, military leaders, and even kings. Moses was a prophet.

And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses. And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face (Deuteronomy 34:9–10).

Because God did not speak with equal clarity to all men, He designated others to speak for Him. He invested them with authority. Without this investiture from the sovereign, no agent can claim legitimacy. Legitimacy is delegated from a greater authority and accepted by lower authorities. Legitimate authority is grounded legally in sovereignty.

Authority. With the closing of the canon of Scripture, no voice of authority can equal the Bible in its authority as the supreme voice of authority in history. Of no other person's word or book can this be said: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16).

Roman Catholics deny this. They assert that the Pope has equal authority in matters of doctrine, as the supreme interpreter of the Bible. This was made official at Vatican I in 1870,

but it had been asserted for over a thousand years. It was this assertion that led to the resistance of Eastern Orthodoxy, and finally to Rome's excommunication of an entire church in 1054. It was this assertion that persuaded the Protestants to protest, beginning with Martin Luther in 1517. The principle of *Sola Scriptura* is the bedrock foundation of Protestantism.

Because of man's sin, his ability to understand and apply the Bible in his life is undercut. The mind of man is twisted.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools (Romans 1:18–22).

So, men need fixed revelation from God: the Bible. This authority judges all men who claim to have a superior voice of authority because of a superior sovereign. We must test the spirits. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). We test a supernatural spirit by testing its self-attesting representative. We use the Bible to do this.

Men also need the Holy Spirit to assist them in their understanding.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:7–8).

Law. The voice of authority lays down the law in the name of the sovereign who established the law. He puts it in language that the common man can understand.

And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it (Deuteronomy 31:9–13).

Supreme earthly authority passed from Moses to the Levitical priests. *This authority was the authority to read the written law before the assembled nation.* The law was fixed. This fixed law was the foundation of the priests' judicial authority.

Judgment. It is not enough to understand the law and God's revelation of Himself and His covenants. There must be appointed agents who possess the authority to implement the law's sanctions. But first, they must interpret the revelation of God's law. Jesus told the disciples, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18). This same authority is possessed by church elders in every era.

Judgment is more than officially imposing the law's sanctions. It is also understanding how God's word applies to specific circumstances. A biblical model is the church at Berea. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Judgment is the work of interpretation, declaration, and implementation.

The Preacher—King Solomon—announced at the end of his philosophical treatise, "Let us hear the conclusion of the

whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14). A return to God’s revealed law, not more philosophy, is the solution to man’s fundamental questions of this life.

Kingdom. The visible marks of a king are his stipulations and his sanctions. Wherever these do not exist, there is no kingdom. The kingdom of God is always marked by the authority of king’s law. This must be His specially revealed law. Any form of law that is said to be common to all mankind, supposedly based on a common reason, does not identify who the Great King is. This is why, in the Mosaic Covenant, the law had to be read before the assembled nation once every seven years (Deuteronomy 31:10–12). The only record of this law-order is the Bible. Its effects had to be visible to covenant-breakers.

Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? (Deuteronomy 4:5–8).

Conclusion. The Bible is the voice of authority. Other forms of knowledge are subordinate to the Bible. Reason is defective due to sin. Man is finite. God is infinite. The Bible is God’s means of providing reliable understanding so that men can exercise authority lawfully and productively.

II. Non-Christian Covenantalism:

Knowledge from Below

Sovereignty. Covenant-breaking man lodges sovereignty either so far outside the creation that the sovereign—personal

or impersonal—pays no attention to man, as in pure deism or in Hinduism, or inside the creation, where it is subject to the changes in the creation, as in animism and pantheism. Under these rival conditions, the voice of authority is equal to the sovereign. But, because the voice of authority is clear and relevant, it eventually becomes the sovereign, operationally speaking, for it is always speaking operationally in the here and now.

The guru in eastern religions speaks on behalf of a deity or non-deity (Buddhism). The ultimate sovereign is the One, which is not self-conscious. Subordinate deities may be said to exist, as in Hinduism, but in both Hinduism and Buddhism, the world of change is *maya*: an illusion. So, the guru speaks as a voice of a sovereign that is either not aware of man or is only marginally more sovereign than man.

The supreme sovereign of modern Darwinism is man. Man understands the world around him, or at least that portion of the world that is subject to human reason (Kantianism). This is the only part that really matters, we are told. Beyond the domain of man's reason, who knows? It is beyond anyone's control. It is purposeless. It cannot be appealed to successfully as a way of achieving one's goals.

Authority. The guru of the West is a scientist. He speaks in the name of scientific law. This law is usually highly mathematical. Higher mathematics is not understood by most people. The book of higher mathematics is a closed book except to initiates. This was also what sustained the authority of ancient priesthoods as well. They knew a great deal of astronomy. They therefore knew the calendar. They knew when the floods would come in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and China, where society was dependent on canals and waterworks.

Even where mathematics is not the primary way to knowledge and therefore control, some conceptual model is believed to offer formally trained practitioners access to the laws of the universe. Reason is seen as the special way to knowledge, which is the road to power. "Knowledge is power," we are assured.

The structure of authority is always hierarchical. The *hierarchy of power* is seen as a *hierarchy of knowledge*. It always has been. Inside information has always been worth a lot of money because it is the road to wealth and power. Today, this is usually open knowledge, in the sense of being published, though in jargon that is closed to untrained, “uninitiated” outsiders. Sometimes this knowledge is secret, as in “top secret.” But it is always hierarchical. It is therefore priestly. The classical Greek word *hierus* was the word for “priest.”

Law. The supreme law today is overwhelmingly the law of mathematics. But the humanist cannot explain this. Why is it that laws of formal logic—mathematics—prove so successful in natural scientific? Why should a plaything of the mind—mathematical logic—correspond so closely with the operations of the external world, both animate and inanimate (“the quick and the dead”)? In 1960, Nobel Prize-winning physicist (1963) Eugene Wigner wrote an essay for a mathematics journal: “The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Natural Sciences.” He pointed out this oddity. The correlation is simply unreasonable. He called this a miracle. He ended his essay with these words:

The miracle of the appropriateness of the language of mathematics for the formulation of the laws of physics is a wonderful gift which we neither understand nor deserve. We should be grateful for it and hope that it will remain valid in future research and that it will extend, for better or for worse, to our pleasure, even though perhaps also to our bafflement, to wide branches of learning.

The Darwinist cannot logically argue that the connection is based on special creation. He cannot say that God imposed the laws of mathematics on large sections of the creation, and then He gave to some people the mental ability to discover mathematical logical relationships and also their connections to the external realm of nature. The Darwinists must find some other explanation. So far, they haven’t.

The materialist rejects supernatural revelation as an authoritative source of knowledge. He dismisses such knowl-

edge as arbitrary. The idea of revelation presupposes a God who does not exist and therefore cannot reveal anything to man. Reason passes judgment on such a God.

The problem is, there is no agreement among scientists on the source of scientific laws, the universality of these laws, the reliability of these laws, and the ability of men to implement them even when the laws are reliable. Scientists disagree with each other as a way of life. There are too many laws, too many scientists interpreting these laws, and too many wrong turns. There is no agreement on universal principles of discovery and interpretation. There is no agreement on the means of reaching agreement, other than reason. But there are conflicting views of what constitutes reason and logic and valid evidence. This is the always divisive issue of *epistemology*: What do men know, and how do they know it?

One of the bases for respect for authority is the public's faith that the law provides justice. But how can anyone know this in a world of evolutionary law?

Judgment. The voice of authority must enforce his authority. Otherwise, the voice of authority has no authority. *Enforcement requires sanctions.* Who has the legal authority to impose sanctions? There is no agreement on this.

The judge is supposed to be predictable. He is not supposed to be arbitrary. The contending parties in court are there because they were not sure how the judge would decide. If both sides knew, one of them would already have settled out of court.

The evolutionist has no theory of fixed law. The whole point of evolutionary theory is that conditions change, which leads to one species gaining an advantage over the others. This outlook was actually imported by Charles Darwin from eighteenth-century Scottish legal and sociological theory.

How can anyone have reliable confidence that the judge in any field can and will apply justly the shifting principles of evolving law to the shifting sands of his jurisdiction?

Kingdom. The kingdom of Darwinian man is the kingdom of man's authority. The source of this authority is the

mind of man: reason. The mind of man and the deeds of man extend his kingdom in history. This is the faith of the rationalist. He declares that man must take control nature, for man possesses implicit authority over nature based on scientific reason. That which is implicit in principle—authority—must be made explicit in history.

This assertion regarding man's authority raises an inescapable philosophical and moral problem. The rationalist says that man is part of nature. He insists that man participates only in nature, not simultaneously in a supernatural realm from which he derives his authority. So, if man must take control of nature, then man must also take control of man. But, as C. S. Lewis wrote in *The Abolition of Man* and *That Hideous Strength*, this means that some men must take control of all the others. Authority inescapably passes to the elite, which corporately possess appropriate specialized knowledge. We are told, "Knowledge is power." Indeed, it is. It is not possessed in equal measure by all men.

On what basis can we place faith in the multiple minds of men? What order can be found in the conflicting logic, conflicting claims, and conflicting assertions of unbridled power, which mankind as a species offers? Where is the unity produced by all men's minds? And if such unity does not exist, where is the unity of autonomous man's kingdom? By what standard will his kingdom be understood, evaluated, and ruled by force?

There is sin in this world—man's world. The rationalist, following Plato, insists that we may and must trust the thought processes and the supposedly personally disinterested conclusions of philosopher kings. But why should we? Are they not human? Why should we trust them to exercise authority on any basis other than personal self-interest? In any case, where are these philosopher kings?

Even if we find them and voluntarily submit to them, how will they defend our joint domain? Rival kings and revolutionists will deny their claim until they are put in charge over

the rest of us. Where is the common human logic that can overcome the conflicting claims within mankind? Where has there ever been a kingdom of unbiased reason, a kingdom of unself-interested logic?

Conclusion. Man is the voice of Darwinian authority. This means scientific man. Other forms of knowledge—intuitive, experiential, emotive—are logically subordinate to reason. For now, reason is operationally defective due to ignorance and sin. Nevertheless, it must be trusted, we are told. Yes, man is finite, but nothing is infinite. Yes, man is ignorant, but nothing is omniscient. So, *man becomes the voice of authority by default*. He answers only to man. No higher authority can call man to account. But other men do, and the wars go on. “From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?” (James 4:1). Logic has a fearful rival: lust.

Conclusion

The Darwinist looks at wars and devastation, and asks: “How can anyone believe in God?” The Christian looks at the same wars and devastation, and asks: “How can Darwinists believe in man?”

The Darwinist trusts in human reason. So does modern man in general. But on what does this trust rest? Not on nature, which cares nothing for man. Not on scientific law, which is said to evolve with nature, including human nature. Such law can become the plaything of tyrants seeking to justify their power.

The Bible claims that it is authoritative. Modern scientific man claims that it isn't. The Bible's claim is based on revelation of the Creator God. The scientist's claim is based on his perception of the way the world works . . . this week.

THEONOMY VS. AUTONOMY

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

I JOHN 5:1–3

The covenantal issue here is **law**.

Law is an inescapable concept. It is never a question of law vs. no law. It is always a question of whose law.

The designated source of law is the official god of any society. In this sense, all law is inescapably theonomic: the law of some god. So, the covenantal debate over law begins here: Who or what is the source of law? *Theonomy* comes from two classical Greek words: *theos* (God) and *nomos* (law). *Autonomy* comes from two classical Greek words: *autos* (self) and *nomos* (law).

There are certain characteristics of God that are transferrable, such as justice, mercy, wisdom, and joy. There are others that are exclusive to God. They are called *incommunicable attributes*. These include absolute power (omnipotence), infinitude (omnipresence), perfect knowledge (omniscience), and self-existence (aseity). Among these is autonomy. God made the law, rules through law, and answers to nobody except by choice (Job 38–39).

I. Christian Covenantalism: Law from on High

Sovereignty. God is the source of law because He is the Creator. He established the regularities of nature: biological (“kind”) and astronomical (“heavens”). He controls whatever comes to pass (Job 38–39). He does this predictably most of the time. There is *covenantal regularity* between the obedience of societies and external blessings (Deuteronomy 28:1–14) and also between the disobedience of societies and external cursings (Deuteronomy 28:15–66). God is completely in control at all times.

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel (Jeremiah 18:5–6).

God, in His self-revelation to Job, described the regularities of nature as entirely due to Him. He described Himself as a father to nature, for He was nature's creator.

By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth? Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man; To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth? Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew? (Job 38:24–28).

The God of creation is the God of law, for the creation has been placed by God under law. This is comprehensive law: the laws of nature, including human nature. There is no other source of law. There is therefore no other God.

Authority. God has delegated authority to mankind based on His image in man (Genesis 1:26–28). This image includes a working knowledge of God's law. First, there is special revelation to covenant-keepers—the judicially adopted sons of Christ—regarding specially revealed law. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews said that the law of God is written in

the hearts of Christians. This, he said, has fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 32:31–33). This assertion appears twice in Hebrews (8:10–11; 10:15–17). Second, there is general revelation to all the sons of Adam. Paul called this *the work of the law*.

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another (Romans 2:14–15).

David in Psalm 119, in the longest sustained theme in any passage in the Bible, rejoiced in his knowledge of God's law. He attributed to his knowledge of God's law his superiority over princes, the ancients, and covenant-breakers

Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes (Psalm 119:23).

The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy testimonies (Psalm 119:95).

I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts (Psalm 119:99–100).

Law. God's law is the basis of fulfilling the dominion covenant (Genesis 1:26–28). This includes both Bible-revealed law and general law. God's special revelation of His precepts to His people is the basis of their success in history.

If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land (Leviticus 26:3–6).

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store (Deuteronomy 28:1-5).

Judgment. God judges men in terms of His law. This applies to eternity. “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14). It also applies to history. David cried out to God, “It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law” (Psalm 119:126).

LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves? They break in pieces thy people, O LORD, and afflict thine heritage. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. Yet they say, The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know? (Psalm 94:3-10).

God's Bible-revealed law should therefore be used by all men to judge themselves as well as others. Covenant-keeping men will eventually judge the angels in terms of God's Bible-revealed law. “Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (I Corinthians 6:3). God's Bible-revealed law is good.

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for

the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine (I Timothy 1:8–10).

These laws were all part of the Mosaic law. So were their required civil sanctions.

Kingdom. A king who does not enforce his law is not a king. The meaning of “kingdom” is “the realm in which a king enforces his law.” God enforces His law in His domain. The kingdom of God should be manifested to all men because of its justice.

Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? (Deuteronomy 4:5–8).

If this is not visible to covenant-breakers, then God’s people are either not ruling according to God’s standards or else not ruling at all.

Conclusion. God’s law is written in the hearts of covenant-keepers: special revelation. The work of the law is written in the hearts of all men: general revelation. The first is covenant-keeping man’s tool of dominion. The second is covenant-breaking man’s tool of dominion until he rebels by disobeying, when it becomes the judicial basis of his disinheritance in history. “The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth” (Psalm 34:16).

Legitimacy of authority comes from adherence to God's law. Legitimacy is delegated by God to individuals by means of the people who are represented by them. The mark of legitimacy is obedience to God's law, which includes special revelation and natural revelation, with special revelation as primary: the Bible over all other sources of law.

II. Non-Christian Covenantalism: Law from Below

Sovereignty. Modern man claims that all physical law arose after the Big Bang. How, he does not say. Biological law appeared when life evolved out of non-life. How this actually happened, he does not say. Exactly how the laws of life are different from the laws of inanimate matter, he does not say. Some think there is no difference. Others think there is.

Law is universal, yet there is change. Random events change the environment. In biology, these random events are called mutations. In physics, they are called the quantum. In the impersonal competition between the fixed, impersonal laws of the macrocosm vs. the random, impersonal events of life, the only sure prophecy is the heat death of the universe: the irreversible outcome of the second law of thermodynamics. So, prior to the universal death of the universe, man is under no personal authority who hands down the law. Man is an autonomous sovereign. The "deep ecologists" deny this, but only in the sense that mankind may make environmental mistakes that violate impersonal natural law, and therefore will suffer the negative consequences. Man is therefore autonomous.

Authority. Man is said to understand some of these laws of nature, including his own nature. He is self-conscious. Therefore, he possesses lawful authority over all his domain, which is defined as "anything that mankind as a species can control at the moment." There is no higher personal being who imposes law on man. Only nature imposes law on man, and men may be able to discover laws that will enable mankind to escape the effects of unwanted laws. Man is therefore autonomous.

Law. Law is seen as the product of impersonal nature, as interpreted by man. Nature is autonomous from God. Man, a product of nature, is therefore autonomous from God.

The law-order governing nature is impersonal. It can be discovered by men. In contrast, the laws governing mankind are personal, for they relate to man. These laws can be discovered. Some legal theorists add that civil laws take on the characteristics of law merely by their formal declaration by certified and legitimate agents of the civil government. These laws are laws only because the state declares them and then enforces them. On this point, there has been a philosophical division, but, on the whole, the “declarationists” have won the battle intellectually and surely politically.

Judgment. Man alone declares the law. Nature is silent and unself-conscious. Thus, man’s authority to discover, interpret, declare, and enforce law puts him in charge of nature, including other men. This means that experts who understand the law and its workings eventually gain the authority to declare and enforce the law.

The problem here is power. Some men understand the laws of power. They may or may not understand the laws of nature, including human nature. Thus, the laws governing politics may be—and seem to be—different from both the impersonal laws of nature and the personal laws of social cooperation. The existence of interminable warfare points to this conclusion. James wrote: “From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?” (James 4:1). Autonomous man has no one judging him. Yet he is not united. So, would-be autonomous man becomes would-be autonomous men. The result is a potential war of all against all. This is how Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan* (1651) described mankind’s condition prior to the hypothetical social contract.

Kingdom. The kingdom of man is established by power that is based on an understanding of law. Man extends his rule over impersonal nature by means of his understanding

of impersonal laws governing nature. But, because mankind is part of nature, mankind becomes subject to law-wielding power-seekers. Some men seek power over others.

Would-be autonomous man gains liberty from nature through his understanding of the laws governing nature. He escapes nature's authority over him by exercising power over nature by means of law. But, in the division of labor, he eventually surrenders his political liberty to experts, who use their specialized understanding of human nature and motivation to subdue the masses by eliminating their political rivals. So, modern man seeks personal freedom through power over nature through law, yet he loses his freedom because of others' superior power over nature, including human nature. Knowledge is power, and some people have better knowledge than others. The kingdom of man therefore becomes a battleground of power-seekers.

Conclusion. Autonomy from God in the field of law officially places sovereignty over nature into the hands of mankind, who alone in nature is self-conscious. Man becomes God by default. But mankind is divided. This leads to a constant struggle for power. There is more than one person who seeks the legal authority to speak on behalf of mankind.

Mankind seeks legitimacy. In the world of Darwinian evolution, legitimacy comes only from power, for the struggle for power reveals the possessor of the supreme knowledge: the laws of power. Knowledge is power—specifically, the knowledge of the law and the will and ability to implement it.

Conclusion

God is autonomous. He alone is autonomous. He is over law. The creation is under law. God can and has existed independently of nature and law. The creation has always existed dependently on law.

Christian theology announces these principles of social order. First, God answers to nobody in terms of law. Man answers to God in terms of God's law. Second, God establishes

and then announces law. Men discover and then announce law. Third, God enforces the law through sanctions. Men enforce the law through sanctions.

Darwinists believe that mankind answers to nobody because nobody lays down the law to man. Law is impersonal, unplanned, and uncaring, for nature is impersonal, unplanned, and uncaring. Impersonal nature has produced man, who is personal, planning, and caring. So, man now lays down the law to nature. Man therefore lays down the law to man. Clever Darwinists want to become the people laying down the law to others, not the people having the law laid down to them.

There are two forms of law: theonomy and autonomy. God alone is autonomous. Darwinists argue that man is autonomous, not in the sense of being lawless, but in the sense of laying down the law to the creation. Yet the creation is the only source of law. There is no God.

The Darwinists' argument is circular. Darwinism relies on a concept of autonomous, impersonal nature to establish man's autonomy from God, yet it also affirms man's authority over nature by invoking man's discovery and understanding of law and then its enforcement by man. Autonomous nature is man's shield from the idea of the God of the Bible, yet it is also man's plaything, the supplier of coherence and raw materials for man's dominion, i.e., the extension of man's kingdom.

As Elijah told the Israelites on Mt. Carmel, choose this day whom you will serve. In other words, decide whose law you will obey.

CASUISTRY VS. IDEOLOGY

*For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?
But we have the mind of Christ.*

I CORINTHIANS 2:16

*Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that
pertain to this life?*

I CORINTHIANS 6:3

The covenantal issue here is **judgment**.

Judgment is an inescapable concept. It is never a question of judgment vs. no judgment. It is always a question of whose judgment.

The term *casuistry* means “the application of general principles of moral law to specific cases.” The word is not in common use today. There was a time when it was. In the Protestant world, casuistry faded after 1700.

The term *ideology* means “the defense of self-interested actions by means of a self-interested theory of the general good.” This has replaced the myth of neutrality, which has faded in popularity ever since the mid-1960s. One book accomplished this more than any other: Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962).

I. Christian Covenantalism: Judgment from on High

Sovereignty. God judges all things. He judges them in history. He will judge them retroactively at the end of history.

First, history:

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return (Genesis 3:17–19).

Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting (Daniel 5:24–27).

Second, at the end of history:

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works (Revelation 20:11–12).

Judgment involves four things: discovery, evaluation, declaration, and the imposition of sanctions. God makes it clear that these are sequential decisions, not simultaneous. Before God imposed sanctions on Adam and Eve, He cross-examined them. He made an evaluation of their guilt. Then He passed sentence on them. Finally, He imposed a negative sanction: expulsion.

Judges make evaluations. Every man is a judge. Adam blamed the woman and therefore God, who had given him the woman. Eve blamed the serpent and therefore God, who had placed her in proximity to the serpent. The serpent said nothing, for he was asked nothing. Nevertheless, God cursed it. Mankind was called on to make evaluations. The serpent was not.

Authority. God's judgment is the archetype for man's judgment. Judgment is a communicable attribute of God. Man must judge. This is basic to his task on earth. This is basic to the dominion covenant, which defined man in relation to God and the creation (Genesis 1:26–28). God is over man. He delegates authority to mankind. He calls upon each man to make decisions in terms of His Bible-revealed law or moral principles derived from the Bible.

The classic example of this is Jesus' ministry, which was marked by a series of challenges from God-haters, who called on Him to make verbal judgments. The archetype example took place at the beginning of His ministry, immediately after His return from 40 days in the wilderness, which began immediately after His baptism.

Jesus was approached by Satan, who challenged Him to do three things. One by one, Jesus applied God's Bible-revealed principles of law to counter all three courses of action suggested by Satan (Matthew 4; Luke 4). In the Matthew account, Jesus replied "it is written" to all three. In the Luke account, He replied "it is written" twice and "it is said" once. Jesus, as perfect man, applied God's three most appropriate universal principles to the three specific cases. This was casuistry. He refused to submit to Satan.

Law. Law provides the fundamental principle of thought and action. Law may be in the form of a general principle, as each of the Ten Commandments is. Or it may be in the form of a specific law, or case law, from which a general principle can be derived. The best example of this procedure in Scripture is the application by Paul of an obscure law, "Thou shalt

not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn” (Deuteronomy 25:4). He applied this civil law to the church: Honor church elders.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward (I Timothy 5:17–18).

There is a connection between general legal and moral principles and specific cases in history. If there were not, there could be no predictability for moral cause and effect. God’s judgments would then be, humanly speaking, capricious and arbitrary.

Judgment. Connections exist among general legal principles, case laws, and specific events in history. God establishes these connections by means of His decree for history. Then He evaluates what the results are. This is the pattern found in Genesis 1. Day by day, God pronounced His day’s work good.

The language of biblical judgment is that of weights and measures. Just as a weight is a fixed standard that is to be placed on one side of a scale in order to establish the quantity of another substance on the other side, so is justice.

Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt. Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: I am the LORD (Leviticus 19:35–37).

Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee (Deuteronomy 25:13–15).

When a balance scale is even—straight across—the weight of the unknown substance is thereby established by means of the known standard. But scales are never perfect, nor is any man's perception perfect. Still, men can and do come to an agreement in the sale of some quantity of an item. So also can they come to an agreement in a court of law.

God evaluates, declares, and imposes sanctions. Men must do the same. They must also do what God does not need to do: discover the applicable law.

Kingdom. God's kingdom is extended in history when men cooperate to extend their joint rule under God. This requires the division of labor. Men must cooperate in order to maximize their efficiency: output per unit of input. Paul used the analogy of a body and its parts to describe the church.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? (I Corinthians 12:12–15)

For the church to function in this way, there must be a way to settle disputes. Paul also wrote:

Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? (I Corinthians 6:1–3)

Biblical justice requires biblical law. It also requires Bible-informed human judgment. The result of Bible-based judgment is a functioning Bible-based community. Bible-based communities must then cooperate in order to establish a Bible-based civilization. This is the visible kingdom of Christ.

Conclusion. Casuistry is the application of general moral and legal principles to specific cases. Biblical casuistry is the application of Bible-revealed moral and legal principles to specific cases. Biblical casuistry establishes justice. Nothing else does. Everything else is some version of false weights and measures.

II. Non-Christian Covenantalism: Judgment from Below

Sovereignty. Darwinism asserts that the universe has no moral principles of law. The universe was originally impersonal. There was no self-conscious agent who compared events in terms of their conformity to established principles of moral law. There was only impersonal physical law and impersonal random change, either the quantum (subatomic change) or mutation (biology).

Then man evolved. *Man was a discontinuous leap of being.* The first man's mind and the first woman's mind were contemporaneous macro-mutations that cannot be explained in terms of nature's otherwise minute competitive advantages for survival in a changing environment. With this unexplained evolutionary leap of being, consciousness appeared in the universe.

The supreme mark of man's sovereignty is his understanding of cause and effect—not just in specific cases but in general. He can compare a specific outcome of a specific event with general patterns of cause and effect, which in the natural (impersonal) sciences are called models. In the social sciences, these patterns are sometimes called ideal types. He can make predictions. He can discover patterns in one area and apply them in another. The use of mathematics in the natural sciences is the archetype. The problem is, this correlation between the logic of mathematics and the operations of the impersonal universe cannot be explained logically. It is in fact unreasonable.

Authority. A man can use his knowledge of general principles or patterns to impose his will over nature, including

other men. He gains power, meaning supremacy, by means of his ability to predict the outcome of events. No other species possesses the ability to predict the outcome of events by means of articulated general patterns. This ability has given mankind authority over nature. (Assumptions: Angels are mythical, and beings from outer space have not yet placed mankind under their dominion.)

Darwinists identify the source of these patterns in nature: nature itself. These patterns are said to exist independently of man, except at the subatomic level (quantum), where observation is believed to affect the outcome of non-human events. Because non-quantum patterns exist independently of man, they are said to be morally neutral toward man or anything else. In fact, the word "moral" has no relevance to the laws or patterns of nature. They are not self-conscious.

Because man's mind can perceive these patterns, his knowledge of how things work is said to be morally neutral. In fact, with respect to the observation and explanation of how things work, the scientific ideal is said to be moral neutrality. Anyway, this was true of nineteenth-century science. The knowledge of how things work is understood as a tool, neither good nor bad. The issue of morality arises only with respect to the application of these principles to human ends. The exercise of authority raises the issue of neutrality.

Law. Nature's patterns of causation are said to be morally neutral. They are understood as not being under God, nor do they self-consciously operate to the benefit or disadvantage of any creature. The problem comes with patterns of behavior among men. The Darwinists are divided here. Some of them deny that these patterns have moral implications. These people tend to use the word "behaviors" (psychologists). Others—the vast majority—do believe that patterns of human action are shaped by moral considerations. The problem is in identifying *which* moral considerations. They seem to multiply with the number of observers and theorists.

Are moral principles objectively true? The percentage of

Darwinists and other modernists who publicly affirm that any moral system is objectively valid (legitimate) has steadily declined since 1859, the year Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published, at least for anything that was not closely associated with Adolph Hitler. Only with respect to Hitler is objective morality invoked by virtually all commentators. This is objective morality's last stand.

Moral principles are said to be individual. Individuals assess the morality of any act. Thus, law moves away from the idea of objective morality as the product of universal moral reason toward subjective morality as the product of imputation by individuals. It therefore moves from point three of the covenant to point four.

This undermines the concept of moral neutrality. To be morally neutral used to mean "in accord with universal principles of morality." It also meant the existence of *self-attesting* moral principles. It meant that rational people who have no self-interested axes to grind will affirm these general moral principles, which were said to be as firm and as binding as astronomical laws, such as gravity. (By the way, the humanist has no explanation for gravity—attraction at a distance without any physical connection.) But Darwinism has undermined this faith in universal moral principles. There is no fixed morality in a world of evolutionary biological change.

Judgment. Individuals impute meaning to reality. This includes moral meaning. Morality becomes the product of individual imputation of justice and right action. The question is: How can there be a universal moral law in a world of autonomous individuals, each imputing value and importance, each deciding what to do on his own authority, each exercising personal judgment?

Faith in neutrality steadily disappears. Nothing is seen as morally neutral. Everything is seen as self-interested. Nothing is seen as objective. Everything is seen as subjective. Neutrality is replaced by ideology, which is the worldview of a self-interested individual. Groups are collections of self-inter-

ested individuals. Their members defend their self-interested actions by devising an explanation based on the common good: an ideology. But there is no common good. There is only individual self-interest and group action to benefit one group at the expense of another group.

Kingdom. The kingdom of man is a cacaphonic kingdom. The temporary alliances of self-interested individuals can and are thwarted or overturned by events, including the actions of more powerful alliances. The kingdom of man operates in terms of power, not moral principle—of ideology, not objective morality. Probably the clearest statement of this outlook is Mao Tse Tung's summary. He was the leader of the Communist Party in China from the early 1930s until his death in 1976.

Every Communist must grasp the truth, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." Our principle is that the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party. Yet, having guns, we can create Party organizations, as witness the powerful Party organizations which the Eighth Route Army has created in northern China. We can also create cadres, create schools, create culture, create mass movements. Everything in Yen-an has been created by having guns. All things grow out of the barrel of a gun. ("Problems of War and Strategy," November 6, 1938)

What then becomes of the power of voluntary cooperation? What of Paul's analogy of the church as a body, with each member cooperating with the other?

Conclusion. In the world of Darwinism, there is no legitimate appeal to a higher law that is enforced by a supreme judge. There is no common morality. There is only the struggle for existence. There is a quest for personal power that is balanced only by a quest for personal escape. There is only ideology: a defense of power held and power sought. There is no objective truth, no objective morality. No one is neutral. Everyone is self-interested.

Conclusion

James put it well: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (James 4:1).

God has a way to replace lust with love. This is redemption. But redemption is not merely individual. It is not souls-only. It is comprehensive. *Wherever sin visibly reigns, Christ's kingdom is supposed to visibly reign.* There is no neutral area in which something other than God's law may legitimately reign in place of God's law. There is no principle of non-biblical casuistry that legitimately replaces the application of biblical law to men's actions.

There was a time when men who rejected the God of the Bible, Christ's work of redemption, and biblical morality suggested an alternative social theory. They insisted that the existence of universal principles of natural law make possible social cooperation. But Darwinism has undermined that faith. There cannot be a legitimate Darwinian appeal to universal and therefore unchanging principles of law, including moral law. We live in an evolving world. There are no constants, other than the speed of light. Maybe.

Men must make judgments in history. The two questions are: (1) Does a man make judgments as a creature who imitates the God of the Bible, who also makes judgments, or (2) does he make them as if he were autonomous from the God of the Bible? Jesus warned: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30).

THEOCRACY VS. DEMOCRACY

*Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you,
and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*

MATTHEW 21:43

The covenantal issue here is **kingdom**.

Kingdom is an inescapable concept. It is never a question of kingdom vs. no kingdom. It is always a question of whose kingdom.

Who rules the kingdom? The classical Greek word for *rule* is *kratos*. Kratos was a spirit (*daimon*) of power and sovereign rule. Kratos was a winged god, an enforcer sent by Zeus. One of his three siblings was Nike (victory), whose motto for mankind was probably “Don’t do it!”

There are two major claimants for the throne of sovereign power: God and Satan. Both rule in history through delegated representatives: men.

Satan, unlike God, is content to be represented by men who do not acknowledge his sovereignty publicly, and who may deeply believe that they are acting on their own authority. This has always been the case. The serpent did not suggest to Eve that she should worship Satan or swear an oath of loyalty to him. He suggested only that Adam and Eve would become as gods if they ate from a tree. This is still the form in

which the major covenantal temptations of life are presented by Satan or his agents.

God, unlike Satan, is not content to be represented by men who do not acknowledge His sovereignty publicly.

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word (I Kings 18:21).

The people (*demos*) still prefer to answer not a word. As with Satan's covenantal representatives, most of God's oath-bound covenantal representatives today are convinced that God does not require any such public acknowledgment, that He is content, just as Satan is content, to let men affirm their own self-made civil covenants, by means of a formal or informal oath to other men or their covenant documents.

Democracy is form of theocracy. It is the rule of a god: would-be autonomous mankind. Similarly, autonomy is theonomy: the law of this one true god.

I. Christian Covenantalism: A Kingdom from on High

Sovereignty. This is the issue of origins. I wrote in Chapter 6, "Why is this issue so important? Because origins are the source of sovereignty in history. Rival theories of origins reveal rival theories of sovereignty. Rival theories of origins reveal rival covenants."

In speaking of Christ's kingdom, we should begin with Christ's words regarding His kingdom.

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I

should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence (John 18:33–36)

The issue was sovereignty. Pilate represented a rival kingdom, a rival sovereign. So did the Jews, who were in rebellion against God the King, and who were about to be disinherited, with the kingdom passing to a new nation: the church (Matthew 21:43).

Jesus' answer made it clear that Pilate was dealing with God, a higher source of sovereignty. Jesus openly claimed that the origin of His kingdom was not in the realm of history. He was claiming a supernatural origin for His kingdom.

Pilate paid no attention. His spiritual heirs have also not paid any attention. But, sadly, neither have most of Christ's spiritual heirs in our era. They interpret Christ's words in the way that Pilate did, namely, that Jesus' kingdom has no influence in the civil affairs of this world. They line up with the humanists, who love to quote this verse. They all explain it as Jesus' assertion of the irrelevance of Christ's kingdom for man's political affairs—and also all other kinds of affairs, insist adulterous humanists.

What does the Greek text say? The phrase, “not of this world,” begins with the Greek work *ek*. This is Strong's #1536, which you can find in Strong's *Concordance*.

A primary preposition denoting origin (the point whence action or motion proceeds), from, out (of place, time, or cause; literal or figurative).

What does the text mean? This should be clear from the context. It refers to the source or origin of Christ's kingdom. His kingdom is not of this world, meaning that its origin is not in this world. This was why his earthly followers would not fight to defend it, He told Pilate. Compare this with what He told Peter (John 18:10).

And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up

again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? (Matthew 26:51–53).

Jesus was claiming absolute authority, meaning authority over Rome. His kingdom is not *from* this world. It is *over* this world. This world is the battlefield between two rival kingdoms (Matthew 13:24–30, 37–43).

Pilate at first did not understand what Jesus was saying. Jesus then clarified it for him.

Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin (John 19:10–11).

Despite Jesus' reply, those who reject the idea of Christ's earthly theocracy have interpreted Jesus' words as if He had not explained Himself clearly. They interpret "not *of* this world" as "not *in* this world." They deny His kingdom its rightful authority in history.

Authority. God has delegated to all mankind the task of subduing the earth (Genesis 1:26–28). He has also delegated to His people, organized into an earthly church, the task of subduing rebellious nations or peoples (*ethnoi*). This is to be done through preaching, teaching, and baptizing.

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matthew 28:18–20).

Jesus claimed all power (point two). Teaching is hierarchical: teacher to pupil (point two). Baptism is covenantal, a oath sign (point four). It involves an affirmation of obedience (point two) to God's law (point three).

The legitimate sphere of authority of the kingdom of Christ is the whole earth: all nations, all peoples. It includes all four covenants: personal, ecclesiastical, family, and civil.

Law. Paul made it clear that God's law is still binding in the New Covenant era. He cited a series of laws, all of which were part of the Mosaic covenant.

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine (I Timothy 1:9–10).

These laws are binding in all five covenants: dominion, personal, ecclesiastical, family, and civil. There is no statement in the Mosaic law that these laws do not bind all five covenants. There is no statement in the New Testament that they do not bind all five. *These laws bind the entire kingdom of Christ, which includes all four covenants.*

Judgment. Judges must serve as casuists, applying God's Bible-revealed laws to specific cases in history. They must render judgment. This involves four steps. First, they must *discover* the applicable law for the specific case. Second, they must *interpret* the law and its specific application. Third, they must *declare*: guilty or not guilty. Fourth, in the case of verdicts of guilty, they must *impose the specific sanction* that is required by the Bible in this case. This authority is limited to each judge's legitimate sphere of covenantal responsibility. This procedure includes the civil government, where civil magistrates are described as ministers of God (Romans 13:4).

The comprehensive judgments of all judges produces a kingdom. This is another word for civilization. There is continual conflict between the two competing kingdoms in every area of life. There is therefore continual conflict to gain possession of the legitimate authority to serve as a judge in every area of life.

Kingdom. Christ's kingdom expands over time. This is the message of Matthew 13, the parables of the kingdom.

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof (Matthew 13:31–32).

Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened (Matthew 13:33).

The kingdom of Christ does not remain bottled up—not in the hearts of covenant-keepers, not in the families of covenant-keepers, and not in the churches of covenant-keepers. It does not remain confined inside a narrowly defined institutional church. “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15). This is not limited to heaven, nor is it limited to the post-final judgment world. Only Revelation 20:13–22:21 refers to the post-final judgment world.

Conclusion. Christ's kingdom is authorized by God to spread wherever sin reigns. Sin has not been granted any zone of legitimate authority. There is no neutrality in the battle between sin and righteousness. There are no neutral zones that have been granted immunity from the consequences of sin. There are no neutral zones between Satan's kingdom and Christ's. With respect to covenants,

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? (II Corinthians 6:14–15)

II. Non-Christian Covenantalism: Kingdom from Below

Sovereignty. The Darwinian attributes original sovereignty to the Big Bang, which lost authority within less than a trillionth of a second. Then the law of evolution took over. There was no purpose in the universe, no plan, no self-consciousness. This condition prevailed—at least in man's sector of the cosmos—until man appeared. Now man is sovereign by default, for man is purposeful, planning, and self-conscious. Man understands the scientific laws of evolution. Man proposes, and man disposes—all within the evolving boundaries of impersonal nature.

Authority. With the development of democratic theory ever since the late seventeenth century, humanists have defended democracy, meaning a system of political representation, as the sole voice of authority. This is corporate mankind.

The sovereign people long ago in the mists of time ratified a hypothetical political covenant with themselves: the hypothetical social contract. Their heirs are now empowered by the terms of the covenant to select their representatives by voting. These representatives are the official voice of authority, unless there is a written constitution, in which case judges interpret the constitution.

For modern man, including most Darwinians, political power is the greatest power in history, so political authority is the most legitimate form of institutional authority in history. The kingdom of man is most visible in politics. In no other sphere of life does mankind exercise its corporate will to power with greater visible effect.

This could change, of course. In a Darwinian world, anything can change, just so long as the source of this change is not supernatural. Perhaps some day, scientists working in an obscure laboratory will create a biological weapon that negates the power of civil government by wiping out mankind. But, for now, political authority is supreme.

Democracy is always representative. The people, as a col-

lective, do not speak with one voice. Thus, gaining political power is the supreme calling of those who wish to substitute a clear, unified declaration of the people's will for the people's cacophonous and competing declarations.

Law. Law changes, for the cosmos evolves. There are no unchanging moral principles, for there is no unchanging impersonal external environment, including the world of man. So, the kingdom of man is itself evolving.

Salvation under democracy is by law: democratic legislation. Salvation is also by grace: the grace shown by political mankind, through their representatives, to men as individuals or gathered together in non-political associations, who oppose the sovereignty of man. The supreme sinners for democratic man are those unbending people who deny the sovereignty of man. They must be re-educated at government expense.

Judgment. Judgment is ideological in the kingdom of Darwinian man. It is not governed by the application of a grace-governed wisdom that invokes fixed moral laws. There are no fixed moral laws in an evolving universe. So, the judge is always subject to the question: "Are you just making this up as you go along?" How can he prove that he isn't? It is easier to silence the critic by the imposition of sanctions, either positive (buy him off) or negative (cut him off).

Sanctions must eventually be imposed by judges. Judges must defend their authority. The humanist kingdom of man extends beyond politics, but never above politics. The sanctions that count most in this kingdom are civil sanctions. The negative ones are the most feared, and the positive ones are the most sought after, by believers in the autonomous self-rule of man.

Modern man declares that civil government must offer positive sanctions as well as negative sanctions. But the kingdom of politics, unlike the broader kingdom of man, is not creative. It lives on wealth that is forcibly extracted from those under its jurisdiction. So, its positive sanctions must be

funded by those people who pay taxes. Negative sanctions are placed on those citizens and residents who are identified as the losers in political conflicts. To the victors go the spoils.

Kingdom. The kingdom of man challenges the kingdom of Christ. It is not neutral. It is all-encompassing. It is not modest. It does not accept the counter-claims of Christ's kingdom. There is warfare unto death. It is a war for civilization.

Expansion may be by stealth. "Equal time for rivals of Jesus!" It may be by coercion. "Only evolution may be taught in tax-supported schools, for only evolution is both scientific and neutral." Kingdom expansion is the long-term goal of the covenant-breaker. He wants nothing to remind him of his sin, even though the creation constantly reminds him (Romans 1:18–22). This is why, in the final analysis, he is at war with the creation. He is therefore at war with life. "But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death" (Proverbs 8:36).

Conclusion. The kingdom of man is a rival kingdom to Christ's kingdom. The most visible form of the kingdom of man in the Darwinian West is democracy. Democracy is said to represent the true sovereign in history, which is collective mankind. This is why there is a constant push for a world civil government. A representative civil government is supposed to represent all humanity, the true god in history.

Yet there is also resistance to world government, for each man asks himself: "Am I not as good as the next person?" Then he thinks to himself: "Actually, I'm a good deal better." He may desire the autonomy supposedly offered by anarchy: a world without civil government or civil sanctions, a world without taxes or coercive regulations. This is the autonomy of the many.

Politics is a war for the votes of the democratic middle. But because political salvation is the salvation by democracy, the push to the one-state world persists. The one-worlders looks at national democracies and announce: "Your God is too small."

Conclusion

The expansion of God's kingdom comes at the expense of Satan's kingdom. Those in Satan's kingdom are steadily disinherited in history. This is the message of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Inheritance and disinheritance are two sides of the same kingdom coin, just as positive and negative sanctions are two sides of judgment's coin.

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace (Psalm 37:9–11).

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5).

Satan has a kingdom. It is divided.

And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad (Matthew 12:25–30).

The question is: Will Satan's kingdom fall only at the end of time, having achieved a major victory in every realm of life? Will this fall be discontinuous? Will God snatch victory at the final judgment out of what appears to be a Satanic victory? Or will Satan's defeat be gradual, culminating in a last-ditch effort of a defeated army?

Jesus described Satan's defensive efforts: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build

my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). He did not say that the gates of the church will prevail against Satan’s onslaught.

CONCLUSION TO PART 2

In the modern West, the two main contenders for the allegiance of men are Christianity and Darwinism. Islam may become a third contender in the future, but it is not a large enough special-interest group yet in the West.

Christianity has a specific social outlook. It teaches that a personal Creator God is sovereign in history and eternity. This God has delegated to mankind the responsibility for serving as God's agent over nature. God has established the laws of nature and the laws of human society. He also has established corporate sanctions, positive and negative, for obeying His laws. The implementation of these sanctions, either by individuals and their institutions or by God directly shapes history. *Sanctions determine who inherits in history and who is disinherited.* This is the basis of the triumph of one kingdom over the other. Christians are divided over this final issue. Some believe that Satan's kingdom will visibly triumph (amillennialists) until the day of final judgment, while others believe that Christ's kingdom will triumph (postmillennialists and premillennialists). At the end of history, this God will judge all things that all men have ever done.

Darwinism has another view of the way things work out. They see the origin of all things in an impersonal Big Bang. They see the end of all things in the impersonal heat death of the universe. There is meaning for neither event at the time that each event takes place. There was no self-conscious Creator at the beginning of time, and there will be no self-con-

scious Judge at the end of time. In between, there is meaning only when man imputes it, unless there is another species with this ability elsewhere in the universe, either now or in the future.

Each view proclaims a god. For Christians, this God is the Creator God of the Bible. For Darwinists, this god is nature. In both views, man is part of nature.

Each view claims a hierarchical system of authority. For Christians, the God of the Bible is represented by mankind. The voice of authority is the Bible. For Darwinists, the god of nature, which is not self-conscious and does not speak, is represented by mankind. Mankind speaks alone, and so takes on the function of divinity: no higher court of appeal. Mankind becomes functionally divine. He is the sole voice of authority, but he is divided. Next, each view has a view of institutional authority in church, family, and state, reach with its own hierarchy and independent authority. For Darwinists, the god of nature is represented by mankind. The hierarchy is different: state, church (school) and family, with one hierarchical chain of command.

Each view has a view of law. Both views see law as an expression of a god, so both systems are technically theonomic. Christians see moral law as permanent, for God is unchanging. Darwinists see moral law as changing, for the universe is evolving.

Each view has systems of sanctions, positive and negative. Christianity sees man's task as discovering, interpreting, declaring, and enforcing God's unchanging laws of nature and morality. Darwinists see man's task as discovering, interpreting, declaring, and enforcing nature's evolving impersonal laws and man's personal laws.

Each view proclaims a theocracy, for each proclaims a god who rules supreme. Christians proclaim that the God of the Bible rules over the creation through a personal kingdom. Darwinists proclaim that the functional god of nature, mankind, rules over the creation in a personal kingdom.

Each view defines its terms differently. The war for the minds of men is waged in terms of these rival definitions. This is why dictionaries are important. This is why linguistic usage is important. *He who defines the terms that his opponent accepts has gained a tremendous advantage in the competition.* This is why competition for control over education has been a battleground between the two kingdoms. It is a battle over civilization's inheritance. This was true in the days of Nebuchadnezzar's school for the Hebrew youths. This remains true today.

Consider definitions. The word *theocracy* is a term of opprobrium today. Christians fear being labeled theocrats. They fear not being regarded as democrats. Yet there was a time before the triumph of democracy when Christians referred to the visible, corporate rule of God's representatives as a theocracy, or at least a kingdom. Today, they still refer to God's kingdom, but they have in mind only three of the four covenantal arrangements: individual, ecclesiastical, and familial. The civil government is seen as democratic, i.e., no confession of Trinitarian faith as a requirement for the franchise. This pleases the non-Trinitarians. They get to establish the ground rules and then change them whenever they have enough votes. They have defined the "cracy" to fit their agenda.

Definitions are important. So are confessions of faith.

CONCLUSION

Here are the five sequential aspects of the one defining covenant. First, God sovereignly announces it representatively, prior to Adam: *transcendence* (point one, but without presence). Second, God in person places Adam under it by establishing a testing boundary with its deadly sanction: *hierarchy* (point two). Third, Adam violates it by transgressing the boundary: *law* (point three). By this transgression, he brings himself and humanity under a new covenant, which is under Satan's illegitimate authority. Fourth, Jesus Christ, as the representative second Adam or "last Adam" (I Corinthians 15:45), rises from the dead, thereby inflicting a mortal wound on Satan, as promised by God (Genesis 3:15): *sanctions* (point four). Fifth, the final resurrection of humanity occurs, when God also imposes the final sanction against Satan and his host, both demonic and human. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:14–15). This inaugurates the eternal *inheritance and disinheritance* (point five). From this point on, covenant-keepers will spend eternity fulfilling the original dominion covenant. Rest and recreation will accompany an uncursed work week. There will be a day of rest each week. But there will be no more blue Mondays. They will be called Secondday, and they will be blessed.

The sequence is manifested covenantally in history by individuals, churches, families, and civil governments. It will not

be manifested in eternity by families and civil governments.

Satan's covenant is exclusively historical. It was ratified by Adam and Eve at their covenant meal at the tree. It will end at the final judgment. As with God's covenant, it has two realms in history for mankind: physical and spiritual. It also has two realms cosmically: natural and supernatural (hell).

There is a covenantal war going on. Most Christians are unaware of the comprehensive nature of this conflict, unlike Darwinist scholars and activists, who do understand this. Christians do not understand the greatness of the Great Commission, as Kenneth Gentry titled his 1990 book. You have read my book. You now understand this irreconcilable conflict of rival covenantal systems. If you believe this book, you are now equipped to become a more effective servant of God. You are now better able to fulfil your God-given assignment to extend the dominion covenant in history. The rest of us will benefit if you do this.

If you understand and accept the message of this short book, you have become a covenant theologian. There are not many of them—far fewer than imagined by that tiny band of Calvinist theologians who call themselves covenant theologians. They are unaware of the five points of the biblical covenant. They are also unaware of the fact that the sequence of five books of the Pentateuch reflect this structure. So do the internal structures of the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. So does the Book of Revelation, as David Chilton demonstrated in his commentary, *Days of Vengeance* (1987). Furthermore, covenant theologians never discuss the social implications of this structure and its Bible-revealed content. I began this task in my book, *Millennialism and Social Theory* (1990). I could have written comparable books on sovereignty, authority, law, and sanctions. But I was busy writing 31 volumes of my economic commentary on the Bible. I also was running my publishing businesses. I did not get around to the other titles. Maybe you will. I hope so.

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