

**Syllabus:
A Baptist View
of the Covenants**

Table of Contents

Introduction	p. 3
Message Outlines	p. 5
Westminster vs. London Confessions on the Covenants	p. 12
Westminster vs. London Confessions on the Baptism	p. 13
Westminster vs. London Confessions on the Church	p. 14
John Owen on the Newness of the New Covenant	p. 15
Resources for Further Study	p. 25
New Covenant Chart with References	p. 28

Introduction

Many who question the validity of our Christian faith have asked, quite reasonably, “Why would I want to be a Christian, if Christians can't even agree with each another?” It is actually a good question, and to answer it, we must look back in church history to a time when the divisions among those based their beliefs on the Bible were not as wide as they are today. Even the teachings of early Roman catholicism would have had little disagreement with those of the Protestant Reformation, a time of great spiritual fervor when, after centuries of church corruption and decline, the Reformers sought to rediscover the Christianity of Christ and the Apostles. Most of the churches coming out of the Reformation believed in ONE people of God, containing both believing Jews and gentiles, who together will inherit ONE kingdom of God and dwell together with Christ in ONE blessed place. They looked to ONE return of Christ, ONE bodily resurrection of the righteous and unrighteous, occurring on ONE great day of judgment, all under the sovereign control of one God whose divine providence is sovereign over all things. And generally speaking, most denominations of Christians, including Baptists, had at least a general grasp of the importance of God's *covenants* regarding man and his redemption. The covenants are God's continual reminder that He has determined to have a personal relationship with those He has chosen from among fallen humanity, not because of anything *we* have done, but solely through an act of *His* sovereign grace. These chosen ones, referred to in Scripture as “the elect,” are a people to whom He has revealed Himself and bound Himself by *covenant* or agreement (Psalm 50:5)—that is, by precious promises. Historically speaking, one of the great contributions of the Reformation was its richly developed *covenant theology*.

Around 1830, however, came a way of looking at Scripture called *dispensationalism*, an elaborate and often-confusing system that spoke of TWO peoples of God, TWO returns of Christ, TWO last judgments, and TWO bodily resurrections of the dead. One of dispensationalism's greatest departures from the received faith of the Reformation was its division of the Bible primarily into *dispensations* rather than according to the biblical *covenants*. Though this system was first seen as a new and novel view when it was first proposed by the Irish clergyman J.N. Darby, it has come to dominate evangelical Christianity, at least in America, for nearly two centuries. Darby's new system quickly spread to America, where it was disseminated to the masses through evangelistic campaigns and Bible conferences by notable preachers like D.L. Moody and R.A. Torrey. Through these and others, a lawyer named C.I. Scofield came under the influence of dispensationalism. In 1909 he published his study Bible, which placed marginal references and often detailed footnotes amid the Bible text. Though this format was troubling to many at the time, the *Scofield Reference Bible*, by the end of World War II, had sold two million copies, and become a powerful promotional tool for dispensationalism. Within a few short years, a whole new generation had grown up on the Scofield Bible with no knowledge of how strange Scofield's ideas were to those who first read them. Over the ensuing decades, his system would be taught in seminaries, put into popular books such as the *Left*

Behind series, and incorporated into popular entertainment, until it was assumed that IT was the faith of our fathers held by the Apostles themselves.

There has been a reawakening, however, to the covenant theology that was one of the crowning jewels of the Reformation. Thanks be to God, in recent years, great books from that spiritually fruitful period have been republished and have found an eager readership in our own spiritually shallow age. But unfortunately, much of the covenant thinking of that period was bound up in the teachings and practice of infant (or *paedo-*) baptism, which was based largely on the Abrahamic covenant of circumcision. This has often been a problem for Baptists who, when initially exposed to the richness of covenant theology, are able to see the Bible as a harmonious whole for the first time, yet are thrown into confusion over the broad acceptance of infant baptism among so many covenant theologians. What has increasingly come to light, however, is the writings of Baptist covenant theologians of the Reformation period which both *harmonized and distinguished* the Old and New Testaments with clarity, and without the unbiblical addition of infant baptism. That theology was embedded, though not well-developed, in the London Baptist Confession of 1689 which, in the form of the Philadelphia Confession of 1742, became the doctrinal statement for most of the early Baptists in America, and is still widely used today.

Unfortunately, much of the Baptist covenant teaching of that time was overshadowed by dispensationalism and then lost, and has needed to be rediscovered. The purpose of these messages is respectfully to show the superiority, in explaining the inspired record of Scripture, of Baptist covenant theology over both dispensationalism *and* paedobaptist covenant theology. Two areas of particular focus in this series are (1) the dual nature of God's covenant with Abraham ("*Abraham had TWO sons*" — Gal. 4:22), regarding his physical seed and his spiritual seed, which must be distinguished from each other; and (2) and the *essential newness* of the new covenant as presented in the book of Hebrews. None of us, as finite beings, claims full knowledge of these truths that emanate from the heart and mind of an infinite God, but our desire is that these messages will broaden your understanding of God and how, throughout the centuries, He has communicated His blessings to us.

Message Outlines

TITLE: A Baptist View of the Covenants, Part 1

TEXT: Hebrews 7:1-28; Hebrews 8:1-5

SPEAKER: Keith Comparetto

DATE: 10-21-18

“The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience to him as their creator, yet they could never have attained the reward of life but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he has been pleased to express by way of covenant. ... This covenant is revealed in the gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by further steps, until its full discovery was completed in the New Testament...” (1689 London Baptist Confession, ch. 7, “Of God's Covenant”)

SUMMARY: In order to explain the meaning of the promised New Covenant that God had now instituted through the work of Christ, the author of Hebrews must establish Christ's superiority over all others as the Son of God; His accomplishments as the perfect man; and His high priestly work on behalf of the elect according to the eternal order of Melchizedek.

I. CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD. Christ is superior to the prophets (1:1); superior to the angels (1:4 — 2:16); superior to Moses (3:1-6); superior to Joshua (3:7 — 4:17); superior to All (1:2-3).

II. CHRIST, THE PERFECT MAN.

A. God's Plan for Man's Dominion.

1. Man, the crown of God's creation.
2. Man's great Fall.

B. God's Man for Accomplishing His Plan.

1. The aim of Christ's sufferings, v. 9.
2. The appropriateness of Christ's sufferings, v. 10.
3. The accomplishments of Christ's sufferings, vv. 11-18

III. CHRIST, OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST.

A. “All the Means Thereto.”

B. The Origin & Purpose of the Priesthood.

C. Qualifications for the Priesthood.

1. “Taken from among men”

2. Tribe of Levi
3. Family of Aaron

D. A Superior Order of Priesthood.

1. Christ's Fulfillment of Ps. 110: The order of Melchizedek
2. The superiority of Christ's priesthood.
 - Not national, but universal.
 - Not fleshly, but spiritual.
 - Not weak & unprofitable, but strong and profitable.
 - Not oathless, but sealed by an oath.
 - Not changing & unstable, but unchanging & stable.
3. The accomplishment of Christ's priesthood. Having come and offered the perfect offering, the work is now finished.
 - He is seated
 - He is seated in the heavens
 - He is seated on a throne
 - Believers are seated with Him

TITLE: A Baptist View of the Covenants, Part 2

TEXT: Hebrews 8:6-13

SPEAKER: Keith Comparetto

Date: 10-28-18

SUMMARY: Because the relationship between the two covenants is necessary for interpreting the Bible properly, the New Covenant as presented in the book of Hebrews should be carefully studied in terms of its meaning, its newness, and its implications for the church of God.

I. FORESHADOWS OF THE NEW COVENANT.

A. The Need for Grace. “The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience” (Westminster Confession of Faith, ch. 7, “Of God's Covenant,” para. 2).

1. The “covenant” of grace.
2. The “covenants of promise.”

B. The “Old” Covenant.

II. THE ESSENCE OF THE NEW COVENANT.

A. Its Beginning.

B. Its Promises.

1. First provision: the implanting of God's law in their hearts:
2. Second provision: the knowledge of God as a matter of personal experience:
3. Third provision: the new covenant promises the blotting out of their sins.

TITLE: A Baptist View of the Covenants, Part 3**TEXT: Hebrews 8:6-13****SPEAKER: Keith Comparetto****DATE: 11-4-18**

SUMMARY: Because the relationship between the two covenants is necessary for interpreting the Bible properly, the New Covenant as presented in the book of Hebrews should be carefully studied in terms of its meaning, its newness, and its implications for the church of God.

I. THE CONTROVERSY: ONE COVENANT, OR TWO?**A. Reformation History: Two Confessions.****B. Reformation Debate: Two Views of God's Covenant.****II. AN ANSWER FROM AN UNEXPECTED SOURCE.****A. Owen and the Westminster model.****B. Owen: A Truly NEW Covenant.****TITLE: A Baptist View of the Covenants, Part 4****TEXT: Hebrews 8:6-13****SPEAKER: Keith Comparetto****DATE: 11-11-18**

SUMMARY: Because the relationship between the two covenants is necessary for interpreting the Bible properly, the New Covenant as presented in the book of Hebrews should be carefully studied in terms of its meaning, its newness, and its implications for the church of God.

I. THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE TWO COVENANTS.**II. OWEN'S ANSWER: THE NEW COVENANT IS TRULY NEW.****III. THE PROGRESSIVE REVEALING OF THE NEW COVENANT.****A. The First Promises of Grace.**

B. The Covenant with Noah.

C. The Blessed Line of Shem.

D. The Covenant with Abraham.

TITLE: A Baptist View of the Covenants, Part 5

TEXT: Hebrews 8:6-13

SPEAKER: Keith Comparetto

DATE: 11-18-18

SUMMARY: Because the relationship between the two covenants is necessary for interpreting the Bible properly, the New Covenant as presented in the book of Hebrews should be carefully studied in terms of its meaning, its newness, and its implications for the church of God.

I. THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE TWO COVENANTS.

II. A TRULY NEW COVENANT.

III. A COVENANT REVEALED "BY FURTHER STEPS."

A. First promises of Grace.

B. The Covenant with Noah.

C. The Blessed Line of Shem.

D. The Covenant with Abraham.

1. The dual nature of God's covenant with Abraham.
2. The covenant with Abraham regarding his natural offspring.
3. The covenant with Abraham regarding his spiritual offspring.

TITLE: A Baptist View of the Covenants, Part 6
THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW COVENANT

TEXT: Hebrews 8:6-13

SPEAKER: Keith Comparetto

DATE: 11-25-18

SUMMARY: Because the relationship between the two covenants is necessary for interpreting the Bible properly, the New Covenant as presented in the book of Hebrews should be carefully studied in terms of its meaning, its newness, and its implications for the church of God.

I. THE MEANING OF THE NEW COVENANTS.

II. THE NEWNESS OF THE NEW COVENANT.

III. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW COVENANT.

A. Implications for Baptism.

- Continuity vs. discontinuity.
- The connection of circumcision with baptism.
- Abraham and the ordinance of circumcision.

B. Implications for the Church.

C. Implications for the Doctrines of Grace.

TITLE: A Baptist View of the Covenants, Part 7

TEXT: Genesis 17:1-14

SPEAKER: Adam Peaslee

DATE: 12-2-18

SUMMARY: The way we interpret the Abrahamic Covenant, or the Covenant of Circumcision, will lead us to differing views of the Old and New Covenants. One view will lead us to a Presbyterian Covenant Theology, another view leads to dispensationalism, while another leads to the theology of the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith.

INTRODUCTION: What is "Reformed" theology?

I: THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION — Is it grace or works?

II: THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION — Is it Physical, Spiritual, or both?

III: THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION — What is the meaning of the sign?

TITLE: A Baptist View of the Covenants, Part 8

TEXT: Genesis 17:1-14; Hosea 1:2-9

SPEAKER: Adam Peaslee

DATE: 12-9-18

SUMMARY: God's promises to Abraham can be seen in terms of 1) A people and land, 2) mercies and blessings, and 3) God's promise to be a God to him and his seed. The Old Covenant governs the physical aspects of these promises by works of the law, and the New Covenant governs the spiritual aspects of these promises by grace through faith. The Old is breakable, the New is complete and finished and unbreakable, from the beginning.

I: THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM: PROMISED AND FULFILLED (Genesis 12:1-3; 17:7)

A: Land and People Gathered.

B: Mercies and Blessings Given.

C: God Will Be Their God.

II: THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM: REMOVED (Hosea 1:2-9)

A. Land and People Scattered.

B. Mercies and Blessings Removed.

C: God Will No Longer Be Their God.

TITLE: A Baptist View of the Covenants, Part 9

TEXT: Hosea 2:1-23

SPEAKER: Adam Peaslee

DATE: 3-3-19

SUMMARY: In the Baptist view, the Covenant of Works is the Law in Adam, the Old Covenant is a law that reveals the gospel, and the New Covenant alone contains the substance of the gospel, which is Christ. This is the 1689 Reformed Baptist framework for interpreting the whole bible as one story of redemption, while maintaining a proper distinction between the law and the gospel throughout the bible.

I. THE LAW/GOSPEL DISTINCTION.

A. The Dogmatic Law/ Gospel Distinction: The law and the gospel are dogmatically opposed to one another.

B. The Historical Law/ Gospel Distinction: The law and the gospel are both present and active in all ages historically.

C. The Covenantal Law/ Gospel Distinction: The law and the gospel as they fit into the biblical covenants.

1. Covenant of Works (Adam & Eve) = Law;
2. Old Covenant = Law pointing to Gospel;

3. New Covenant = Gospel.

II. JEZREEL.

- A. The blood of Jezreel.**
- B. The promised land as seen in Jezreel.**
- C. Great will be the day of Jezreel.**

III. THE PROMISE OF THE CURSE (Hosea 2:1-13).

- A. To condemn her:** "*[God] is not your husband.*"
- B. To bring her back:** "*I will go and return to my first husband.*"

IV. THE GOSPEL (Hosea 2:14-23).

- A. God comes for His elect:** "*I will allure her.*"
- B. God is "loving husband," (gospel) and no longer "master" (law)**
- C. God's people love the law:** "*betrothed in faithfulness.*"

The Westminster & Baptist Confessions on God's Covenant

Westminster Confession of Faith

- 1 The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto him as their Creator, yet they could never **have any fruition of him, as their blessedness and reward**, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.
- 2 The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.
- 3 Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace: wherein he freely offered unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.
- 4 This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in the Scripture by the name of a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ, the testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.
- 5 This covenant was **differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel**: under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come, which were **for that time sufficient and efficacious**, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation, and is called the Old Testament.
- 6 Under the gospel, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed, are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity and less outward glory, yet in them it is held forth in more fulness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. **There are not, therefore, two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations.**

1689 London Baptist Confession

- 1 The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience to him as their creator, yet they could never have **attained the reward of life** but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.
- 2 **Moreover, man having brought himself under the curse of the law by his fall**, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace, wherein he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.
- 3 **This covenant is revealed in the gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by farther steps, until the full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament; and it is founded in that eternal covenant transaction that was between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect; and it is alone by the grace of this covenant that all the posterity of fallen Adam that ever were saved did obtain life and blessed immortality, man being now utterly incapable of acceptance with God upon those terms on which Adam stood in his state of innocency.**

Note: The *Savoy Declaration* (Congregationalist), para. 5, like the Westminster, holds to a one covenant / two administrations model: "Although **this covenant hath been differently and variously administered** in respect of ordinances and institutions in the time of the law, and since the coming of Christ in the flesh; yet for the **substance and efficacy** of it, to all its spiritual and saving ends, it is **one and the same**; upon the account of which various dispensations, it is called the Old and New Testament."

Chapter 28/29: “Of Baptism”

Westminster Confession of Faith Ch. 28:

1 Baptism is a **sacrament** of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, or his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life: which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in his Church until the end of the world.

2 The outward element to be used in the sacrament is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a minister of the gospel, lawfully called thereunto.

3 Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by **pouring or sprinkling** water upon the person.

4 Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.

5 **Although it be a great sin to condemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.**

6 The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time.

7 The sacrament of **Baptism is but once to be administered to any person.**

1689 London Baptist Confession Ch. 29:

1 Baptism is an **ordinance** of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, **a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death and resurrection;** of his being engrafted into him; of remission of sins; and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.

2 **Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance.**

3 The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherein the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

4 **Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance.**

Chapter 25/26: “Of The Church”

Westminster Confession of Faith Ch. 25:

- 1 The catholic or universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.
- 2 The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ; the house and family of God, through which men are ordinarily saved and union with which is essential to their best growth and service.
- 3 Unto this catholic and visible Church, Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto.
- 4 This catholic Church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less, visible. And particular Churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.
- 5 The purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error: and some have so degenerated as to become apparently no Churches of Christ. Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth, to worship God according to his will.

1689 London Baptist Confession Ch. 26:

- 1 The catholic or universal Church, which **(with respect to the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace) may be called invisible**, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.
- 2 **All persons throughout the world, professing the faith of the gospel, and obedience unto God by Christ according unto it, not destroying their own profession by any errors everting the foundation, or unholiness of conversation, are and may be called visible saints; and of such ought all particular congregations to be constituted.**
- 3 The purest Churches under heaven are subject to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no Churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan; nevertheless Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him, and make profession of his name.

[Para. 4 concerns antichrist, which both confessions identify as the pope of Rome. Para. 5-15, which are unique to the 1689, concern administrative matters concerning elders and members of the churches.]

John Owen on the Newness of the New Covenant

Excerpted and slightly modernized from Owen's commentary on Hebrew 8

Hebrews 8:9: *“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 did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD.”*

Owen vs. Westminster: Not “One covenant in two administrations,” but “a new covenant.”

Suppose, then, that this new covenant of grace was extant and effectual under the old testament, so as the church was saved by virtue thereof, and the mediation of Christ therein, how could it be that there should at the same time be another covenant between God and them, of a different nature from this, accompanied with other promises, and other effects? On this consideration it is said, that the two covenants mentioned, the new and the old, were not indeed two distinct covenants, as unto their essence and substance, but only different administrations of the same covenant, called two covenants from some different outward solemnities and duties of worship attending of them. . . . By the new covenant, not the new covenant absolutely and originally, as given in the first promise, is intended; but in its complete gospel administration, when it was actually established by the death of Christ, as administered in and by the ordinances of the new testament. This, with the covenant of Sinai, were, as most say, but different administrations of the same covenant.

But on the other hand, there is such express mention made, not only in this, but in sundry other places of the Scripture also, of two distinct covenants, or testaments, and such different natures, properties, and effects, ascribed unto them, as seem to constitute two distinct covenants. This, therefore, we must inquire into. . . . we may consider that the Scripture doth plainly and expressly make mention of two testaments, or covenants, and distinguish between them in such a way, as what is spoken can hardly be accommodated unto a twofold administration of the same covenant.

Wherefore we must grant two distinct covenants, rather than a twofold administration of the same covenant merely, to be intended. We must, I say, do so, provided always that the way of reconciliation and salvation was the same under both. But it will be said, —and with great pretense of reason, for it is that which is the sole foundation they all build upon who allow only a twofold administration of the same covenant, —’That this being the principal end of a divine covenant, if the way of reconciliation and salvation be the same under both, then indeed are they for the substance of them but one.’ And I grant that this would inevitably follow, if it were so equally by virtue of them both. If reconciliation and salvation by Christ were to be obtained not only under the old covenant, but by virtue thereof, then it must be the same for substance with the new. But this is not so; for no reconciliation with God nor salvation could be obtained by virtue of the old covenant, or the administration of it, as our apostle disputes at large, though all

believers were reconciled, justified, and saved, by virtue of the promise, whilst they were under the covenant.

On The Newness of the New Covenant

As therefore I have showed in what sense the covenant of grace is called “the new covenant,” in this distinction and opposition, so I shall propose sundry things which relate unto the nature of the first covenant, which manifest it to have been a distinct covenant, and not a mere administration of the covenant of grace:

1. These two covenants [Old and New] differ in the circumstance of time as to their promulgation, declaration, and establishment.

- The first covenant was made at the time that God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, and took its date from the third month after their coming up from thence, Exodus 19:24. From the time of what is reported in the latter place, wherein the people give their actual consent unto the terms of it, it began its formal obligation as a covenant. And we must afterwards inquire when it was abrogated and ceased to oblige the church.
- The new covenant was declared and made known “in the latter days,” Hebrews 1:1, 2; “in the dispensation of the fullness of times,” Ephesians 1:10. And it took date as a covenant, formally obliging the whole church, from the death, resurrection, ascension of Christ, and sending of the Holy Ghost. I bring them all into the epocha of this covenant, because though principally it was established by the first, yet was it not absolutely obligatory as a covenant until after the last of them.

2. They differ in the circumstance of place as to their promulgation; which the Scripture also taketh notice of.

- The first was declared on mount Sinai. Galatians 4:24-26: “These are the two covenants; the one from mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.” That is, Agar, the bondwoman whom Abraham took before the heir of promise was born, was a type of the old covenant given on Sinai, before the introduction of the new, or the covenant of promise; for so he adds: “For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth unto Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.” This mount Sinai, where the old covenant was given, and which was represented by Agar, is in Arabia, —cast quite out of the verge and confines of the church.
- The other was declared on mount Zion. This difference, with many remarkable instances from it, our apostle insists on, And it “answereth,” or “is placed in the same series, rank, and order with Jerusalem,” namely, in the opposition of the two covenants. For as the new covenant, the covenant of promise, giving freedom and liberty, was given at Jerusalem, in the death and resurrection of Christ, with the preaching of the gospel which ensued thereon. Isaiah 2:3 [a prophecy of the Messiah’s coming]: “*Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will*

teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths. ' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

3. They differ in the manner of their promulgation and establishment.

- The old covenant: There were two things remarkable that accompanied the solemn declaration of the first covenant: — (1.) The dread and terror of the outward appearance on mount Sinai, which filled all the people, yea, Moses himself, with fear and trembling, Hebrews 12:18-21; Exodus 19:16, 20:18, 19. Together herewith was a spirit of fear and bondage administered unto all the people, so as that they chose to keep at a distance, and not draw nigh unto God, Deuteronomy 5:23-27. (2.) That it was given by the ministry and “disposition of angels,” Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19. Hence the people were in a sense “put in subjection unto angels,” and they had an authoritative ministry in that covenant. The church that then was, was put into some kind of subjection unto angels, as the apostle plainly intimates, Hebrews 2:5. Hence the worshipping or adoration of angels began among that people, Colossians 2:18; which some, with an addition unto their folly and superstition, would introduce into the Christian church, wherein they have no such authoritative ministry as they had under the old covenant.
- Things are quite otherwise in the promulgation of the new covenant. The Son of God in his own person did declare it. This he “spake from heaven,” as the apostle observes; in opposition unto the giving of the law “on the earth,” Hebrews 12:25. Yet did he speak on the earth also; the mystery whereof himself declares, John 3:13. And he did all things that belonged unto the establishment of this covenant in a spirit of meekness and condescension, with the highest evidence of love, grace, and compassion, encouraging and inviting the weary, the burdened, the heavy and laden to come unto him. And by his Spirit he makes his disciples to carry on the same work until the covenant was fully declared, Hebrews 2:3. See John 1:17, 18. And the whole ministry of angels, in the giving of this covenant, was merely in a way of service and obedience unto Christ; and they owned themselves the “fellow-servants” only of them that have “the testimony of Jesus,” Revelation 19:10. So that this “world to come,” as it was called of old, was no way put in subjection unto them.

4. They differ in their mediators.

- The mediator of the first covenant was Moses. “It was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator,” Galatians 3:19. And this was no other but Moses, who was a servant in the house of God, Hebrews 3:5. And he was a mediator, as designed of God, so chosen of the people, in that dread and consternation which befell them upon the terrible promulgation of the law. For they saw that they could no way bear the immediate presence of God, nor treat with him in their own persons. Wherefore they desired that there might be an *internuncius*, a mediator between God and them, and that Moses might be the person, Deuteronomy 5:24-27.
- But the mediator of the new covenant is the Son of God himself. For “there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all,” 1 Timothy 2:5. He who is the Son, and the Lord over his own house, graciously

undertook in his own person to be the mediator of this covenant; and herein it is unspeakably preferred before the old covenant.

5. They differ in their subject-matter, both as unto precepts and promises, the advantage being still on the part of the new covenant. For, —

- The old covenant, in the preceptive part of it, renewed the commands of the covenant of works, and that on their original terms. Sin it forbade, — that is, all and every sin, in matter and manner, — on the pain of death; and gave the promise of life unto perfect, sinless obedience only: whence the decalogue itself, which is a transcript of the law of works, is called “the covenant,” Exodus 34:28. And besides this, as we observed before, it had other precepts innumerable, accommodated unto the present condition of the people, and imposed on them with rigor. The old testament, absolutely considered, had, (1.) No promise of grace, to communicate spiritual strength, or to assist us in obedience; nor, (2.) Any of eternal life, no otherwise but as it was contained in the promise of the covenant of works, “The man that doeth these things shall live in them;” and, (3.) Had promises of temporal things in the land of Canaan inseparable from it. In the new covenant all things are otherwise, as will be declared in the exposition of the ensuing verses.
- But in the new covenant, the very first thing that is proposed, is the accomplishment and establishment of the covenant of works, both as unto its commands and sanction, in the obedience and suffering of the mediator. Hereon the commands of it, as unto the obedience of the covenanters, are not grievous; the yoke of Christ being easy, and his burden light.

6. They differ, and that principally, in the manner of their dedication and sanction. This is that which gives any thing the formal nature of a covenant or testament. There may be a promise, there may be an agreement in general, which hath not the formal nature of a covenant, or testament, — and such was the covenant of grace before the death of Christ, — but it is the solemnity and manner of the confirmation, dedication, and sanction of any promise or agreement, that give it the formal nature of a covenant or testament. And this is by a sacrifice, wherein there is both bloodshedding and death ensuing thereon.

- Now this, in the confirmation of the old covenant, was only the sacrifice of beasts, whose blood was sprinkled on all the people, Exodus 24:5-8.
- But the new testament was solemnly confirmed by the sacrifice and blood of Christ himself, Zechariah 9:11; Hebrews 10:29, 13:20. And the Lord Christ dying as the mediator and surety of the covenant, he purchased all good things for the church; and as a testator bequeathed them unto it. Hence he says of the sacramental cup, that it is “the new testament in his blood,” or the pledge of his bequeathing unto the church all the promises and mercies of the covenant; which is the new testament, or the disposition of his goods unto his children. But because the Hebrews 9:18-23, we must thither refer the full consideration of it.

7. They differ in the priests that were to officiate before God in the behalf of the people.

- In the old covenant, Aaron and his posterity alone were to discharge that office;

- in the new, the Son of God himself is the only priest of the church. This difference, with the advantage of the gospel-state thereon, we have handled at large in the exposition of the chapter foregoing.

8. They differ in the sacrifices whereon the peace and reconciliation with God which is tendered in them doth depend. And this also must be spoken unto in the ensuing chapter, if God permit.

9. They differ in the way and manner of their solemn writing. All covenants were of old solemnly written in tables of brass or stone, where they might be faithfully preserved for the use of the parties concerned.

- So the old covenant, as to the principal, fundamental part of it, was “engraven in tables of stone,” which were kept in the ark, Exodus 31:18; Deuteronomy 9:10; 2 Corinthians 3:7. And God did so order it in his providence, that the first draught of them should be broken, to intimate that the covenant contained in them was not everlasting nor unalterable.
- But the new covenant is written in the “fleshy tables of the hearts” of them that do believe 2 Corinthians 3:3; Jeremiah 31:33.

10. They differ in their ends [purposes].

- The principal end of the first covenant was to discover sin, to condemn it, and to set bounds unto it. So saith the apostle, “It was added because of transgressions.” And this it did several ways: — (1) By conviction: for “by the law is the knowledge of sin;” it convinced sinners, and caused every mouth to be stopped before God. (2) By condemning the sinner, in an application of the sanction of the law unto his conscience. (3) By the judgments and punishments wherewith on all occasions it was accompanied. In all it manifested and represented the justice and severity of God.
- The end of the new covenant is, to declare the love, grace, and mercy of God; and therewith to give repentance, remission of sin, and life eternal.

11. They differed in their effects.

- For the first covenant being the “ministration of death” and “condemnation,” it brought the minds and spirits of them that were under it into servitude and bondage; whereas spiritual liberty is the immediate effect of the new testament. And there is no one thing wherein the Spirit of God doth more frequently give us an account of the difference between these two covenants, than in this of the liberty of the one and the bondage of the other. See Romans 8:15; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 4:1-7, 24, 26, 30, 31; Hebrews 2:14, 15. This, therefore, we must a little explain. Wherefore the bondage which was the effect of the old covenant arose from several causes concurring unto the effecting of it: — (1.) The renovation of the terms and sanction of the covenant of works contributed much thereunto. For the people saw not how the commands of that covenant could be observed, nor how its curse could be avoided. They saw it not, I say, by any thing in the covenant of Sinai; which therefore “gendered unto bondage.” All the prospect they had of deliverance was from the promise. (2.) It arose from the manner of the delivery of the law, and God’s entering thereon into

covenant with them. This was ordered on purpose to fill them with dread and fear. And it could not but do so, whenever they called it to remembrance. (3.) From the severity of the penalties annexed unto the transgression of the law. And God had taken upon himself, that where punishment was not exacted according to the law, he himself would “cut them off.” This kept them always anxious and solicitous, not knowing when they were safe or secure. (4.) From the nature of the whole ministry of the law, which was the “ministration of death” and “condemnation,” 2 Corinthians 3:7, 9; which declared the desert of every sin to be death, and denounced death unto every sinner, administering by itself no relief unto the minds and consciences of men. So was it the “letter that killed” them that were under its power. (5.) From the darkness of their own minds, in the means, ways, and causes of deliverance from all these things. It is true, they had a promise before of life and salvation, which was not abolished by this covenant, even the promise made unto Abraham; but this belonged not unto this covenant, and the way of its accomplishment, by the incarnation and mediation of the Son of God, was much hidden from them, —yea, from the prophets themselves who yet foretold them. This left them under much bondage. For the principal cause and means of the liberty of believers under the gospel, ariseth from the clear light they have into the mystery of the love and grace of God in Christ. This knowledge and faith of his incarnation, humiliation, sufferings, and sacrifice, whereby he made atonement for sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness, is that which gives them liberty and boldness in their obedience, 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18. Whilst they of old were in the dark as unto these things, they must needs have been kept under much bondage. (6.) It was increased by the yoke of a multitude of laws, rites, and ceremonies, imposed on them; which made the whole of their worship a burden unto them, and insupportable, Acts 15:10. In and by all these ways and means there was a spirit of bondage and fear administered unto them. And this God did, thus he dealt with them, to the end that they might not rest in that state, but continually look out after deliverance.

- On the other hand, the new covenant gives liberty and boldness, the liberty and boldness of children, unto all believers. It is the Spirit of the Son in it that makes us free, or gives us universally all that liberty which is any way needful for us or useful unto us. For “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;” namely, to serve God, “not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the spirit.” And it is declared that this was the great end of bringing in the new covenant, in the accomplishment of the promise made unto Abraham, namely, “that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve God without fear all the days of our life,” Luke 1:72-75. And we may briefly consider wherein this deliverance and liberty by the new covenant doth consist, which it doth in the things ensuing: — (1.) In our freedom from the commanding power of the law, as to sinless, perfect obedience, in order unto righteousness and justification before God. Its commands we are still subject unto, but not in order unto life and salvation; for unto these ends it is fulfilled in and by the mediator of the new covenant, who is “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,” Romans 10:4. (2.) In our freedom from the condemning power of the law, and the sanction of it in the curse. This being undergone and answered by him who was “made a curse for us,” we are freed from it, Romans 7:6; Galatians 3:13, 14. And therein also are we

“delivered from the fear of death,” Hebrews 2:15, as it was penal and an entrance into judgment or condemnation, John 5:24. (3.) In our freedom from conscience of sin, Hebrews 10:2, — that is, conscience disquieting, perplexing, and condemning our persons; the hearts of all that believe being “sprinkled from an evil conscience” by the blood of Christ. (4.) In our freedom from the whole system of Mosaical worship, in all the rites, and ceremonies, and ordinances of it; which what a burden it was the apostles do declare, Acts 15, and our apostle at large in his epistle to the Galatians. (5.) From all the laws of men in things appertaining unto the worship of God, 1 Corinthians 7:23. And by all these, and the like instances of spiritual liberty, doth the gospel free believers from that “spirit of bondage unto fear,” which was administered under the old covenant.

- It remains only that we point out those ways whereby this liberty is communicated unto us under the new covenant. And it is done, — (1.) Principally by the grant and communication of the Spirit of the Son as a Spirit of adoption, giving the freedom, boldness, and liberty of children, John 1:12; Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:6, 7. From hence the apostle lays it down as a certain rule, that “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,” 2 Corinthians 3:17. Let men pretend what they will, let them boast of the freedom of their outward condition in this world, and of the inward liberty or freedom of their wills, there is indeed no true liberty where the Spirit of God is not. The ways whereby he giveth freedom, power, a sound mind, spiritual boldness, courage, contempt of the cross, holy confidence before God, a readiness for obedience, and enlargedness of heart in duties, with all other things wherein true liberty doth consist, or which any way belong unto it, I must not here divert to declare. The world judges that there is no bondage but where the Spirit of God is; for that gives that conscientious fear of sin, that awe of God in all our thoughts, actions, and ways, that careful and circumspect walking, that temperance in things lawful, that abstinence from all appearance of evil, wherein they judge the greatest bondage on the earth to consist. But those who have received him, do know that the whole world doth lie in evil, and that all those unto whom spiritual liberty is a bondage are the servants and slaves of Satan. (2.) It is obtained by the evidence of our justification before God, and the causes of it. This men were greatly in the dark unto under the first covenant, although all stable peace with God doth depend thereon; for it is in the gospel that “the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith,” Romans 1:17. Indeed “the righteousness of God without the law is witnessed by the law and the prophets,” Romans 3:21; that is, testimony is given to it in legal institutions and the promises recorded in the prophets. But these things were obscure unto them, who were to seek for what was intended under the veils and shadows of priests and sacrifices, atonements and expiations. But our justification before God, in all the causes of it, being now fully revealed and made manifest, it hath a great influence into spiritual liberty and boldness. (3.) By the spiritual light which is given to believers into the mystery of God in Christ. This the apostle affirms to have been “hid in God from the beginning of the world,” Ephesians 3:9. It was contrived and prepared in the counsel and wisdom of God from all eternity. Some intimation was given of it in the first promise, and it was afterwards shadowed out by sundry legal institutions; but the depth, the glory, the beauty and fullness of it, were “hid in God,” in his mind and will, until it was fully revealed in the gospel The

saints under the old testament believed that they should be delivered by the promised Seed, that they should be saved for the Lord's sake, that the Angel of the covenant would save them, yea, that the Lord himself would come to his temple; and they diligently inquired into what was foresignified concerning "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." But all this while their thoughts and conceptions were exceedingly in the dark as to those glorious things which are made so plain in the new covenant, concerning the incarnation, mediation, sufferings, and sacrifice of the Son of God, —concerning the way of God's being in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Now as darkness gives fear, so light gives liberty. (4.) We obtain this liberty by the opening of the way into the holiest, and the entrance we have thereby with boldness unto the throne of grace. This also the apostle insists upon peculiarly in sundry places of his ensuing discourses, as Hebrews 9:8, 10:19-22: where it must be spoken to, if God permit, at large; for a great part of the liberty of the new testament doth consist herein. (5.) By all the ordinances of gospel-worship, How the ordinances of worship under the old testament did lead the people into bondage hath been declared; but those of the new testament, through their plainness in signification, their immediate respect unto the Lord Christ, with their use and efficacy to guide believers in their communion with God, do all conduce unto our evangelical liberty. And of such importance is our liberty in this instance of it, that when the apostles saw it necessary, for the avoiding of offense and scandal, to continue the observance of one or two legal institutions, in abstinence from some things in themselves indifferent, they did it only for a season, and declared that it was only in case of scandal that they would allow this temporary abridgment of the liberty given us by the gospel.

12. They differ greatly with respect unto the dispensation and grant of the Holy Spirit. It is certain that God did grant the gift of the Holy Spirit under the old testament, and his operations during that season; but it is no less certain, that there was always a promise of his more signal effusion upon the confirmation and establishment of the new covenant. See in particular that great promise to this purpose, Joel 2:28, 29, as applied and expounded by the apostle Peter, Acts 2:16-18.

- The old covenant. Yea, so sparing was the communication of the Holy Ghost under the old testament, compared with his effusion under the new, as that the evangelist affirms that "the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified," John 7:39; that is, he was not yet given in that manner as he was to be given upon the confirmation of the new covenant. And those of the church of the Hebrews who had received the doctrine of John, yet affirmed that "they had not so much as heard whether there were any Holy Ghost" or no, Acts 19:2; that is, any such gift and communication of him as was then proposed as the chief privilege of the gospel.
- The new covenant. Neither doth this concern only the plentiful effusion of him with respect unto those miraculous gifts and operations wherewith the doctrine and establishment of the new covenant was testified unto and confirmed: however, that also gave a signal difference between the two covenants; for the first covenant was confirmed by dreadful appearances and operations, effected by the ministry of angels, but the new by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost himself. But this difference principally consists herein, that under the new

testament the Holy Ghost hath graciously condescended to bear the office of the comforter of the church. That this unspeakable privilege is peculiar unto the new testament, is evident from all the promises of his being sent as a comforter made by our Savior, John 14-16.; especially by that wherein he assures his disciples that “unless he went away” (in which going away he confirmed the new covenant) “the Comforter would not come; but if he so went away, he would send him from the Father,” John 16:7. And the difference between the two covenants which ensued hereon is inexpressible.

13. They differ in the declaration made in them of the kingdom of God. It is the observation of Augustine, that the very name of “the kingdom of heaven” is peculiar unto the new testament.

- The old covenant: It is true, God reigned in and over the church under the old testament; but his rule was such, and had such a relation unto secular things, especially with respect unto the land of Canaan, and the flourishing condition of the people therein, as that it had an appearance of a kingdom of this world. And that it was so, and was so to be, consisting in empire, power, victory, wealth, and peace, was so deeply fixed on the minds of the generality of the people, that the disciples of Christ themselves could not free themselves of that apprehension, until the new testament was fully established.
- But now in the gospel [new covenant], the nature of the kingdom of God, where it is, and wherein it consists, is plainly and evidently declared, unto the unspeakable consolation of believers. For whereas it is now known and experienced to be internal, spiritual, and heavenly, they have no less assured interest in it and advantage by it, in all the troubles which they may undergo in this world, than they could have in the fullest possession of all earthly enjoyments.

14. They differ in their substance and end [purpose].

- The old covenant was typical, shadowy, and removable, Hebrews 10:1. Now, consider the old covenant comparatively with the new, and this part of its nature, that it was typical and shadowy, is a great debasement of it.
- The new covenant is substantial and permanent, as containing the body, which is Christ. But consider it absolutely, and the things wherein it was so were its greatest glory and excellency; for in these things alone was it a token and pledge of the love and grace of God. For those things in the old covenant which had most of bondage in their use and practice, had most of light and grace in their signification. This was the design of God in all the ordinances of worship belonging unto that covenant, namely, to typify, shadow, and represent the heaven]y, substantial things of the new covenant, or the Lord Christ and the work of his mediation. This the tabernacle, ark, altar, priests, and sacrifices did do; and it was their glory that so they did. However, compared with the substance in the new covenant, they have no glory.

15. They differ in the extent of their administration, according unto the will of God.

- The first [covenant] was confined unto the posterity of Abraham according to the flesh, and unto them especially in the land of Canaan, Deuteronomy 5:3, with some few proselytes that were joined unto them, excluding all others from the participation of the benefits of it. And

hence it was, that whereas the personal ministry of our Savior himself, in preaching of the gospel, was to precede the introduction of the new covenant, it was confined unto the people of Israel, Matthew 15:24. And he was the “minister of the circumcision,” Romans 15:8. Such narrow bounds and limits had the administration of this covenant affixed unto it by the will and pleasure of God, Psalm 147:19, 20.

- But the administration of the new covenant is extended unto all nations under heaven; none being excluded, on the account of tongue, language, family, nation, or place of habitation. All have an equal interest in the rising Sun. The partition wall is broken down, and the gates of the new Jerusalem are set open unto all comers upon the gospel invitation. This is frequently taken notice of in the Scripture. See Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; John 11:51, 52, 12:32; Acts 11:18, 17:30; Galatians 5:6; Ephesians 2:11-16, 118 3:8-10; Colossians; 3:10, 11; 1 John 2:2; Revelation 5:9. This is the grand charter of the poor wandering Gentiles. Having willfully fallen off from God, he was pleased, in his holiness and severity, to leave all our ancestors for many generations to serve and worship the devil. And the mystery of our recovery was “hid in God from the beginning of the world,” Ephesians 3:8-10. And although it was so foretold, so prophesied of, so promised under the old testament, yet, such was the pride, blindness, and obstinacy, of the greatest part of the church of the Jews, that its accomplishment was one great part of that stumbling-block whereat they fell; yea, the greatness and glory of this mystery was such, that the disciples of Christ themselves comprehended it not, until it was testified unto them by the pouring out of the Holy Ghost, the great promise of the new covenant, upon some of those poor Gentiles, Acts 11:18.

16. They differ in their efficacy; for the old covenant “made nothing perfect,” it could effect none of the things it did represent, nor introduce that perfect or complete state which God had designed for the church. But this we have at large insisted on in our exposition of the foregoing chapter.

17. Lastly, They differ in their duration: for the one was to be removed, and the other to abide for ever; which must be declared on the ensuing verses.

Conclusion. It may be other things of an alike nature may be added unto these that we have mentioned, wherein the difference between the two covenants doth consist; but these instances are sufficient unto our purpose. For some, when they hear that the covenant of grace was always one and the same, of the same nature and efficacy under both testaments, —that the way of salvation by Christ was always one and the same, —are ready to think that there was no such great difference between their state and ours as is pretended. But we see that on this supposition, that covenant which God brought the people into at Sinai, and under the yoke whereof they were to abide until the new covenant was established, had all the disadvantages attending it which we have insisted on. And those who understand not how excellent and glorious those privileges are which are added unto the covenant of grace, as to the administration of it, by the introduction and establishment of the new covenant, are utterly unacquainted with the nature of spiritual and heavenly things.

Resources for Further Study

Though the Bible is our primary source, many other resources have been helpful in the preparation of this series. The following books in particular are well worth a careful read (reviews are from online sources).

***The Distinctiveness of Baptist Covenant Theology*, by Paschal Denault (2013).** Subtitle: *A Comparison Between Seventeenth-Century Particular Baptist and Paedobaptist Federalism*. “Pascal Denault’s careful labors over the theological texts of both Baptist and Paedobaptists of the seventeenth century have yielded an excellent study of the relation of baptism to a commonly shared covenantalism. At the same time he has shown that a distinct baptistic interpretation of the substance of the New Covenant, that is, all its conditions having been met in the work of Christ its Mediator resulting in an unconditional application of it to its recipients, formed the most basic difference between the two groups. His careful work on the seventeenth-century documents has yielded a strong, Bible-centered, covenantal defense of believers’ baptism and is worthy of a dominant place in the contemporary discussions of both covenantalism and baptism.” — Thomas J. Nettles, Ph.D.

***From Shadow to Substance*, by Samuel D. Renihan (2018).**

- “*From Shadow to Substance* approaches Particular Baptist covenant theology chronologically, tracing the origins and development of the Particular Baptists’ covenant theology in dialogue with the Church of England, Presbyterian, and Independent paedobaptists of their day. A chronological approach reveals not only where the Particular Baptists and their paedobaptist counterparts agreed and disagreed, but it also reveals the ways in which later Particular Baptists built on the work of earlier Particular Baptists.... It addresses issues such as the covenant of works in Particular Baptist literature, the importance of noting the polemical genre of their covenantal writings, the covenant of redemption in Particular Baptist literature, and reasons why the Particular Baptists appealed to John Owen’s covenant theology in relation to their own” — the author.
- “Baptist history and theology is undergoing a modern recovery and rediscovery. Such a renaissance is incomplete without an examination of the covenant theology that played such a prominent role in Particular Baptist identity, thought, and literature. This work describes the covenant theology of the Particular Baptists associated with the 1644 and 1677 Confessions of Faith through analyses of their own writings and in comparison to the Reformed theology of their day. The study offers groundbreaking, fresh insights into the interactions between Particular Baptist churches during the second half of the seventeenth

century as well as providing new details of some of their most important leaders, including Nehemiah Coxe and Benjamin Keach.”

The Fatal Flaw of Theology Behind Infant Baptism, by Jeffrey Johnson (2017).

- “*The Fatal Flaw* exposes the inconsistencies of the theology behind infant baptism. Rather than rehashing the familiar arguments against infant baptism, this work seeks to undercut its very foundation. What is the theological system which under girds infant baptism and where does this system come unraveled? This work answers these questions by explaining the distinction in the nature of the old and new covenants and their often misunderstood relationship with one another. This critical discussion of the continuity and discontinuity of the covenants is thoroughly explored in this book. To understand the biblical connection between the covenants, it is vital to first understand the *dual* nature of the Abrahamic Covenant. What is the relationship between Abraham and Moses, Abraham and Christ, and Moses and Christ? The debate of continuity and discontinuity between the old and new covenants cannot be properly solved until the intended nature of the Abrahamic Covenant is fully comprehended.”
- “The Fatal Flaw of the Theology Behind Infant Baptism & Covenantal Dichotomism. Johnson’s treatment differs in some important respects from the Coxe/Owen treatment (see disclaimer below), but he shares their rejection of the “multiple administrations” view and highlights the dichotomous nature of the Abrahamic Covenant. This book is a very helpful summary of various ways paedobaptists have attempted to deal with the “law of works” aspect of the Mosaic Covenant.”

Covenant Theology From Adam to Christ, by Coxe and Owen (2005).

This book is a reprint of two seventeenth century theologians, Nehemiah Coxe and John Owen, which shows how the seventeenth century Particular Baptists fit within the broader Covenant Theology of that day. Coxe’s work, *A Discourse of the Covenants That God Made With Men Before the Law*, appears first, in which Coxe traces the promise of redemption through a coming Messiah beginning with Adam. Next in the book, John Owen’s full commentary on Hebrews 8:6-13 is reprinted, in which Owen shows how the Old Covenant (the Law of Moses), which was never intended to bring about man’s redemption, has been fulfilled and accomplished by Christ’s finished work in establishing the New Covenant. In his comments, Owen, though a paedobaptist himself, argues against the Westminster Confession’s position that the New Covenant is merely a *new administration* of the Old Covenant, instead taking the position that the New Covenant is a *completely new covenant* of a different kind, because it is the only covenant that actually saves sinners.

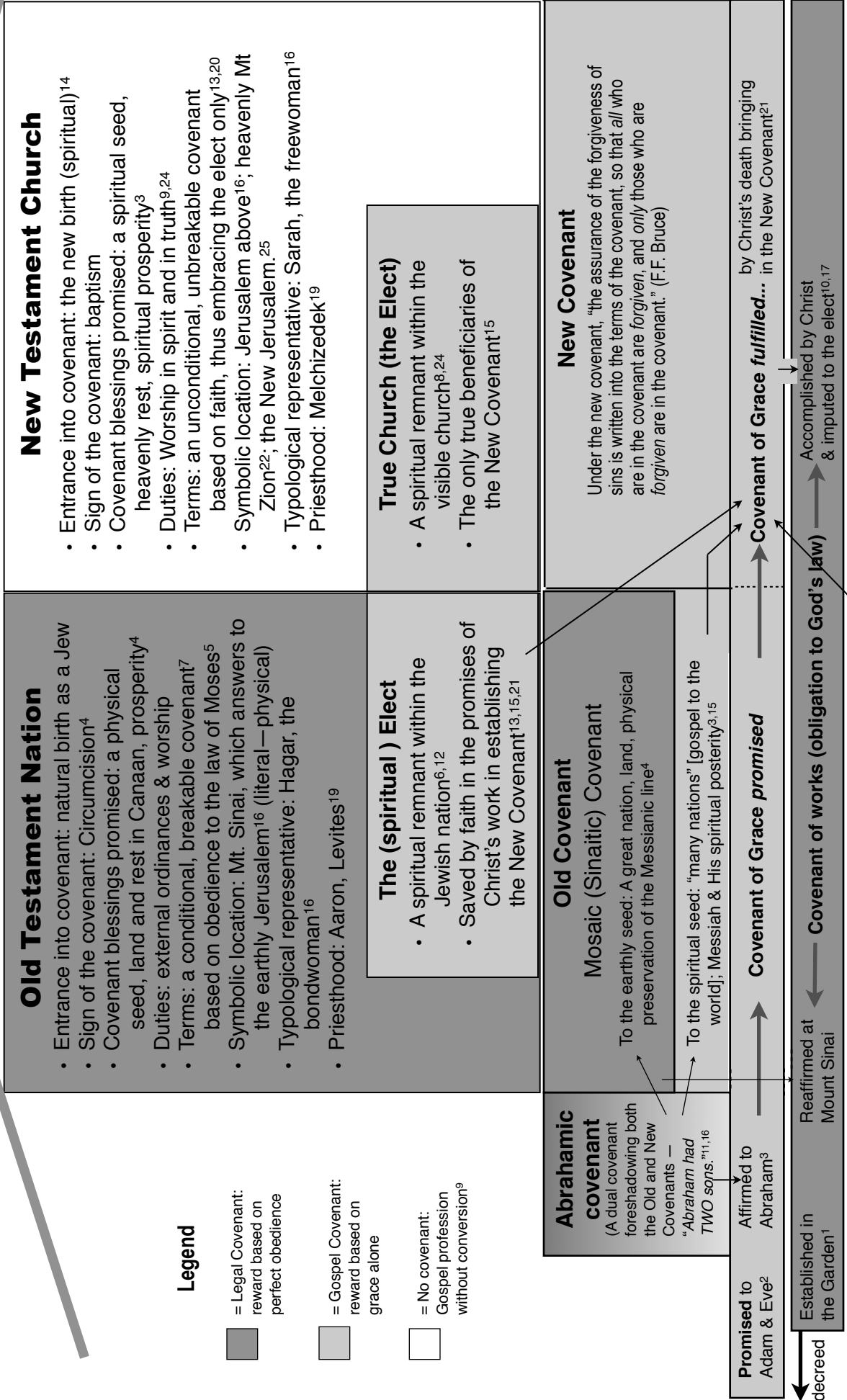
Recovering a Covenantal Heritage by various authors (2014).

“This book is offered with the intent to further the discussion on covenant theology among Baptists and paedobaptists. It in no way pretends to be a fully worked-out Baptist covenant theology. It contains essays by thirteen different authors who do not necessarily advocate the fine details of every contribution, something that is quite common with multiple-author works. After the Preface and Introduction, the first main section is historical. It seeks to set a historical-

theological context for the reader. The second section of this work discusses various biblical issues related to covenant theology - the Abrahamic Covenant, the Old and New Covenants, Acts 2 and Colossians 2. The third section of the book, though the shortest, seeks to put things together, though certainly not in any comprehensive sense. It is my hope that this work will both challenge and instruct Baptist readers and introduce paedobaptists into part of the thought-world of Baptist covenant theology.”— The Editor, Richard C. Barcellos, Ph.D., Grace Reformed Baptist Church Palmdale, CA.

God's Household¹⁸

(The professing people of God)



Legend

- = Legal Covenant: reward based on perfect obedience
- = Gospel Covenant: reward based on grace alone
- = No covenant: Gospel profession without conversion⁹

Explanation of Key Points

NOTE: This chart is intended only as a supplement to the messages. It does not provide full scriptural support on any single point, nor is it possible for any visual aid adequately to represent God's covenant dealings with man.

- **The foundation of the chart** is formed by:
 - (1) The **law**, God's perfect standard, which promises rewards and punishment based on perfect obedience (often called the *covenant of works* in Reformed theology), and which remains in force for all who are outside of God's grace through Christ; (2) The **gospel**, which promises rewards only through faith in the imputed righteousness of *Christ's* obedience to the law.
- **Law vs. gospel:** The *Old Covenant* (under Moses at Sinai) was a covenant of **law**, a reaffirmation of the original *covenant of works*. It was gracious only in that it pointed sinners to the *need* for grace, but it was unable in itself to provide it. Only the *New Covenant* is a **gospel** covenant, a true covenant of grace.
- **All of the Old Testament covenants** were merely foreshadows, "covenants of promise" (Eph. 2:12), pointing to the saving grace of the new covenant. The true Old Testament saints were saved by their faith in

the promises of the grace to come: "*Abraham believed God...*" (Rom. 4:3).

- **The covenant with Abraham** was a dual covenant ("*Abraham had TWO sons*") which foreshadowed both Old and New Covenants, that is, both **law** and **gospel**: *the Old Covenant in Abraham's physical descendants*, who were the root of national Israel and accomplished their purpose in bringing forth the Messiah; and *the New Covenant in Abraham's spiritual descendants*, he being "*the father of all those who believe*" (Rom. 4:11).

- **The scope of the covenants:** Under the old covenant, the entire Jewish nation (His *professing* people), was placed in a covenant promising *temporal* blessings for obedience. In the New Testament, only those having genuine saving faith are in covenant with God to inherit *eternal* blessings.

- **Professing vs. Possessing:** In both Old and New Testament times, there has been (1) a *professing* people of God who are judged on the merits of their own works; (2) a true remnant within who will be judged on the merits of Christ, as well as (3) a world of unbelievers who will be judged without mercy according to their own works.

Scripture References for New Covenant Chart

- ¹ Genesis 2:15-17: [15] Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. [16] And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; [17] but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."
- ² Genesis 3:15: And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."
- ³ Genesis 12:1-3: [1] Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. [2] I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. [3] I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed..."
- ⁴ Genesis 17:1-11: [1] When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; I walk before Me and be blameless. [2] And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly. ... [4] "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. [5] No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. [6] I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. [7] And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be

God to you and your descendants after you. [8] Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger; all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." [9] And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. [10] This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; [11] and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.

⁵ Exodus 19:5-8: [5] Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. [6] And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." [7] So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. [8] Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.

⁶ Isaiah 10:20-23: [20] And it shall come to pass in that day That the remnant of Israel, And such as have escaped of the house of Jacob, Will never again depend on him who defeated them, But will depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. [21] The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, To the Mighty God. [22] For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, A remnant of them will return; The destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness. [23] For the Lord GOD of

hosts Will make a determined end In the midst of all the land.

⁷ Jeremiah 31:31-34: [31] "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— [32] not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. [33] But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My

people. [34] No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

⁸ Matthew 7:21-23: [21] "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. [22] Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' [23] And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

⁹ John 4:21-23: [21] Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. [22] You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. [23] But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

¹⁰ Romans 3:21-22: [21] But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; [22] Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

¹¹ Romans 4:9-16: [9] Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

[10] How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. [11] And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, [12] and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised. [13] For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. [14] For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect,

[15] because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression. [16] Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

¹² Romans 9: [27] Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL BE AS THE SAND OF THE SEA, THE REMNANT WILL BE

SAVED. [28] FOR HE WILL FINISH THE WORK AND CUT IT SHORT IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, BECAUSE THE LORD WILL MAKE A SHORT WORK UPON THE EARTH."

¹³ Romans 15:8: Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers....

¹⁴ 2 Corinthians 3:2-11: [2] You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; [3] clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. [4] And we have such trust through Christ toward God. [5] Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, [6] who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. [7] But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, [8] how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? [9] For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. [10] For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. [11] For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.

¹⁵ Galatians 3:6-18: [6] just as Abraham "BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." [7] Therefore know that

only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. [8] And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." [9] So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. [10] For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT CONTINUE IN ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW; TO DO THEM." [11] But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." [12] Yet the law is not of faith, but "THE MAN WHO DOES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM." [13] Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"), [14] that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. [15] Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. [16] Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "AND TO YOUR SEED," who is Christ. [17] And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. [18] For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

¹⁶ Galatians 4:22-31: [22] For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. [23] But he who was of the

bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, [24] which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— [25] for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children — [26] but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. [27] For it is written: "REJOICE, O BARREN, YOU WHO DO NOT BEAR! BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR! FOR THE DESOLATE HAS MANY MORE CHILDREN THAN SHE WHO HAS A HUSBAND." [28] Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. [29] But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. [30] Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREEWOMAN." [31] So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

¹⁷ Philippians 3:9: and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

¹⁸ Hebrews 3:1-6: [1] Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, [2] who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. [3] For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. [4] For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is

God. [5] And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, [6] but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

¹⁹ Hebrews 7:12-16: [12] For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. [13] For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. [14] For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. [15] And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest [16] who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.

²⁰ Hebrews 8:6-11: [6] But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. [7] For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. [8] Because finding fault with them, He says: "BEHOLD, THE DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH — [9] 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 DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DISREGARDED THEM, SAYS THE LORD. [10] FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF

ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. [11] NONE OF THEM SHALL TEACH HIS NEIGHBOR, AND NONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST OF THEM TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.

²¹ Hebrews 9:15: [15] And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. [16] For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. [17] For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.

²² Hebrews 12:18-24: [18] For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, [19] and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. [20] (For they could not endure what was commanded: "AND IF SO MUCH AS A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT SHALL BE STONED OR SHOT WITH AN ARROW." [21] And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I AM EXCEEDINGLY AFRAID AND TREMBLING.") [22] But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, [23] to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, [24] to

Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

²³ 1 Peter 2:5-10: [5] you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. [6] Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHIEF CORNERSTONE, ELECT, PRECIOUS, AND HE WHO BELIEVES ON HIM WILL BY NO MEANS BE PUT TO SHAME." [7] Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE," [8] and "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. [9] But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; [10] who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

²⁴ 1 John 2:19: They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

²⁵ Revelation 21:2: Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.