

## CHRIST AND THE COVENANTS

### WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 12. What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?

A. When God had created man, he entered into **a covenant of life** with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.

.... Then Adam and Eve sinned .....

Q. 20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into **a covenant of grace** to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

### Ephesians 2: 1 - 13 (NKJV)

1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh--who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands-- 12 that at that time you were without Christ, **being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise**, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

### Life in an unconverted condition,

without a saving faith in Jesus Christ...

Eph 2:12

1. without Christ - no knowledge, no love, no mercy
2. being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel - enemies of God and His people
3. strangers from the covenants of promise - no intimacy as God's child; no fellowship and no relationship with God
4. having no hope - facing death with fear and trembling
5. without God in the world - alone, abandoned, anxious, afraid

### Westminster Confession of Faith : Ch 7 - Of God's Covenant with Man.

I. 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 has been pleased to express by way of covenant.

The separation between man and God was 'so great' even before the fall. Remember God is the Creator and we are mere creatures.

A Covenantal relationship existed between God and His people throughout redemptive history.

The conditions in God's covenants do not deserve or earn His blessings. Be cautious in thinking of a covenant as a contract.

WCF 7.II. 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.

Old covenant - Works : at creation prior to the Fall  
Sabbath, marriage, labor, obedience

Sproul : Six elements of a covenant (explicit or implied)

Preamble, Historical Prologue, Stipulations, Oaths & Vows,  
Sanctions, Sealing with blood

WCF 7.III. Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make **a second (covenant), commonly called the covenant of grace**; wherein He freely offers 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.

God has always required Repentance, Faithfulness, Worship, Loyalty and Obedience, from His covenant people.

Salvation has always and only been through Jesus Christ.

God's initiative makes us "... willing and able to believe". (TULIP)

As sinners, our spiritual condition is described in Scripture as dead, deaf, blind, lame, diseased, poor, hungry, thirsty, imprisoned, enslaved, ...

WCF 7.IV. This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in 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.

Christ's death and resurrection gave us all the gracious blessings of salvation : forgiveness, rebirth into spiritual life, adoption into God's family, a future hope, assurance of saving faith, ....

God has always been leading His people to salvation through Christ.

All aspects of all covenants point to Jesus Christ.

First (Old) Covenant	Second (New) Covenant
	Old Testament & New Testament

WCF 7.V. This (second) 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 foreshadowing 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.

God's covenant remains in perfect unity (both in structure and theme) as covenants build upon earlier covenants throughout Biblical history.

In Israel's history, think of growth, development, and fulfillment aspects of the covenants rather than cancellation, innovation, and improvement.

#### Different Administrations of the New Covenant of Grace

##### Old Testament

Adam - commencement : posterity; enmity with Satan, ultimate victory

Noah - preservation (from judgment) : family ; rainbow as a sign

Abraham - promise : Circumcision is the sign & seal; a symbol of regeneration; a great nation & people;

Moses - law : an external summation of God's will, Law, & holiness; revealing God's standard & our sin, providing a focus for obedience (portrait & mirror); formed the nation of Israel; the sign of Passover

David - kingdom : Jerusalem, the city of God; justice; protection

##### New Testament

Christ - consummation : forgiven by His blood, indwelling Holy Spirit; balancing old & new - continuity & fulfillment

WCF 7.VI. 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 fullness, 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.

Advantages of the New Testament, the pinnacle of the New Covenant :

- (1) new Sacraments : Lord's Supper (Passover) and Baptism (Circumcision);
- (2) simpler worship;
- (3) growth of the Kingdom of God;
- (4) the fullness of Scriptural revelation;
- (5) greater revelation through Jesus' life;
- (6) the presence of the Holy Spirit in and among us

#### Seeing Christ in the Covenants

All roads lead to the cross

...in the garden : a Savior, born of a woman, would crush Satan

...in the flood : God mercifully and graciously spared His people from His Holy righteous, judgment on their sin and wickedness

...on the mountain : God provided a sacrifice, sparing Isaac

...in the wilderness : a raised serpent spares the disobedient people

...from the throne : a king provides leadership, protection, wisdom