

Lesson 11: 2LCF Chapter 7: Of God's Covenant

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began...

2 Timothy 1:8-9

In the last lesson, we were introduced to the theme of covenant found in the Bible. As we shift our attention from chapter 6 to chapter 7 in the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith, we will see this theme more fully developed.

Last time, we considered the Covenant of Works (otherwise known as the “Creation Covenant,” “Adamic Administration,” etc.). As we enter into our exposition of chapter 7, we will be introduced to two additional covenants normally identified within the framework of covenant theology (tri-covenantalism): the Covenant of Grace and the Covenant of Redemption.

As is often the case, Sam Waldron provides a very helpful outline of the Confession:¹⁰¹

Theme: Of God's Covenant:

- I. Its General Necessity (paragraph 1)
- II. Its Specific Identity (paragraph 2)
 - A. Its Description: “A Covenant of Grace”
 - B. Its Dimensions: Universal and Particular
- III. Its Significant History (paragraph 3)
 - A. Its Progressive Revelation
 - B. Its Eternal Foundation
 - C. Its Exclusive Provision

Before we explore these covenants in paragraphs 2 and 3, the Confession offers an explanation of the purpose or necessity of these covenants.

Paragraph 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.
1 Luke 17:10; Job 35:7,8

¹⁰¹ Samuel E. Waldron, *A Modern Exposition of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*, 5th ed. (Welwyn Garden City, UK: EP Books, 2016), 126.

Exposition

Speaking on paragraph one, James Renihan explains:

God freely (of His own will) and of necessity (due to humanity's finitude) condescends, or accommodates, to man; in this case, for the purpose of granting to him the reward of life. This is not merely continued existence, but rather a confirmation of the high estate into which God created man-with the greatest blessing being continued, unbroken communion with God his creator. This is covenant. The chosen vehicle of revelation is covenant.¹⁰²

Here we find that the Lord communicated with His people in a way that would be especially understandable to ancient readers, and to us by extension. Ancient Near Eastern studies have offered considerable insight into the covenants and treaties found in the Bible. It has been observed that many Hittite treaties share the same features as biblical covenants, especially Mosaic covenants. These treaties often included a powerful and benevolent king providing a smaller and weaker nation with property, covenant promises, and blessings. Not only does this demonstrate God's willingness to graciously condescend for the blessing and preservation of His people, but also His willingness to express this condescension in a manner that would have been clearly understood by those people.¹⁰³

Michael Grisanti comments on this theme:

If the Bible was to impact the world to which it was given, it had to interact in some way with the culture and background of its recipients. For the biblical worldview to correct or confront (polemically) the surrounding culture or cognitive environment, the biblical writers would have been aware of that culture and interacted with it. As God had biblical writers make use of the language, culture, and ideology of the surrounding world, He invested it with the meaning and message He wanted to communicate to His people by divesting them of their pagan distortions.¹⁰⁴

Waldron provides a basic definition of Covenant: "There is a covenant made by God the Father with Christ the Redeemer. A covenant, as shown above, is a sworn promise, an oath-bound promise (Deuteronomy 4:31; 7:12; Hosea 10:4; Ezekiel 16:8; 17:13-19)."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² James M. Renihan, *To the Judicious and Impartial Reader: A Contextual-Historical Exposition of the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*, Baptist Symbolics 2 (Cape Coral: Founders Press, 2022), 200.

¹⁰³ Shayne P. Poirier, *"The Uses and Misuses of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies,"* Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary, 2025.

¹⁰⁴ Michael A. Grisanti, "Ancient Near Eastern Literature and the Old Testament," in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament*, ed. Eugene H. Merrill, Mark F. Rooker, and Michael A. Grisanti (Brentwood, TN: B&H Publishing, 2011), 69.

¹⁰⁵ Samuel E. Waldron, *A Modern Exposition of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*, 5th ed. (Welwyn Garden City, UK: EP Books, 2016), 131.

Paragraph 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 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.

Gen. 2:17; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 3:20,21; Rom. 8:3; Mark 16:15,16; John 3:16; Ezek. 36:26,27; John 6:44,45; Ps. 110:3

Exposition

Paragraph two introduces introduces the second covenant of covenant theology, known as the covenant of grace.

Throughout the Old Testament, what we find is a progressively revealed Covenant of Grace that finds its fulfillment in Christ and the New Covenant.

Ephesians 2:11-13

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— **12** remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to 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.

What this means is that all of God’s covenants constitute an “unfolding of a single promise of salvation.”¹⁰⁶

The covenant with Noah is given as a framework in which creation will be preserved by common grace until the fulfillment of the promise. The covenant with Abraham formally initiates that community through which the promised Redeemer will come. The Mosaic covenant provides the necessary regulation and legislation for that community at the time when it has ceased to be a family and has become a nation. In so doing God also provides a full revelation of the nature and necessity of the response owed to his covenant grace. In the Davidic covenant God's rule over his people is given concrete manifestation. In so doing the line through which the Redeemer would come is specified. In the New Covenant the Redeemer appears and accomplishes redemption, thus bringing to fruition all the types and predictions of the earlier covenants. He inaugurates the final form of the covenant community.¹⁰⁷

Covenants of Promise (Ephesians 2:11-12)

Adamic

Noah: Genesis 8:20-22; 9:8-12

Abrahamic: Genesis 12:1-3; 15:8-21; 17:7-9

Mosaic: Exodus 3:6-15; 6:7-8

David: 2 Samuel 7:8; 7:12-16

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

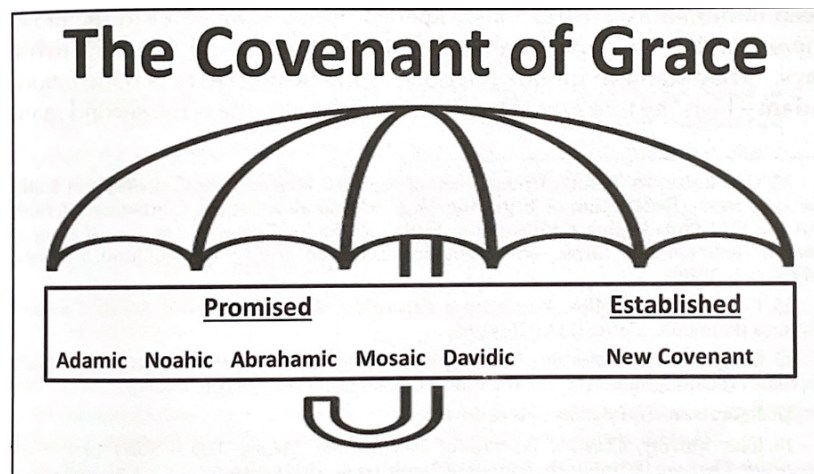


Figure 7.1: The Covenant of Grace

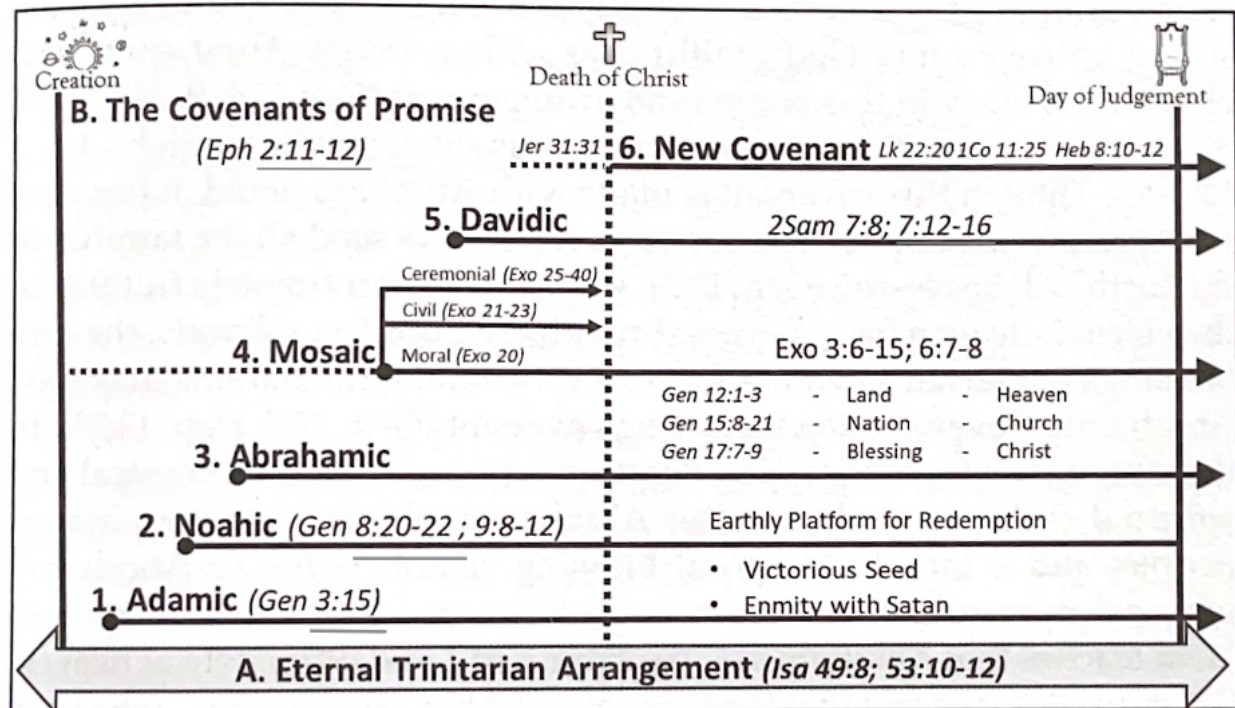
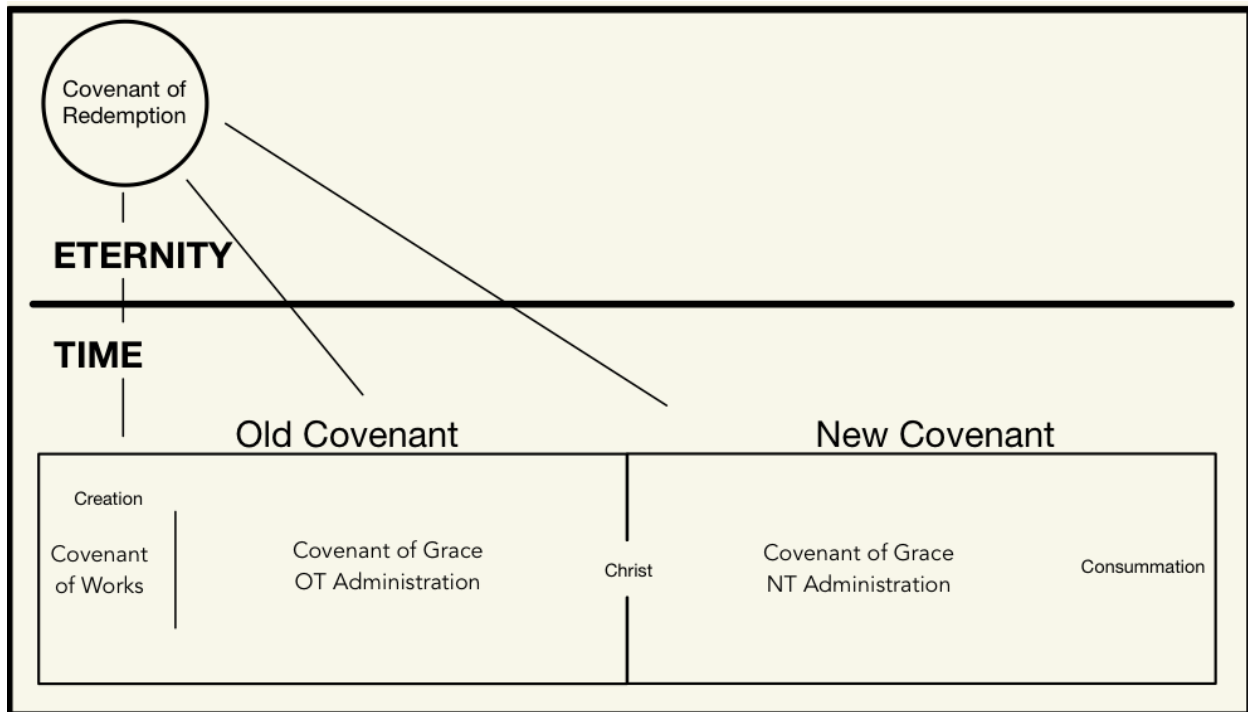


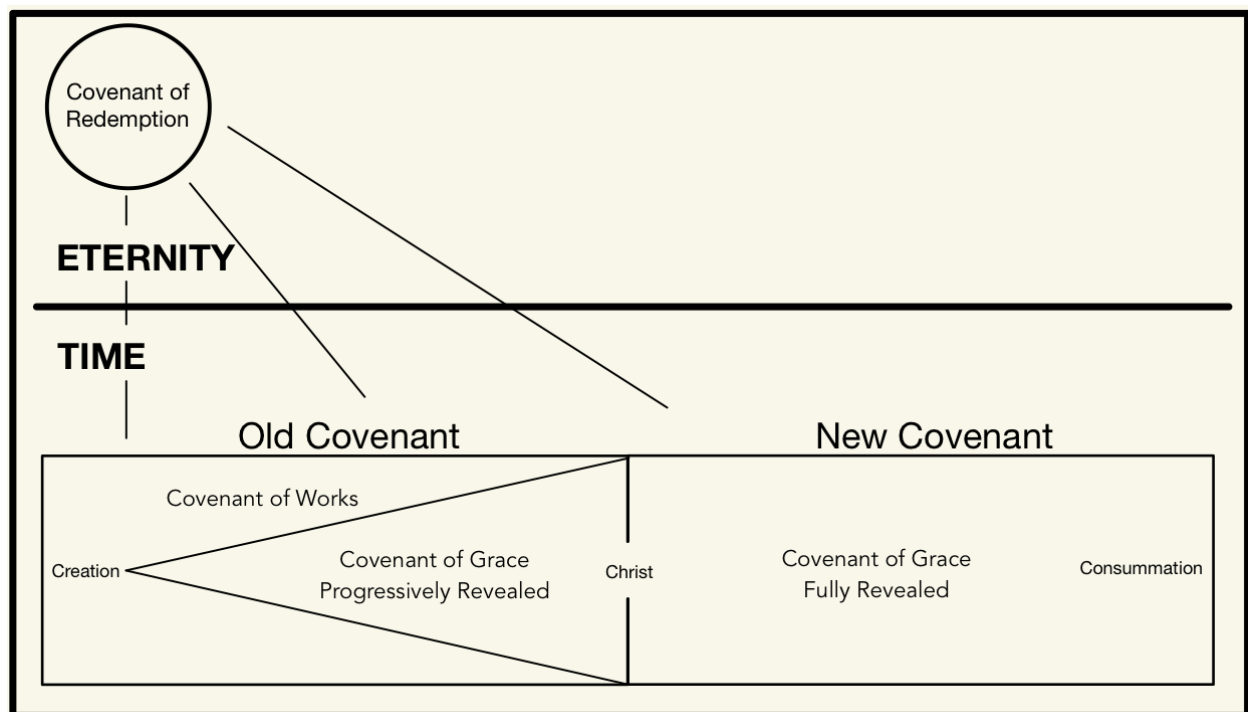
Figure 7.2: Covenant Diagram¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Mitch Lush, "Chapter Seven: Of God's Covenant," in *A New Exposition of the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, ed. Rob Ventura (Ross-shire: Mentor, 2022), 143.

Paedobaptist Covenant Theology



Reformed Baptist Covenant Theology



Samuel Renihan:

In their Confession, the Particular Baptists directly tied the covenant of grace to the gospel. Where the gospel is found, there is the covenant of grace. As the gospel was progressively made known throughout history, the covenant of grace was progressively made known throughout history. The covenant of grace should not be flattened into two administrations, oversimplifying its progressive revelation and complex relationship to the old covenant.¹⁰⁹

The Free Offer of the Gospel:

Nehemiah Coxe:

All that can be said of men in general unto whom the Gospel is preached, amounts to no more than this, that the grace and blessings of the New Covenant are offered to them upon condition of faith: God declareth his good pleasure to sinners, that if they or any of them do confess and forsake their sins, "they shall find mer-cy," and those of them that do believe, he gives the sure mercies of David unto, Isa. 55:3, and they are under Grace, Rom. 6:4.¹¹⁰

Paragraph 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.

Gen. 3:15; Heb. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2; Heb. 11:6,13; Rom. 4:1,2; Acts 4:12; John 8:56

Ligonier Ministries provides the following definition for the Covenant of Redemption:

The covenant of redemption is the agreement made between the members of the Trinity in order to bring us salvation. We find allusions to it in several biblical texts. Under this covenant, the Father plans redemption and sends the Son in order to save His people. The Son agrees to be sent and to do the work necessary to save the elect (John 10:17–18), and the Spirit agrees to apply the work of Christ to us by sealing us unto salvation (Eph. 1:13–14).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Samuel D. Renihan, *From Shadow to Substance - The Federal Theology of the English Particular Baptists (1642-1704)*, (Oxford, England: Regent's Park College, 2018), 188.

¹¹⁰ Nehemiah Coxe, *"Vindiciae Veritatis,"* 77-78.

¹¹¹ Covenant of Redemption, <https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/covenant-redemption>

Conclusion

In a treatment of Nehemiah Coxe's "Discourse on the Covenants that God made with men before the Law," we see some important applications for these covenants in our lives: ¹¹²

- 1) God's covenant adds to our assurance.
- 2) God makes covenants to better the state of men.
- 3) God's covenants are made to strengthen our love for God.

¹¹² Brandon Adams, "Nehemiah Coxe : A Discourse of the Covenants that God made with men before the Law," 1689 Federalism: <https://www.1689federalism.com/owen/demo/coxe.html>.