

Is There a “Covenant of Grace”?

A study about the shaky basis of Covenant Theology

By Rev Earl Jackson

Tit 1:2 *In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;*

Tit 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men

"New Covenant Theology" (NCT) is somewhat of a recent development on the Theological time-line, but that does not mean that it is a new understanding of the Biblical material. There have always been people who accept and understand the truths emphasized by NCT, which are the truths articulated in the Bible itself, yet they may not have articulated them in the same way or with the same emphasis as the current NCT'ers. Part of the current emphasis in NCT is a directed apologetic against the two man competitive systems of traditional "Covenant Theology"(CT) and "Dispensationalism" (DISP). People who engage with the NCT materials currently being produced by people like Jon Zen's who wrote an excellent article on this same subject [“Is there a Covenant of Grace?”](#); must realize that part of what is happening is that the NCT'ers, (including myself), are spending a formative amount of time, defending the system against the other two systems. We are in an apologetic and polemic frame of mind, and that creates problems in and of itself, because there is more defense posturing than clear interaction with the other two systems and with the Biblical material.

“Biblical Priority” in the Discussion

Covenant Theology in various shades is the accepted and the historical stance of most of the Reformed Churches, and of all the major Reformed Confessions of Faith. My opinion as a NCT'er, is that I (personally) should devote all my effort and energy to the positive articulation of the Biblical material, and not so much emphasis on the polemics of justifying what I see in the Bible against other systems of interpretation. That is my opinion, and it does not mean that I am opposed to interaction with legitimate questions or objections to our doctrines. It means that I perceive the critical need to be more of an interaction with the Bible itself. I read one critique of Jon Zen's article where the author concluded by stating: *“Until NCT interacts competently and adequately with John Owen, I see no reason to entertain their rejection of covenant theology.”*

<http://contrast2.wordpress.com/2010/02/06/critique-of-jon-zens-is-there-a-covenant-of-grace/>. This seems to be the attitude prevalent in the historic Confessional community. We need to interact with John Owen, or John Murray, or some other Confessional scholar, as opposed to basing our conclusions and our doctrines squarely and solely upon the Bible and the Bible alone (as in *Sola Scriptura*). That attitude rubs me the wrong way, because as a Baptist, I affirm that: the scholars, the confessions, and the traditions of men are always supposed to bow to the Scriptures. This is not optional in my mind, and it is not secondary. The authority of the Scriptures is primary. The same author (Brandon Adams) who wrote the critique against Zen's article which I just referenced, and who is a defender of Baptist Covenant Theology, also indicated in that article His opinion that *"logic is something NCT needs to become more acquainted with"*. These statements seem to indicate that "logic" and "John Owen" are more highly valued than Scripture? And I fear that among those who are our detractors this may in fact be the case. This is the exact reason why I deliberately refrain from too much interaction with them and their preconceived notions. I prefer to interact instead with the plain texts of the Bible. If that is illogical then so be it. That's exactly what John Zen's was trying to do. He was trying to show that "The Covenant of Grace" language, and the ideas expressed by it, are totally foreign to the Biblical material. He was not trying to interact with Owen or anybody else, he was stating that "The Bible cannot be used to support the basic ideas underpinning CT". To advocate that Zen's thesis should be discarded because he did not interact with this view or that person, or because he needs to learn something about logic, is simply ridiculous and unfair. The fact is, detractors from what Zen's was trying to say, need to show 'FROM THE BIBLE' why they reject the idea Zen's presents showing that there is no covenant of Grace found anywhere in Scripture. That was the whole point. Trying to direct the conversation away from the point is absurd and is a straw man at best. In my mind, this underscores the important necessity for all of us NCT'ers to force everyone else to deal with the Bible, rather than just the Confessions and the scholarly opinions of the past. This is a Biblical interpretative issue, and it is not about John Owen, or John Zens, or anybody else. It is about what does the Bible actually say. All the logic and polemics in the world will not settle a dispute in Biblical interpretation unless the Bible is front and center in the discussion. What does this verse mean? or this passage from the Bible? Must always be out in front and above "what does John Owen have to say about Hebrews chapter 8?" My purpose is to force people who hold to traditionalism to bow to the authority of the Scriptures. I do not care if they find my logic faulty or my lack of interaction with somebody to be deficient? I care whether or not they address the Biblical material and the Biblical

statements that challenge their own presuppositions, which may or may not be false. That's what I care about. And that's what I do. I feel that if we try to support our position with human experts we actually lose the strength in our position. Why should we give up the high ground of Biblical exegesis and hermeneutics and take instead the lower flanks of human authorities and experts? People criticize me for my lack of footnotes and links to the opinions of men, oh well? So what? I want them to study and deal with my footnotes and links to the Bible! That is my goal, and I could care less about their agenda that differs from my purpose. My aim is to drive them away from Owen, Murray, this one and that one, and to the Bible alone. So why on earth would I spend my time directing attention to the very people who are part of the problem with the deficient view I am trying to correct? Where is the logic in that? The well is polluted so lets go see if by drinking more from it we can deduct the pure doctrine that God wants us to hold? That makes sense doesn't it? My entire purpose is to deflect people away from those who advocate the faulty views, and to turn their full attention on exactly what God Himself says. That's why I am a Bible preacher. I take the Bible to the pulpit, not the puritans or a bunch of seminary professors. So please understand. This is a Bible based discussion. It is an evaluation of Biblical concepts, and how I think they may apply to this discussion. Do not critique my statements based on anything other than the Bible, because this is about that and not about something else. I am called to deal with the Biblical material, and to call all my readers to do the same! If you cannot get yourself out of the ivory towers of scholasticism, and down to the hard pavement of dealing with what the Bible says, then you have no right or basis to critique my position. You forfeit the right to critique me, the moment you move to any other arena than the Bible itself. But if you cannot substantiate the proof for your position from the Bible, then I will toss out whatever appeals you make to extraneous sources because they are just eyewash and superfluous bull if they are expressing views that disagree with God's views. Deal with the Bible when you are defending your doctrines. That's where truth originates!

The Reformed Baptist View of Confessions

Jon Zens made a very profound statement in his study, and most people would pass over it as being trite. To me it is the most important thing he said... *“I would stress that our minds must be glued to every word that comes from God's mouth (Matt. 4:4).”* He said that with reference to every opinion, every Confession, every doctrine, and every system of thought which we entertain in our minds. The one thing we should glue ourselves to is “God's Word”. Thanks Mr. Zen's for reminding us of that. It is refreshing to hear someone dragging us

back to the Bible and away from all the artificial crutches we use to try to support our beliefs. Nevertheless we have many Reformed Baptist churches, which seem to identify more with the 1689 Confession of Faith than they do with the Bible. They are always talking about the articles of the Confession, and they seldom talk about the Bible without also talking about the Confession. The two things seem to be joined at the hip. But I wonder if this is healthy or proper for people who run around shouting “Sola Scriptura” from the rooftops? If we really believe in the supremacy and ultimate authority of the Bible alone, then why are we involved in the perpetual pursuit of verification for our doctrines by means of the Confession? Is this the way Baptists should use their Confession of Faith? Maybe we need to ask the very basic question “what is the purpose for Confessions of Faith?”

The 1689 Baptist Confession itself says this in the first Chapter dealing with the Scriptures:

1: 6 *The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men...*
(2 Timothy 3:15-17; Galatians 1:8,9; John 6:45; 1 Corinthians 2:9-12; 1 Corinthians 11:13, 14; 1 Corinthians 14:26,40)

1:10. *The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.*
(Matthew 22:29, 31, 32; Ephesians 2:20; Acts 28:23)

These are very simple statements right at the outset of the Confession and they say that the Bible is the only repository for “*all things necessary for God's glory, man's salvation, faith and life*”, and they stress that because of this fact, “*nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men.*” The Confession is very clear and concise here. The Bible is the source of “*all things necessary*” and neither “*new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men*” is ever to be added to the Bible. The primacy of Scripture is the point. This one statement within the Confession is sufficient to prove that

all the Confessional Statements of the Reformed “traditions of men”, who even though guided by the Spirit, are nothing more than human opinions, which must bow to the primacy and authority of the Sacred writings of the Canon.

The Confessions are not Scripture. In fact, they are not even an accurate interpretation of Scripture! I have shown how “the Covenant of Works” idea which was carried into the 1689 Baptist statement from the Presbyterian and Congregational Confessional documents is without one shred of evidence in the Bible. See [“Is There a Covenant of Works?”](#) There is not even one verse of Scripture that can be produced to prove the imaginary doctrine of a “Covenant of Works”, yet it is a foundational doctrine in “Covenant Theology”, and it occupies a large part in our 1689 Baptist Confession. Why? How can the Confession be defended as an accurate interpretation of the doctrines of the Bible, when it contains doctrines which have zero Biblical support? I don't know about you, but that raises serious red flags in my mind? If it cannot be found in the Bible, then should it be found in a Baptist Confession of Faith? I don't think so. We should all have problems with the notion that the Confession articulates what we believe, if what it articulates cannot be demonstrated with either precept or principle directly from the Word of God? I do not find a Covenant of Works doctrine anywhere in the Bible, so why should it be in multiple paragraphs of my confession of faith? I intend to show the same thing in this complimentary article. Not only is there no “Covenant of Works” in the Bible, there is no “Covenant of Grace” in it either. Some people also speak of a “Covenant of Redemption” well guess what? that's not there either.

Our Confession Ought to Express What we Believe about the Bible.

This idea is at the heart of why we have Confessions in the first place. As Baptists we have always seen them as having limited value, limited authority, and limited functionality. Baptists have never been ruled by the Confessions which “we have created”. They are properly viewed as aids and adjuncts to help with our understanding of the Biblical teachings, but they are not the actual Biblical teachings to which we adhere wholeheartedly, and without question or doubt.

We see them as more or less accurate statements of the faith that was held by a group of educated believers at a particular place and time. (See [“The Baptist View of Creeds and Confessions”](#)). I have no doubt in my mind that in 1689

when the third London Baptist Confession was published that it accurately expressed the views of the great Baptist men who framed it. I am sure that many chose to include language that I may not have included, and I know that they did so because of many factors which were relevant in their current social, political and moral climate. But what they wrote, must be discarded if it is found to be in disagreement with the Word of God. That would apply to all doctrines which were articulated without proper qualifying Biblical proof texts and relevant supporting passages from the Scriptures.

Instead of viewing the Confessions as something locked indelibly in time, never to be changed, never to be challenged, to always serve as the perpetual summation of Biblical Truth, we should view the Confessions as guides to help us ascertain and speak the truth to our time, our place in history, and with a view to the issues which we face. If they help with that, they serve a valuable purpose. But if they limit us to think within a framework devised over 300 years ago, never to be changed, never to be questioned, never to be supplemented, augmented or re-written, if necessary; then they have turned us into intellectual cripples and spiritual idiots? God ought to be able to show us the proofs in His word for the doctrines we confess? If He cannot, then we ought not to confess them. If the Confession we hold does not adequately state our beliefs which are derived from God's word, then that Confession needs to be either modified or abandoned. It serves no valid function at all if it does not Confess our beloved truths derived from our beloved Book...The Bible.

The Covenant of Grace Doctrine as it Appears in the 1689 Baptist Confession.

I already told you that my purpose is to drive you to the Bible, and that my article is not going to be full of footnotes and quotes from men. But I also told you that NCT is involved in a certain amount of polemics and apologetics regarding the system which we advocate, because even though it is the same old truths that the early Baptists believed before the intrusion of CT, it seems new today, because it is just now being resurrected in contradistinction from CT. . The only reason that I am including these quotes from the Confession, is because I take issue with them. I oppose their inclusion in a Baptist Confession of Faith based on the idea that Baptists are Sola Scriptura people. So that you can see that I am not misrepresenting the Baptist Covenant Theology Position, which many fine men adhere to; including many scholars far more advanced and adept than myself; I am including the quotes from the Confession so you can see for yourself, and hopefully think for yourself also. This discussion does not

mean that I disagree with everything in the confession, I don't. I hold the 1689 in high esteem, even though I no longer use it myself, because it does not speak for me. I value what is good in it and I toss out whatever I cannot find in the Bible. But I do this with all human writings and all the teachings of men.

The 1689 is indeed valuable, but it is not infallible. That's why I also believe that most of the churches and Pastors who endorse it so freely, do not actually know what it says? They are ill-informed more often than they are well-informed. There is a paltry lack of exposition relative to the [1689 Confession](#) and the three Baptist Confessions which came before it (the [1644](#), [1646](#) London Confessions and the [1656 Somerset Confession](#)). People tend to read them and agree on the basis of a quick surface reading, but few people really delve deeply into what each item actually says? what it means? the history behind it? why it was stated the way it was stated? and what are the Scriptural proofs given in support of the particular doctrines?

I am not trying to offer a Confessional exposition here, only an introduction to a glaring problem that I see in the document, so that I can drag you back to the Bible, show you what the Bible actually says, and cause you to think on your own about this doctrinal discrepancy. That's my only purpose. I am not trying to get you to think like me, I am just trying to get you to think! I am not trying to get you to embrace NCT, I am trying to get you to embrace the Bible over any writings of mere men. What you do with it, and where you go with it, is up to you and the Holy Spirit? That does not concern me at all. My job is to drive you to The Bible which is self-authenticating and self-verifying. That's why I will ultimately drag you there after I show you the doubtful passages in the Confession. So first we will list the passages in full (including Scripture References). Here they are:

Chapter 7: Of God's Covenant

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.

(Luke 17:10; Job 35:7,8)

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.

(Genesis 2:17; Galatians 3:10; Romans 3:20, 21; Romans 8:3; Mark 16:15, 16; John 3:16; Ezekiel

36:26, 27; John 6:44, 45; Psalms 110:3)

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. (Genesis 3:15; Hebrews 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 11:6, 13; Romans 4:1, 2, &c.; Acts 4:12; John 8:56)

Chapter 8: Of Christ the Mediator

1. It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, according to the covenant made between them both, to be the mediator between God and man; the prophet, priest, and king; head and savior of the church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world; unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

(Isaiah 42:1; 1 Peter 1:19, 20; Acts 3:22; Hebrews 5:5, 6; Psalms 2:6; Luke 1:33; Ephesians 1:22, 23; Hebrews 1:2; Acts 17:31; Isaiah 53:10; John 17:6; Romans 8:30)

These passages in the 1689 contain the basic statements about the so-called "Covenant of Grace". Please take note of the following ideas which are expressed in these statements:

1. Man is so far from God that he could never obtain the reward of life by obedience, so God had to exercise some voluntary condescension **WHICH HE EXPRESSED BY WAY OF A COVENANT!** (See 7:1).
2. God made "THE COVENANT OF GRACE" in order to "freely offer sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ" (See 7:2)
3. This COVENANT (the Covenant of Grace) was first revealed to "Adam" and then in successive steps until it was completed in the New Testament (See 7:3 a).
4. The basis (foundation) for this is "The eternal covenant transaction between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect" (see 7:3 b).
5. 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 (see 7:3 c).
6. It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus,

his only begotten Son, according to the covenant made between them both, to be the mediator between God and man (see 8:1).

These ideas are the basic ideas expressing “The Covenant of Grace” doctrine within the 1689 Confession. This language was virtually the same language expressed in the Westminster Confession and the Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order. The Baptist statement however, leaves out “Covenant of Works” language which is found in the Westminster and Savoy at 7:2. It also leaves out the “Testament” language of paragraph 4. Those are good omissions which were obviously done on purpose. [Click Here to View The Westminster and The Savoy statements side by side with the 1689 Baptist Confession](#), for an accurate comparison (Please note: the 1689 Baptist Confession is in the far right column). Nevertheless, much of the language from the Westminster and Savoy was carried almost verbatim into the 1689 Baptist Confession, and it is this language we must examine in the light of the Bible.

What does the Bible Say? Is there a Covenant of Grace?

Lets look more closely at the ideas which we observed above.

1. Man is so far from God that he could never obtain the reward of life by obedience, so God had to exercise some voluntary condescension WHICH HE EXPRESSED BY WAY OF A COVENANT! (See 7:1).

Here are the Bible verses listed in support of this.

Luke 17:10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

Job 35:7-8 If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? 8 Thy wickedness *may hurt* a man as thou *art*; and thy righteousness *may profit* the son of man.

Do either of these verses substantiate the statement in the Confession that God had to take “some voluntary condescension”... “which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant”? They seem to support only the idea that man was greatly distanced from God and could not attain life on their own. Nobody would dispute this. But they say absolutely nothing about “God's condescension in a Covenant” which is really what the thesis of chapter 7 is all about.

The supporting proof-texts do not prove the idea being expressed. Verses showing that God's Condescension to save man is called a Covenant would be what we are looking for here, but those verses are completely absent.

2. God made “THE COVENANT OF GRACE” in order to “freely offer sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ” (See 7:2)

Here are all the Bible verses listed in support of this.

Gen 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Gal 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Rom 3:20-21 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

Rom 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Mar 16:15-16 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Eze 36:26-27 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.

Joh 6:44-45 *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.* 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Psa 110:3 Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

Ask yourself these questions.

1. Do any of these verses speak about a “Covenant”?
2. Do any of these verses speak about a “Covenant of Grace”?
3. Do any of these verses say that God freely offers salvation by means of a “Covenant”?

Clearly again, the proof texts do not prove the doctrine of a “covenant of Grace”. For the proof texts to prove the assertions in this part of the Confession, they would at least need to mention the basic idea being taught. But none of these verses substantiate the teaching at hand. None of these verses mention the word “covenant”. None of them mention “Covenant of Grace”. And none of them show that salvation is by means of such a covenant.

Lets take the assertions found in 7:3 together as a group, because the proof texts which are offered are listed together. Here are the next three ideas from the Confession, all found in section 7:3.

3. This COVENANT (the Covenant of Grace) was first revealed to “Adam” and then in successive steps until it was completed in the New Testament (See 7:3 a).

4. The basis (foundation) for this is “The eternal covenant transaction between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect” (see 7:3 b).

5. 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 (see 7:3 c).

Here are all the verses listed to substantiate these doctrines.

Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2Ti 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

Tit 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Heb 11:6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Heb 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Rom 4:1-2 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God.

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Joh 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad.

It is not my purpose to just dismiss these verses as being irrelevant. They certainly are not irrelevant when it comes to the matter of salvation by faith through grace. They are very relevant to a discussion of the gospel, and to the matter of progressive divine revelation. They however say nothing about a “Covenant of Grace” which was supposedly “revealed to Adam” and to successive generations. They say nothing about this covenant of Grace being the way that any who are saved of the fallen sons of Adam are saved. They do talk about salvation, the gospel and the grace of God, but they do not prove the idea of “the Covenant of Grace”. All these verses describe various aspects of salvation and redemption but none of them show that a “Covenant of Grace” was part of it.

The Confession asserts that the “Covenant of Grace” was “the eternal covenant transaction between the Father and The Son”, but it fails to show that there is such a thing at all? Nor is it shown why the Holy Spirit would have been excluded from such a transaction? Nor do they show why all of this is not exactly the same as the doctrine of God's Decrees in chapter 3? There is no doubt that God planned salvation before the world began. This is covered in Chapter 3 under “God's Decrees” and in chapter 5 under “Divine Providence”, and in Chapter 10 under “Effectual Calling”. Nobody disputes that salvation was planned before creation. What is being disputed is this idea that it is a “covenant” between the Father and Son which was offered to man as a condescension from God for man's salvation. The Covenant language used in this context is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible? The Bible does not say that the Father and Son made a “covenant to save man”. It says that God promised salvation before the world began (Titus 1:2). But a promise is not a “divine covenant” which you read and then arbitrarily insert anywhere you want throughout the whole history of the Bible! This inserting of a “Covenant of Grace” in the Adamic narrative (*“This covenant is revealed in the gospel; first of all to Adam”*), is completely unwarranted. Why can't you just say that God promised salvation to Adam? Why does it have to be “God revealed the covenant of grace to Adam”? The answer to this question is that the Covenant Theologians are setting the stage to read this “covenant of grace” idea into the whole Bible, just like they read the “covenant of works” idea into it. If they had said that God revealed salvation by grace to Adam, we would have no problem with that whatsoever and we would have shouted a hardy Amen to the proof text Genesis 3:15. But Genesis 3:15 says nothing about a “Covenant of Grace”? They are inserting something which is clearly not indicated by the text.

The same is true when you come Jesus Christ who is the Second Adam. They insert the “Covenant of Grace” idea into the next discussion about “Christ the Mediator”. Nobody has a problem with Christ's mediatorial offices. In fact it is an essential doctrine of the Christian faith. But when you insert “covenant of Grace” language into the mediatorial work of Christ, you confuse and tarnish the truth. We have a problem with this Confessional idea. Look!

6. It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, according to the covenant made between them both, to be the mediator between God and man (see 8:1).

Here are the verses given as proofs for the Idea that Christ is the Mediator of

“The Covenant of Grace”:

Isa 42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

1Pe 1:19-20 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

Act 3:22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

Heb 5:5-6 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. 6 As he saith also in another *place*, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Psa 2:6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

Luk 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Eph 1:22-23 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Heb 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Act 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Isa 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Joh 17:6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

Rom 8:30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

I must be either blind or an intellectual moron? Because no matter how hard I look at these verses, I cannot see any references at all to Christ being the Mediator of “the Covenant of Grace”? What am I missing? I don't see the word “Covenant” in any of these passages? This is problematic? Every one of these wonderful verses speaks about various aspects of Christ's work of salvation, but not one of them speaks about it as a “Covenant” much less “the Covenant of Grace”? All of these verses properly teach important doctrines like predestination, vicarious atonement, the kingdom of Christ, foreordination etc. but none of them support “the Covenant of Grace” teaching which is embodied in the Confession. Why is that?

I do not believe that there are any doctrines, so mysterious, or so well-hidden from view, that we can find them nowhere in the Bible? “We can't find them in the Bible, yet we are supposed to believe them” is a form of hermeneutics which we are unfamiliar with? If a doctrine is in our Confession, then it should also be easy to find in our Bible? That is not an unreasonable expectation?

There are numerous verses about predestination, God's decree to save men, election, foreordination, foreknowledge and hundreds of verses on how God's plan of Salvation is applied. But there is not one verse which mentions God entering into "a covenant" before the World began? which covenant is supposed to be read into the entire history of the Bible, as an over-arching principle of interpretation? Help! I must be a moron? I don't see. I don't understand. I read all the verses, but they say something different? What's up with that?

Here are the various important Covenants mentioned in the Bible. Notice they are all called "covenant's". There is no doubt that these are "covenants" because God calls them "covenants". They all have the elements of a "covenant" as a treatise or contract between two or more parties according to old testament practice. These are the important covenants of the Bible. But do you see one before the world was created? Do you see one called "The Covenant of Grace"? Some people speak of "the covenant of Redemption" instead of "covenant of Grace". Do you see that in any of these verses? Do you see it? I don't!

1. The Covenant with Noah – Genesis 9:9-17
2. The Covenant with Abraham – Genesis 15:8; Genesis 17:2-21
3. The Mosaic Covenant at Sinai – Exo. 19:5; 24:4-8, 7-10; 34:10,27-28; Deut. 29:1
4. A Covenant with Levi – Deut. 33:10; Jer. 33:21; Mal. 2:4
5. A Covenant with Phinehas – Num. 25:12-13
6. The Covenant with Joshua – Joshua 24
7. The Covenant with David – 2Sam. 7; 1Chron. 17; Psalm 89; Psalm 132:12; Jer. 32: 21
8. The covenant with Jehoiada and the people - 2King 11:17; 2Chron. 23:3
9. The Covenant with Hezekiah and the People - 2Chron. 29:10
10. The Covenant with Josiah and the people - 2Kng. 23:3
11. The Covenant Ezra and the People – Ezra 10:3
12. The Old Covenant – Heb 8:13
13. The New Covenant – Isa. 42:6; 49:8; 55:3; 59:21; 61:8; Jer. 31:31, 31:33; 32:40; 50:5; Ezek. 16:60; 16:62; 20:37; 34:25; 37:26; Hos. 2:18

The Covenant That Christ is Actually a Part of is Clearly Mentioned in the Bible!

There are numerous verses in the Bible which show that Christ is part of a Covenant. But it is not called "the Covenant of Grace". It is called "The New

Covenant”. It is very interesting to note, that while these verses all speak about a covenant which Christ is actually a part of, and over which he is actually “the mediator”. None of these verses were cited in the Confession when the authors were trying to establish the so-called “Covenant of Grace” doctrine? It seems like they should have at least mentioned these verses. In fact these are the very verses which they should have used to try to prove their “covenant of Grace” doctrine, because they are the only verses which speak of Christ in relation to a “Covenant”. But since they knew that these verses actually disproved their ideas, they ignored them on purpose. We cannot assume that these great scholars were ignorant of these critical Biblical passages. Instead we must assume, that because they chose not to use them to support their doctrine of a “covenant of Grace” they clearly understood that they supported something other than what they were teaching. The only conclusion is that they deliberately left them out, knowing that they showed clearly that Christ was mediator of “The New Covenant”, not mediator of the “Covenant of Grace” agenda that they were trying to teach. Here are the verses where Christ is mentioned in relation to His Covenant which is called “The New Covenant”. It is not called a “Covenant of Grace” or a “Covenant of Redemption”. It is called “The New Covenant”. It is “The Everlasting Covenant in His Blood” (Heb13:20)

Isa 42:6-7 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; 7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, *and* them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

Isa 49:8 Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;

Mal 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

Heb 8:6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Heb 9:15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

Heb 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel.

Luk 1:68-70 Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, 69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; 70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: 71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; 72 To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; 73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, 74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. 76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; 77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, 78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, 79 To give light to them that

sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Gal 3:17 And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

Heb 9:16-26 For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. 18 Whereupon neither the first *testament* was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, 20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. 21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. 23 *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Heb 13:20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

Matt. 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Mar 14:24 And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

Luke 22:20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

Heb 10:29 How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?

There are many other verses which are also relevant to the Covenant which Christ is actually a part of...the New Covenant. But there are no verses relevant to the imaginary "Covenant of Grace". Many of you may think I am being a nit-picker, and that I am straining at straws. But the seriousness of this is quite extensive. Covenant Theology stresses "covenant of works" and "covenant of grace" as the two foundational covenant which are behind everything in the Bible. They interpret the whole Bible from the perspective of these covenants. They are a pair of colored glasses which color everything which they look at. These presupposed covenants are artificial creations, and neither can be demonstrated from the Bible itself. That's the reason they should be abandoned.

Possible Explanations for the Doubtful Doctrine in the Baptist Confession

God is not honored when we follow fiction rather than fact. If this doctrine were fact, it would be included in the Bible, for our edification. But since it is included

in our Confession, we should not just assume that it is a fact. Obviously it was included either by mistake, by ignorance, by plagiarism from the Westminster, or by deliberately trying to conceal the truth for doubtful purposes. Baptist's of the time, were under a lot of pressure to conform their doctrines to the powerful state mandated church doctrines. Baptists were well acquainted with persecution during this time, and anything they did to make themselves appear more agreeable, and more conformable, more politically correct, would alleviate a lot of suffering among a people who were in the extreme minority and who were persecuted rigorously by the officials of the time. I believe that the presence of this doubtful Covenant Theology language in our confession, shows that sometime after the 1644, 1646 and 1656 Baptist Confessions, which contain no Covenant Theology language, pressure was put on them, or the Paedo-baptist influence became so great, that our good Baptist forefathers caved in to a doctrine that they were either duped into believing or pressured into embracing. It has left a serious non-Baptist injury on our Baptist thinking ever since. In my opinion, this is one of the most tragic doctrinal mistakes in Baptist history, and it is high time we correct it.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read “The New Covenant Confession of Faith”

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