



WHY DO WE BELIEVE *THAT* ?
Introduction to Reformed Theology

Class 6

FINISHING COVENANT THEOLOGY
&
DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

Education Year 2024-2025

Rev. Mark H. Vander Pol



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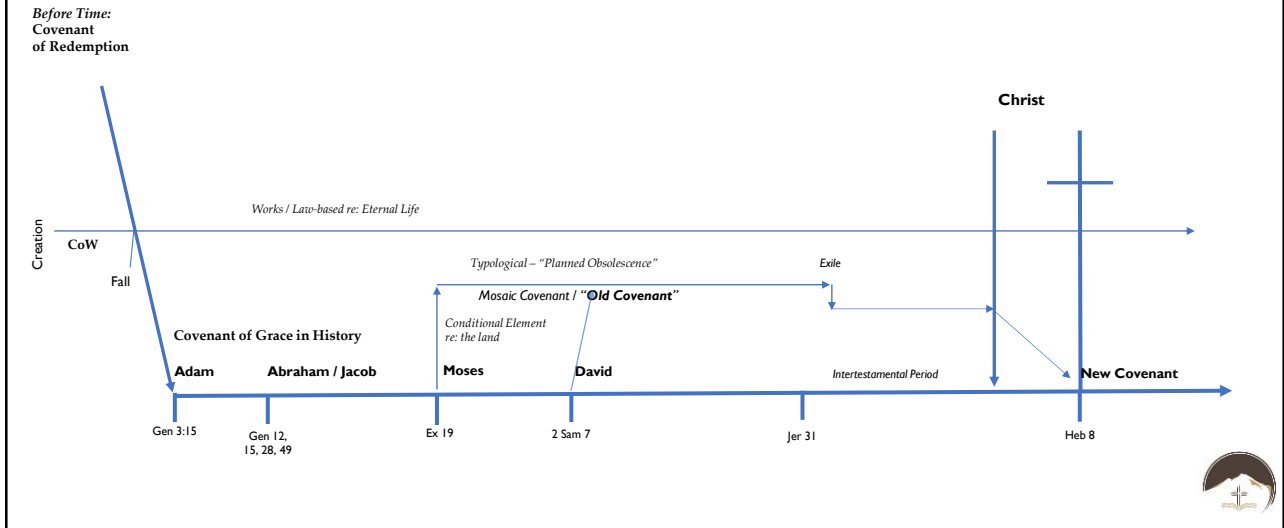
Review

- Covenant of Works in the Garden
 - Adam did not obey
- Covenant of Redemption broke into human history as the Covenant of Grace
 - Gen 3:8-9 – God pursuing Adam (BC 17)
 - Gen 3:15 – the *protoevangelium*
 - Gen 3:20-21 – Adam naming Eve, God making coverings out of animal skins
- CoG w/ Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
 - Gen 12; 15 – The promises and bloody aisle
- Administration of the CoG at Mount Sinai
 - Works-based concerning Israel's remaining in the Promised Land



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The Covenants of Scripture



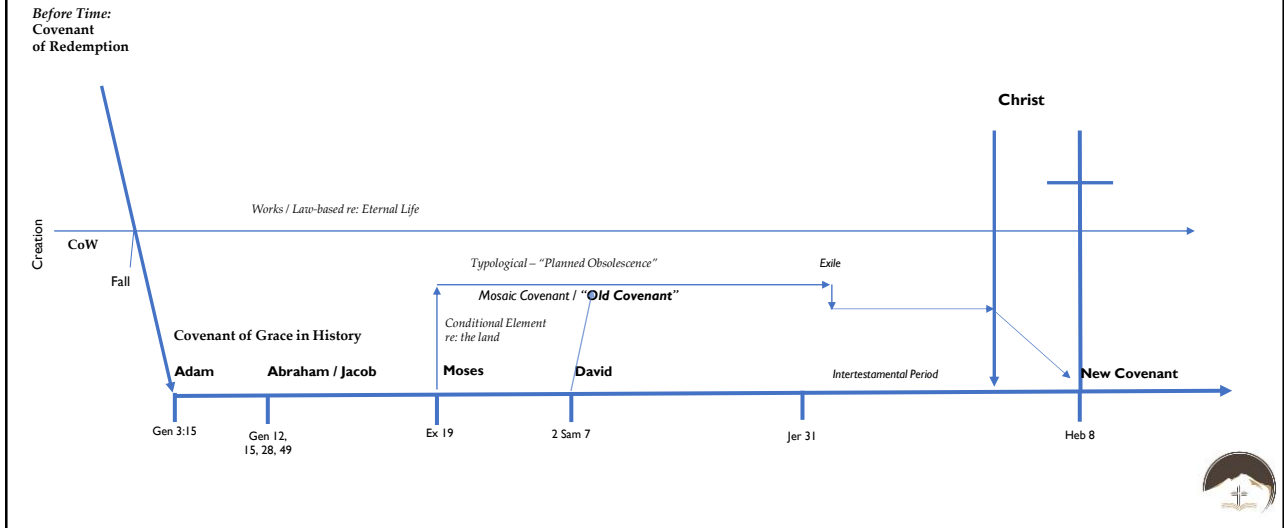
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Excursus – Mosaic Law Categories

- Three categories / distinctions of the Mosaic Law – WCF XIX.3-4
 - Moral Law
 - Was present before Sinai and remains after.
 - Codified in the Decalogue
 - Expanded upon in the Sermon on the Mount
 - Ceremonial Law
 - A gracious act of God to point his people to their need for a Savior.
 - Abrogated by Christ because they are fulfilled.
 - Civil Law
 - No more Promised Land or theocracy, civil laws expired
 - Some current laws do bear resemblance because of their “general equity” (and simply make sense).

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The Covenants of Scripture



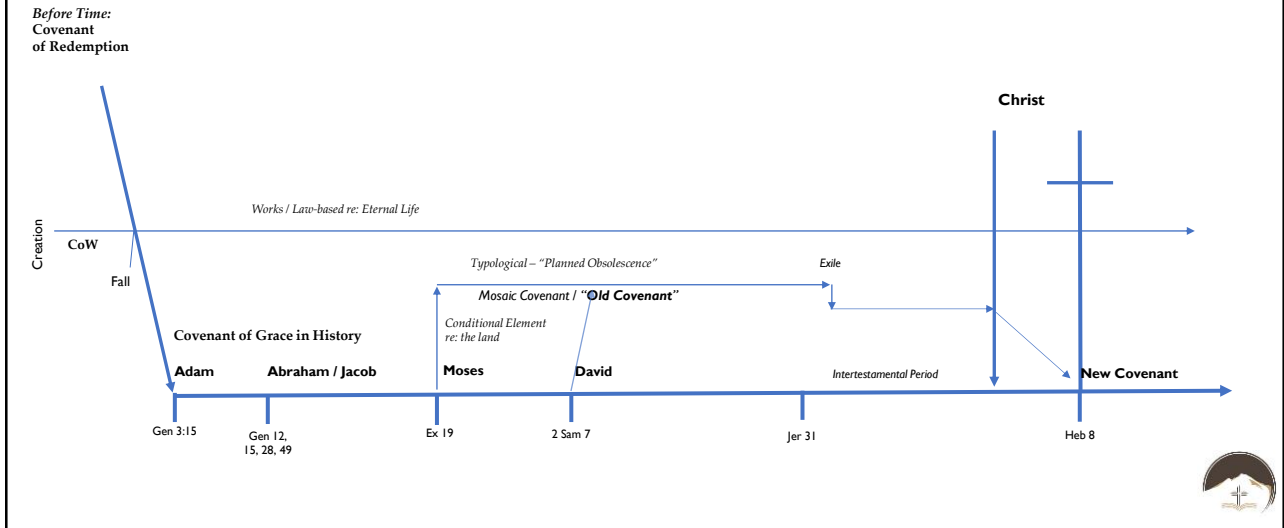
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Covenant of Grace – Davidic Covenant

- 2 Samuel 7:1-17 (cf. 1 Chron 17:1-15)
 - The word *בְּרִית* (*berit*) is not used here, but it is Psalm 89:19-37
 - The promised “Son of David” is included in the CoG and God’s promise, but the need for obedience (“if / then” statements) was the Mosaic Administration of the CoG.
 - Case Study: 2 Kings 11:1-3; 22:11-17
- God’s Covenant Attorneys: the Prophets

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The Covenants of Scripture



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Covenant of Grace – New Covenant

- Parties: God and believers (and their children)
- Stipulations: God will be our God, and we will be his people.
- Sanctions: We are reconciled to God
 - The Holy Spirit will regenerate and renew – greater outpouring of the Spirit than the OT
 - 2 Cor 4:3-6
 - The law is written on our hearts
 - Jeremiah 31:31-33
- Testimony: The Holy Spirit and the ascended and seated Christ.

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Covenant of Grace – New Covenant

- Importance of the New Covenant¹
 - Keeps us from wanting to go back to the Mosaic economy.
 - Guards against triumphalism – the Kingdom of God is no longer identified with one particular nation or people.
 - We commune with God in worship – we are the temple of God (2 Cor 6:16; I Peter 2:5) and we come to Mount Zion, not Mount Sinai (Heb 12:18-19).
 - Replacement of circumcision by baptism – more people included!

1. Adapted from Brown and Keale, *Sacred Bond*



Resources

- Michael Brown and Zach Keele, *Sacred Bond*
- Michael Horton, *God of Promise*
- Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* and *Manual of Christian Doctrine*





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Doctrine of Scripture

- Two Types of Revelation – Psalm 19; BC 2
 - General – Rom 1:19-20
 - Special – 2 Tim 3:15-16
- Horton’s “Four Ds”¹
 - Drama
 - Doctrine
 - Doxology
 - Discipleship

1. From Horton, Core Christianity, 17-21.



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Doctrine of Scripture

- Inspiration – 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21
 - Inspiration does not mean “dictation”
 - Our understanding is that of *organic verbal plenary inspiration*
 - *Organic* – The Spirit used ordinary men with their own historical context, understanding, characteristics, and personality. Berkhof, “. . . in harmony with the laws of their own inner being.”¹
 - *Verbal* – The very words are inspired, not just the thoughts.
 - *Plenary* – The entirety of the Scriptures are inspired, not just parts.
 - 100% God and 100% Man
 - B.B. Warfield: We need a doctrine of God’s providence and an appreciation of God’s working through ordinary means (vocations).²

1. Berkhof, *Manual of Christian Doctrine*, 42.
 2. Warfield, per Horton, ST501 Class Notes, 11.8.05.



Doctrine of Scripture

- Infallible – “true and reliable in all the matters it addresses.”¹
- Inerrant – “free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit”²
- “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy”, Article X:

We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.

We deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.

1. “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy”, Art. XI.
 2. *Ibid.*, Art. XII.



Doctrine of Scripture

- Dr. Horton:
 - Because the Spirit has breathed this word, only he can illumine our spirits to receive it. We hear it then as God's Word.¹

1. Horton, ST501 Class Notes



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Perfections / Attributes of Scripture

- Authoritative
 - The Word of God is the supreme authority “for the regulating, founding, and establishing of our faith” (BC 5).
 - Determines our doctrine and our life.
 - The Bible has an inherent authority on the basis it is the inspired Word of God
 - WCF I.3-4



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Perfections / Attributes of Scripture

- Authoritative

Contrary

- Rome: the Bible owes its authority to the church.¹
 - Horton, “For the Reformation, the Word secures the church. For Rome, the ministry secures the Word.”²
 - Vatican II – Sacred Scripture and sacred tradition
- Liberalism: The Enlightenment
 - Rationalism and man’s reason trumps God’s Word
 - What doesn’t make sense to the culture is antiquated
 - Hyper-naturalistic: no room for miracles.
- Broad Evangelicalism
 - Can put more emphasis on experience and subjective categories

1. Berkhof, *Manual*, 46.
2. Horton, notes, 11.9.05.



Perfection / Attributes of Scripture

- Necessity

- The Word is necessary for the church as it is the seed of the church.
- We don’t have any other means to discover the Gospel.
- Reformation: Scripture should be available in the vernacular
- BC 2, “...as much as we need in this life for his glory and for the salvation of his own.”

Contrary

- Rome: because of the Church and its tradition, the Scriptures aren’t strictly necessary (it could get by without them).
 - Berkhof, “In its estimation it is more correct to say that Scripture needs the church more than the Church needs Scripture.”¹
 - Fought against the Scriptures being translated for a long time.

1. Berkhof, *Manual*, 47.



Perfections / Attributes of Scripture

- Perspicuity – Clarity of primary message
 - Berkhof, “. . .the knowledge necessary unto salvation, though not equally clear on every page of Scripture, is yet communicated to man throughout the Bible in such a simple and comprehensive form that anyone who is earnestly seeking salvation can easily gather this knowledge for himself. . .”¹
 - The Spirit is necessary! I Cor 2:14-16; I John 2:20
 - BC 5, “For even the blind themselves are able to see that the things predicted in them do happen.”
 - WCF I.7 – “All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear to all; yet those things that are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.”
 - Not “Solo Scriptura” – we do not come to the Scriptures and interpret them completely alone.

1. Berkhof, *Manual*, 48.



Perfections / Attributes of Scripture

- Perspicuity

Contrary

- Rome: You don't need the Scriptures (necessity) because you couldn't understand them anyway! You need an infallible interpreter (i.e. the Church).
- Liberalism: If it doesn't make sense, if you don't agree, or if it doesn't fit with the culture, get rid of it!



Perfections Attributes of Scripture

- Sufficiency

- Berkhof, “This does not mean that everything that was spoken or written by the prophets, by Christ, and by the apostles is contained in Scripture, but simply that the written Word is sufficient for the moral and spiritual needs of individuals and the Church.”¹
- All that God wanted us to have for our doctrine and life is contained in the Canon of Scripture.

Contrary

- Rome: Tradition is necessary to the written Word.
- Anabaptists and some charismatics: There is ongoing revelation by the Holy Spirit to particular individuals today.

1. Berkof, *Manual*, 48-49.



Reliability of the NT Canon

- Over 5,700 Greek manuscripts/fragments (2005 numbers)
- The Canon of the NT was not imposed by any church body or authority.
 - BC 5 – “The church received these books and these only [the 66 books of the Bible] as holy and canonical. . .”
 - Some claimed it was Emperor Constantine or the Early Popes that politically selected the NT books over and against other valid options.
- The earliest churches and church fathers were citing, copying, and distributing the Gospels and letters of the Apostles.
 - It seems to have been pretty obvious to the earliest church who the authors of books/letters were (even the non-canonical books) and which were true Scripture.
 - Copies began circulating very quickly.

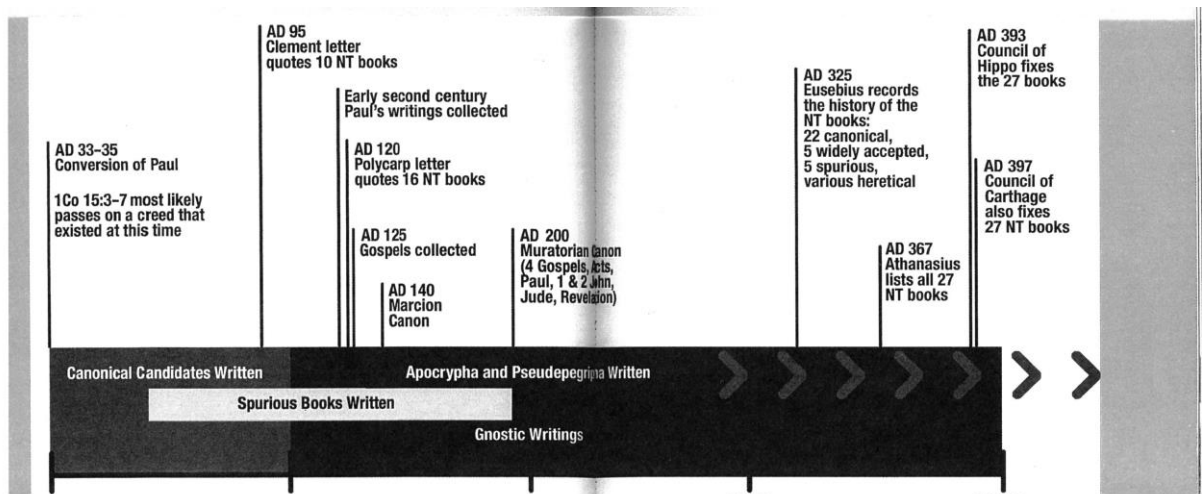


	Date of original document	Date of Oldest Surviving Copy	Approximate time between original and oldest surviving copy	Number of ancient copies in existence today
Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War	c. 431-400BC	900AD plus a few late 1 st -century fragments	1,300 years	73
Caesar's Gallic War	c. 58-50BC	825AD	875 years	10
Tacitus' Histories and Annals	c. 98-108	c. 850AD	750 years	2
The Whole New Testament	40-100AD	350AD	310 years	14,000 (5k Greek, 8k Latin, 1k other)
Mark's Gospel	c. 58-65AD	Before 300AD	240 years or less	



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NT Timeline



From Doug Powell, Guide to Christian Apologetics, 140-141.



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Textual Criticism

- The attempt to discern what the “original autographs” contained with some degree of certainty.
- External Evidence
 - Manuscript volume, dates, location, etc.
- Internal Evidence - Different types of errors that can be introduced by copyists¹
 - Faulty Eyesight – not distinguishing characters properly
 - 2 Peter 2:13 – ΑΠΑΤΑΙΣ (“love feasts”) vs. ΑΓΑΠΑΙΣ (“deceptions”).
 - Jumping over letters, words, lines when similar characters and words are used close together.
 - Faulty hearing – homophones, similar sounding vowels
 - Errors of the mind - synonyms, sequences, transposition, assimilation
 - Errors of judgment – adding previous comments into the text, combining columns

1. From Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 250-271.



Textual Criticism Example – John 1:18

- English – “
 - ESV – “No one has ever seen God; *the only God*, ...”
 - NKJ – “No one has seen God at any time. *The only begotten Son*, ...”
 - NIV – “No one has ever seen God. *but the one and only Son. who is himself God...*”

⁵ 18 {B} μονογενής θεός Ϝ⁶⁶ Ϟ* B C* L syr^p, h^{mg} geo² Origen^{gr 2/4} Didymus Cyril^{1/4} //
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 bius^{3/7} Basil^{1/2} Gregory-Nyssa Epiphanius Serapion^{1/2} Cyril^{2/4} // ó μονογενής υἱός A
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 menaeus Alexander Eustathius Eusebius^{4/7} Serapion^{1/2} Athanasius Basil^{1/2} Gregory-Na-
 zianzus Chrysostom Theodore Cyril^{1/4} Proclus Theodoret John-Damascus; Tertullian
 Hegemonius Victorinus-Rome Ambrosiaster Hilary^{5/7} Ps-Priscillian Ambrose^{10/11} Fau-
 stinus Gregory-Elvira Phoebadius Jerome Augustine Varimadum // μονογενής υἱός
 θεοῦ it^a Irenaeus^{lat 1/3}; Ambrose^{1/11} vid // ó μονογενής v^gms Ps-Vigilius^{1/2}



Next Week

- Doctrine of God

