

# COVENANTS, GOVERNMENT & THE CHURCH

Secret Church -- October 21, 2020 -- Session 4

## *Review:*

CREATION --> FALL --> REDEMPTION --> RESTORATION

Adamic Covenant (Genesis 1-2)

Noahic Covenant (Genesis 9)

Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-21)

Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 19, 20, 24, 34)

Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7:1-17)

The NEW Covenant (All entire NT)

## UNDERSTANDING THE COVENANTS TODAY...

- God's covenants with all humanity still apply to all people in all nations.
- God's covenants with Israel do not still apply in the same way to all people or to any nation.
  - Laws and structures of governance were given to the specific nation of Israel in the Old Testament.
  - Laws and structures of governance are not given to any specific nation in the New Testament.
- God's covenant with the church applies to \_\_\_\_\_ Christians in every nation.
  - God calls the church in the New Testament to obey everything Christ has commanded us.
  - Unless an Old Testament commandment is somehow restated or reinforced in the New Testament, it is no longer \_\_\_\_\_ binding\_\_\_\_\_ for Christians.

## ABUSE of SCRIPTURE:

We must reject liberal distortions of Scripture.

We must be able to discern theological liberalism: when people call themselves Christians yet deny Scripture and orthodox teaching on the primary doctrines of Christianity.

**WHY/HOW they do this...**

- Often times in an attempt to **adapt** to a changing culture or appeal to an increasingly non-Christian culture.
- Often times with language that appears to be biblical (though it undercuts Scripture) and claims to be 'new' and contemporary (though it rehashes old heresies).

### ▪ Theological liberalism denies . . .

- The final authority of God's Word.
- God's supernatural work in history.
- The seriousness of sin before a holy God.
- Biblical teaching on the person and work of Christ.
- Biblical teaching on judgment and eternity.
- Biblical teachings that become unpopular or ridiculed.
- Consistent teachings throughout church history.

### ○ We must remember the primary function of Scripture.

- The Bible was not written to answer every specific political question we have.
- The Bible was not written to address every specific political situation we face.
- The Bible was written to \_\_\_\_\_ who God is, who we are, and how we can be redeemed by God's grace through God's Son for God's glory.

### ○ We must prioritize proper interpretation of Scripture.

### ○ We must recognize varied application of Scripture.

*Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

**James 1:21–25**

• **THE \_\_\_\_\_ AMONG CHRISTIANS.**

*For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.*

**Acts 15:28–29**

*Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.*

**Acts 15:37–41**

- Political.
- Social.
- Generational.
- Racial.
- Experiential.
- Cultural.

• The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Church.

◦ The need for THEOLOGICAL triage.

- **Primary:** That which is essential for \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Christians (Bible-believing, gospel-embracing followers of Jesus) \_\_\_\_\_ from non-Christians over **primary doctrines** that are **clear** in Scripture and **essential** to Christianity, and Christians are willing to **die** for these doctrines.
  
- **Secondary:** That which is essential for \_\_\_\_\_ but non-essential for Christianity.
  - Christians \_\_\_\_\_ **distinguish** themselves from one another over **secondary doctrines** that are **less clear** in Scripture and **non-essential** to Christianity, and while these distinctions may mean **less fellowship** with one another in their churches, these Christians are glad to still **partner together around primary doctrines**.
  
- **Tertiary:** That which is non-essential for Christianity and for church.
  - Christians \_\_\_\_\_ among themselves over **tertiary doctrines** that are **even less clear** in Scripture and also **non-essential** to Christianity, yet Christians experience **close fellowship** with one another in the church despite their disagreement.

◦ The need for POLITICAL triage.

- **Primary:** That which is \_\_\_\_\_ essential \_\_\_\_\_ to the integrity of Christian faith and practice.
  - Christians (Bible-believing, gospel-embracing followers of Jesus) \_\_\_\_\_ **divide** over political positions of **primary** magnitude that are **clear** in Scripture and **essential** to Christianity, and for those who don't share these political positions, it is **questionable** if they are Christians and is likely cause for church **excommunication**.

- **Secondary:** That which is \_\_\_\_\_ **essential** to the integrity of Christian faith and practice.
  - Christians \_\_\_\_\_ over political positions of **secondary** magnitude that are **less clear** in Scripture and **not essential** to Christianity, and while these Christians **may remain together in the same church**, these differences may mean **less partnership** with one another in the political arena, even as these Christians are glad to still **stand together around political issues of primary magnitude**.

○ **A serious caution in our speech . . .**

- “You can’t be a Christian and vote for . . .”
- “You can’t be a Christian and support . . .”
- “You can’t be a Christian and think . . .”

○ **A guiding principle for partnership . . .**

- In essentials, \_\_\_\_\_.
- In non-essentials, \_\_\_\_\_.
- In ALL things, \_\_\_\_\_.

• **The \_\_\_\_\_ of politics.**

“In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churches stand on the sideline and merely mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard so many ministers say, ‘Those are social issues with which the Gospel has no real concern.’” — **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

○ Avoiding politics is \_\_\_\_\_ toward God.

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.* (Matthew 28:19–20)

○ Avoiding politics is \_\_\_\_\_ toward others.

*And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* (Matthew 22:39)

- Avoiding politics is \_\_\_\_\_ in this world.

*Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. Colossians 4:5–6*

- **The \_\_\_\_\_ of politics.**

- *Do you ever find your hope tied to the success of a particular politician or political party?*
- *Do you ever see a politician or political party you support as practically perfect?*
- *Do you ever struggle to stop, hear, and understand why your political opponent holds his or her position?*
- *Do you ever struggle to admit when your political opponent is right? Do you ever side with your political party without thinking through that issue from a biblical perspective?*
- *Do politics capture an irresponsible amount of your thoughts or emotions?*
- *Do politics ever steal your joy?*
- *Is your political speech more kind and honorable, or more harsh and hostile?*
- *Are your hidden political thoughts more kind and honorable, or more harsh and hostile?*
- *Do you ever hate sin in those you oppose politically but excuse sin in those you support politically?*
- *Do you ever hate sin in those you oppose politically but excuse sin in yourself?*
- *Do you ever forget that those you oppose (and support) politically are sinners in need of a Savior? Do you ever neglect to pray for them and share the gospel with them accordingly?*
- *Do you ever experience disunity with Christian brothers and sisters over secondary political issues?*

- **The EXTREME \_\_\_\_\_ of Politics.**

- Among \_\_\_\_\_.
- Across countries.
- Divisive \_\_\_\_\_.
- Ideological \_\_\_\_\_.

- \_\_\_\_\_ generalizations.
- Broad condemnation.
- Politics is a game to be \_\_\_\_\_.
- Contempt is the strategy to pursue.
- Compromise is the \_\_\_\_\_ to avoid.
- Opponents are \_\_\_\_\_ to be defeated.

• **The \_\_\_\_\_ of opponents.**

- Turns thoughtful discussions into critical \_\_\_\_\_.
- Turns political dialogue into personal\_\_\_\_\_.
- Turns healthy disagreement into hostile (even hateful) \_\_\_\_\_.

• **The \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.**

*So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

**Philippians 2:1–11**

- Thinking that we have it all \_\_\_\_\_.
- Thinking that others have it all \_\_\_\_\_.
- Being quick to accuse others (even if only in our minds).
- Being quick to \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves (even if only in our minds).
- Valuing our rights over what's right.
- Valuing acceptance in \_\_\_\_\_ over obedience to \_\_\_\_\_.

- Fearing what people \_\_\_\_\_.
- Ignoring what people \_\_\_\_\_.
- Failing to \_\_\_\_\_ our neighbor.
- Failing to \_\_\_\_\_ our enemy.
- Refusing to hear and \_\_\_\_\_ from others.
- Refusing to hear and obey God.

*But this command I gave them: “Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.”*

**Jeremiah 7:23**

## **Our Purpose . . .**

- **To hear \_\_\_\_\_ what God has said in His Word about government.**

*See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today? (Deuteronomy 4:5–8)*

*And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:6–9)*

- **To understand how \_\_\_\_\_ relates to government.**



*Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel . . . (Philippians 1:27)*

- **To understand how the gospel is \_\_\_\_\_ for government.**

*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14–16)*

- **To distinguish \_\_\_\_\_ between God’s Word and our wisdom regarding government.**

*I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.*

**2 Timothy 4:1–4**

*The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth—Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

**Proverbs 1:1–7**

**God's Word** <-----> **Our Wisdom**

**"Rules of the Game"**

Biblically \_\_\_\_\_

Direct, straight line to positions and policies

Binding on a Christian's conscience—"must do"

Clear and unchanging across cultures and times

Firm Grip / \_\_\_\_\_ Closed \_\_\_\_\_ Hand

**"Strategy for the Game"**

Biblically \_\_\_\_\_

Indirect, jagged line to positions and policies

Freedom in a Christian's conscience—"can do"

Complex calculations in various cultures at various times

Loose Grip / \_\_\_\_\_ Open \_\_\_\_\_ Hand

*The diagrams and images used in this Study Guide are adapted from Jonathan Leeman's course titled "Christians and Government" at 9marks.org.*

- **To unite joyfully around God's Word in the church as we work \_\_\_\_\_ according to our wisdom in the world.**

*Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.*

**Psalm 133:1-3**

*I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.*

**1 Corinthians 1:10**

*I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

**Ephesians 4:1-6**

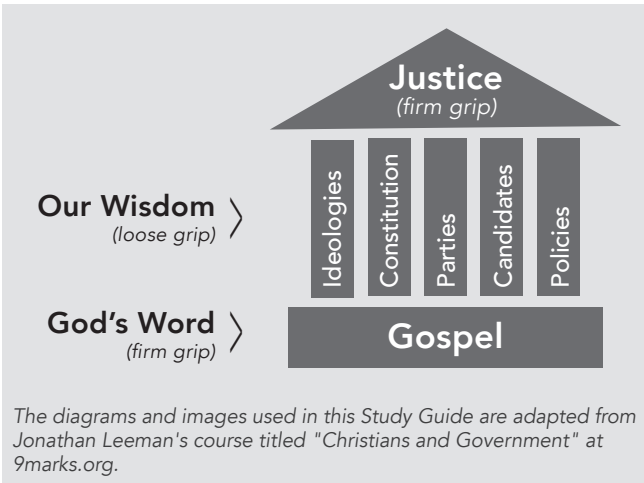
*Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.*

**1 Peter 3:8**

- To live justly, love kindness, and walk humbly with God in \_\_\_\_\_ nation.

*He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

**Micah 6:8**



- To live zealously for the spread of God's love and the glory of God's name among \_\_\_\_\_ nations.

*And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*  
(Matthew 24:14)

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*  
(Matthew 28:18–20)

*And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”*

**Revelation 5:9–10**

## **Our Plan . . .**

- Gospel Foundations
- Biblical Truths
- Gospel Conclusions
- Practical Takeaways