



Gospel Highway

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Talks given at Reformed Ministers' Conference 2016, Kuala Lumpur, by Pastor Steve Clevenger of Covenant Reformed Baptist Church, Warrenton, Virginia, USA.

3. Title: The Covenant of Redemption Text – 2 Timothy 1:8-10 and Selected Passages

2 Timothy 1:8-10 (NKJV)

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,

9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, ***but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began***,

10 but has now been revealed by the appearing of ***our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel***,

Introduction: We now turn our attention to what is known as the Covenant of Redemption. This covenant is also known theologically as ***“the covenant of peace,”*** or ***“the counsel of redemption.”*** The Divine Covenants of Promise (especially the New Covenant) that we see revealed in Scripture are anchored in this everlasting covenant. This teaching is foundational to understand the covenantal development of the Bible.

This is not a covenant between God and humans. This covenant is between the members of the Godhead, the members of the Holy Trinity. **It is an inter-Trinitarian covenant, or oath.**

The Biblical teaching concerning God is that there is One God, and Three Person, who are one in essence. The Persons of the Holy Trinity are God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, and it is among the Persons of the Trinity that this covenant was established.

Notice the wording of **verse 9** which says, ***“before time began”***.

It is a before-time covenant (pre-temporal), from eternity, before the world was made, before creation, before Genesis 1:1, before the covenant made with Adam in the Garden, the Persons of the Holy Trinity entered into an everlasting covenant. You might think of this covenant as God's eternal plan to redeem His elect people.

The Apostle Paul is teaching that God in time has saved us not by our works, but according to God's purpose and grace in Jesus Christ and it was granted to us before time began. It was planned by God from eternity. And in **verse 10** Paul is saying that this eternal purpose of salvation is now revealed in time with the arrival of Jesus Christ.

Salvation is found only in Jesus Christ, He who came forth from eternity and broke upon the scene of human history, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.

Jesus taught this truth when He declared,

John 6:38–40 (NKJV)

38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Furthermore, we should understand that the covenants God made with man in the Bible are rooted in and grow out of this everlasting covenant.

Christians have confessed this teaching for centuries, for instance in our Confession of Faith notice the precise wording concerning this doctrine.

The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689

Chapter 7: Of God's Covenant

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 innocence.

There are a number of places in the Bible that teach that the Triune God determined the salvation of the people of God. If you look closely you notice that each person has a specific role in the accomplishment of this eternal purpose. For instance, this can be seen in Ephesians chapter one.

God the Father chooses a people.

Ephesians 1:3–6 (NKJV)

3 Blessed be *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

4 just as *He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

5 having *predestined us* to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, *according to the good pleasure of His will*,

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

God the Son accomplishes redemption through the shedding of His blood on the cross.

Ephesians 1:7–12 (NKJV)

7 *In Him we have redemption through His blood*, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Finally, the Holy Spirit seals the individuals that the Father chose and the Son redeemed by His blood.

Ephesians 1:13–14 (NKJV)

13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, ***you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,***

14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

The whole Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are active in the salvation of the people of God. The work sprung from the eternal counsel of God, the Father chose a people, and the Son came forth from heaven, was born of woman, and shed His blood to redeem, and the Holy Spirit would seal the elect people of God as a guarantee of their salvation.

The Scriptures speak of the Son as in a state of submission to the Father, and the Father sending the Son into the world to accomplish a mission. The obedient Son obeys the Father and completes redemption. The Apostle in Galatians 4:4 writes,

Galatians 4:4 (NKJV)

4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

And Jesus spoke of the work that He was sent to do. Notice the wording of John 17,

John 17:1–4 (NKJV)

1 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,

2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.

3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

Charles Spurgeon spoke of this before-time covenant in story form. He said it like this,

“I behold the Father pledging himself to the Son, and the Son pledging himself to the Father, while the Spirit gives his pledge to both, and thus that divine compact, long to be hidden in darkness, is completed and settled—the covenant which in these latter days

has been read in the light of heaven, and has become the joy, and hope, and boast of all the saints.”

The covenant therefore had for its end the restoration of the chosen people. And now we may readily understand what were the stipulations.

On the Father’s part, thus run the covenant. I cannot tell you it in the glorious celestial tongue in which it was written: I am fain to bring it down to the speech which suiteth to the ear of flesh, and to the heart of a mortal. Thus, I say, run the covenant, in lines like these: ***“I, the Most High Jehovah, do hereby give unto my only begotten and well-beloved Son, a people, countless beyond the number of the stars, who shall be by him washed from sin, by him preserved, and kept, and led, and by him, at last, presented before my throne, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. I covenant by oath, and swear by myself, because I can swear by no greater, that these whom I now give to Christ shall be for ever the objects of my eternal love. Them will I forgive through the merit of the blood. To these will I give a perfect righteousness; these will I adopt and make my sons and daughters, and these shall reign with me through Christ eternally.”*** Thus run that glorious side of the covenant. ***The Holy Spirit*** also, as one of the high contracting parties on this side of the covenant, gave his declaration, ***“I hereby covenant,”*** saith he, ***“that all whom the Father giveth to the Son, I will in due time quicken. I will show them their need of redemption; I will cut off from them all groundless hope, and destroy their refuges of lies. I will bring them to the blood of sprinkling; I will give them faith whereby this blood shall be applied to them; I will work in them every grace; I will keep their faith alive; I will cleanse them and drive out all depravity from them, and they shall be presented at last spotless and faultless.”*** This was the one side of the covenant, which is at this very day being fulfilled and scrupulously kept. ***As for the other side of the covenant this was the part of it, engaged and covenanted by Christ.*** He thus declared, and covenanted with his Father: ***“My Father, on my part I covenant that in the fulness of time I will become man. I will take upon myself the form and nature of the fallen race. I will live in their wretched world, and for my people will I keep the law perfectly. I will work out a spotless righteousness, which shall be acceptable to the demands of thy just and; holy law. In due time I will bear the sins of all my people. Thou shalt exact their debts on me; the chastisement of their peace I will endure, and by my stripes they shall be healed. My Father, I covenant and promise that I will be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. I will magnify thy law, and make it honourable. I***

will suffer all they ought to have suffered. I will endure the curse of thy law, and all the vials of thy wrath shall be emptied and spent upon my head. I will then rise again; I will ascend into heaven; I will intercede for them at thy right hand; and I will make myself responsible for every one of them, that not one of those whom thou hast given me shall ever be lost, but I will bring all my sheep of whom, by thy blood, thou hast constituted me the shepherd—I will bring every one safe to thee at last.” *Thus ran the covenant; and now, I think, you have a clear idea of what it was and how it stands—the covenant between God and Christ, between God the Father and God the Spirit, and God the Son as the covenant head and representative of all God’s elect.* I have told you, as briefly as I could, what were the stipulations of it. You will please to remark, my dear friends, that the covenant is, on one side, perfectly fulfilled. God the Son has paid the debts of all the elect. He has, for us men and for our redemption, suffered the whole of wrath divine. Nothing remaineth now on this side of the question except that he shall continue to intercede, that he may safely bring all his redeemed to glory.

On the side of the Father this part of the covenant has been fulfilled to countless myriads. God the Father and God the Spirit have not been behindhand in their divine contract. And mark you, this side shall be as fully and as completely finished and carried out as the other. Christ can say of what he promised to do, “It is finished!” and the like shall be said by all the glorious covenanters. All for whom Christ died shall be pardoned, all justified, all adopted. The Spirit shall quicken them all, shall give them all faith, shall bring them all to heaven, and they shall, every one of them, without let or hindrance, stand accepted in the beloved, in the day when the people shall be numbered, and Jesus shall be glorified.

3. And now having seen who were the high contracting parties, and what were the terms of the covenant made between them, let us see what were the objects of this covenant. - (Spurgeon, C. H. “The Blood of the Everlasting Covenant.” The New Park Street Pulpit Sermons. Vol. 5. London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1859. 419–420.)

Application:

1. We learn from this doctrine that God is not a God of plan B. God is not making things up as time unfolds, and He is not in a state of constant reaction to man. Rather the Scriptures teach that all of history is the unfolding of God’s plan, God purposes. His plan is

perfect and shall be accomplished. He is the sovereign of the universe, He is God.

Isaiah 46:8–11 (NKJV)

8 “Remember this, and show yourselves men; Recall to mind, O you transgressors.

9 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me,

10 *Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,’*

11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes *My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.*

2. Our salvation in Christ is not an afterthought.

John 3:16 (NKJV)

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him *should not perish but have everlasting life.*

Romans 8:28–30 (NKJV)

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, *these He also glorified.*

John 17:20–26 (NKJV)

20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;

21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

24 ***“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.***

25 ***O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.***

26 ***And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”***

3. And though this covenant is from eternity it is in time and through the shedding of the blood of the Son of God, the Great Shepherd of the sheep that we have been brought into this covenant, this relationship with God.

Hebrews 13:20 (NKJV)

20 Now may the God of peace who brought up ***our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,***

Holy God has redeemed us, forgiven us, reconciled us, by virtue of the death of His Son. Jesus Christ by suffering and dying on the cross in the place of guilty sinners, suffering the penalty that was due unto them. Jesus dying, Jesus buried, and Jesus raised from the dead because His work accomplished and was received by the Father for us.
