

Theology and Practice for Radix Fidem

By Ed Hurst

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Ask questions, because I can't possibly think of everything by myself.

This document began as a series of blog posts. They are presented more or less in the order they were posted on the blog. While it may seem a random order of topics, the underlying theme was developed in that order. Some of these topics underwent a substantial rewrite.

The idea is to address common theological and practical issues common in Western churches from the Radix Fidem point of view. It's not that I have no awareness of Eastern Christianity, but I don't have a feel for what Eastern Christians would consider important right now. I don't have a finger on that pulse; it's not my calling. The world I live in is mostly evangelical American Christian religion and its theology. I'm willing to address anything else you ask about, so don't hold back. But I've already said that theology is nothing more than one person's mental organization of faith, and what I know best is the stuff I'm reacting against from my own education and experience.

Thus, you should not expect me to issue "ex cathedra" divine guidance on what you should think or believe. This is more about developing a context for your own independent guidance from the Lord. If you share any of my background, this might prove helpful in seeking peace with God, particularly on nagging questions and controversies in Christian religion up to our time.

Right off the bat, you should expect me to say this: Most of the biggest controversies arise only in the context of Western assumptions and biases. For example, the Calvinist-Arminian debate would not arise in an ancient Hebrew society. It's a silly question for them. We are seeking to move closer to the ancient Hebrew intellectual atmosphere and farther from the heathen world-view of the West. Some of the issues I bring up will quickly turn out to be stupid questions. There is such a thing as stupid questions. Not in the sense that asking them is wrong, but that the answer is to ditch the assumptions behind them.

I don't take myself that seriously, but people have been asking those kinds of questions from time to time. Again, all I can offer is my own answers.

Where you come down on some of this stuff is wide open. My underlying contention is that divine truth cannot be rendered down to some logical explanation in the first place. We all need a way of wrestling with the question of what faith demands of us personally, and the purpose God had in giving us brains was to organize and implement what our hearts discern from His Holy Spirit. We are not ancient Hebrew people, so we aren't going to come up with their explanations. But we can seek to understand how God revealed Himself through their culture, keeping in mind that He engineered that culture as the best way to reveal Himself and His truth for us.

Feel free to keep for your own religion any traditions that bring you closer to God. You still have to deal with who you are now, in order to become who God intended you to be. My intention here is to help you examine by hopefully asking the right questions.

Feel free to ask your own questions so as to help me process it, as well.

Covenants

There is one critical issue that is the foundation of our approach.

Review: Creation/reality is inherently feudal. It is feudal in the sense of what “feudal” meant in the Ancient Near East (ANE). This is the setting God planted and grew in which to reveal Himself and the nature of things. This is not the feudalism of Medieval Europe. There are parallels and overlapping ideas here, but the focus in the West has always been real property, an inherently materialistic approach. People within a Western feudal realm are not people but property. The real issue was the territory a feudal lord controlled. In the ANE, people were the property and treasure as living souls. Real estate was just a matter of what a lord’s household occupied effectively. The ANE feudal lord’s domain was the persons under his authority, regardless where they were.

And for that ANE feudal lord, persons within his household might hold any of three different statuses. First came his family, his kin by blood or by adoption. He also had faithful servants who might be treated as family, but knew their status was more tenuous. There were also slaves, people who were far less useful by reason of being somewhat at enmity with their master. It had nothing to do with personal enmity, but was a matter of how they came into the household. Both slaves and servants could be elevated in status through a show of personal devotion, and servants could be reduced to slaves for violating trust, but it depended on the head of household. By tradition and custom, once someone was announced as adopted and vested as a member of the family, that status could not be reduced (the Prodigal Son was not adopted, but his treatment was forgiving in the same way). Once someone crossed the threshold into kinship, everything was changed for them.

Granted, the feudal lord might still have to execute his own family members for going too far, but their kinship remained after death. Their burial would reflect this. You might also see banishment to prevent them enjoying the privileges of kinship, but their status was unchanged. Don’t get hung up in all the historical details; this is a metaphor for how God deals with Creation.

As slaves and servants in God’s realm (all Creation), we are under one or another Law Covenant. It happens that most of humanity is under the Covenant of Noah. However, if you read up on the Covenant of Moses, you can extrapolate from the specifics of Moses to the generalities that constitute Noah. Moses was a specific implementation of Noah, a very clear and precise expression of the same basic truth of how God handled people who had not risen to the level of self-death and faith.

The Covenant of Abraham had a specific purpose in the redemption narrative, but in another sense, it serves as an example of an individual faith covenant. Abraham responded to the individual call of faith and was elevated above the Law Covenant that applied (Noah), up to faith and grace. What he gained was implied by Noah, but was much more, because he was no longer just a servant in God’s household, but was adopted as family. In one sense, it was just a logical extension of Noah, so it remains a matter of Noah in terms of conduct. However, it is not wholly covered by Noah, because it introduces the element of adoption as family and heir. It was much more close and

personal. His mistakes still brought discipline, but his inheritance remained intact. Faith goes beyond the provisions of Noah, but includes them.

In like manner, any Israelite under the Covenant of Moses could have risen in devotion to the status of a faith covenant like Abraham's. Indeed, the way it is expressed in the Bible, anyone who rose to full faith adoption had entered into the Covenant of Abraham, since he was their forefather. The whole family of Israel – the entire nation under the Covenant of Moses – was granted the privilege of adoption if they would take seriously their obligations under Moses. But they were still minors. Don't try to pin this down legalistically; it is meant to be a fuzzy parable. That's how God communicates to us fallen humans. The nation of Israel was meant to learn how to walk in the privileges of adoption – a wholesale national adoption – via the provisions of the Pentateuch. If they persisted and became truly devoted, if they could just discover the sheer joy of walking in God's design, they were treated as fully mature adult members. As long as they fell short of that, they were minor children who lacked a range of access granted to adults.

Law is for children (and servants and slaves). Faith is an adult thing. And it was never DNA, but all about the Covenant.

In Christ, the business of having one human nation within the household of God is gone. There is no longer a nation of God on the earth in that kind of special relationship. The shape of the nation is now rooted in Heaven, not on earth. The pathway to faith no longer leads through the Law Covenant. Rather, faith is granted as a gift. The Holy Spirit is no longer withheld until you reach a certain point of moral maturity; He can come into your soul as soon as you realize it's possible. You are adopted on an individual basis, not on the basis of your maturity within the applicable Law Covenant. Note here that Noah doesn't work exactly like Moses; under Moses the whole nation was granted provisional childhood in the family as members of the same covenant. Noah demands you create something of that national identity without all the precise particulars of the ANE context. It no longer has any connection to an officially organized national identity on the earth.

So Noah still works as before, and it can still lead people to faith, but Christ Himself warned us that this was increasingly less likely as history rolls on toward the End of All Things. So the order of events is reversed; you can grab faith and then go back and learn what faith requires of you. You still have to cling to Noah, but now it becomes the frame of reference (and frame of reverence) that gives faith meaning on this earth. Your fleshly existence is still obliged to Noah, but not as servants and slaves; we are children learning to walk as adult heirs of our Father.

Atonement

This is a major point of conflict between the Western and Eastern Christian traditions.

The Western view is based on tribal Germanic mythology, which bears an inherently vindictive and punitive view of God's wrath. The image of God that arises from this tradition is closest to the literary image of the grouchy Norse god. It makes God's wrath unpredictable and capricious. This is a pagan view; it is not consistent with the Bible. This is why Western Christian theology tends to view Jesus as a departure from the God

of the Old Testament, and why that theology seems hostile to the continuity between Jesus and the Old Testament.

The Eastern view does not see fallen men as evil, but as sick. Instead of the Western need of placating an angry God, this is the view that we need healing for our warped understanding. The Eastern church prefers the term “recapitulation” instead of “atonement.” The call of Christ is more of union than paying a penalty. The Eastern Christ reunites fallen man with God’s ideal; it’s a stronger focus on the work of His life than on His death. It’s also a much stronger emphasis on the dual nature of Christ.

We find both views lacking in the sense of a false dichotomy. We emphasize the centrality of covenant in what we teach here. Everything is explained by referring to the applicable covenant. For us, Christ came to restore the covenant communion we had with God in the Garden of Eden. The mission of Christ was to bring us back to the Flaming Sword (in the form of the Cross) so we could enter Eden again. We don’t explain it in abstractions nor mere symbolism, but in terms of biblical narrative.

The problem with the Fall was that it asserted the primacy of human self, of intellect over faith. We are all equipped with the mechanism of faith, but our sense of the adequacy of reason stands in the way. We insist on discerning and reasoning out for ourselves what is good and what is evil. So long as we trust in our human capabilities, we exclude ourselves from redemption.

The death of Jesus was substitutionary, but not as most theologians think of it. Once we bought into Satan’s lie about trusting our own intellects and becoming our own gods, we were flatly unable to find our way back to faith without slogging through preparatory revelation under the Law Covenants. We were outside of Eden and under wrath, deserving of eternal destruction. The Law Covenants could get you to faith, but only at a very heavy personal cost, though not in the sense of human work, but in the sense of slowly dying to self. Jesus took our destruction upon Himself and vastly lowered the price of restoration. His work was both restoration of divine truth and healing of broken family ties, thus opening for us a much shorter path back to Eden. We could always choose self-death before we come to the grave, but Jesus offered it up front, instead of after a long hike through a law covenant. His death and resurrection made the Holy Spirit a free gift instead of a prize. He was the substitution of all the ritual offerings that the Law Covenants demanded.

Sacrifice was meant to provoke a sense of horror at the cost of sin and its destruction on our souls. The Cross was a much more vivid declaration of that cost. All the more so in that we are told flatly that He died in our place. That was far more emphatic and clear than even a lifetime of agricultural sacrifices. Thus, His death was a substitutionary atonement in that sense, too.

Faith was inherent in the Old Testament. There, the path of revelation was God’s chosen self-disclosure through the various covenants. It began with the simple Covenant of Seth just outside of Eden. As mankind traveled farther and farther from Eden, things got more complicated for a return to the Flaming Sword. Next came the Covenant of Noah, rather clearly stated in the prophecy Noah gave before the Flood. But mankind traveled farther still from Eden. Sometime later, at least one man reached the self-death of the Flaming Sword: Abraham. The Covenant of Abraham is a genuine covenant of faith, the

first recorded instance of a very personal communion between God and man. That kind of faith communion with God was implied under the Covenant of Noah, but was offered only upon reaching that point of self-death. Abraham was thus marked for return to Eden.

However, Abraham was also the first link in the Covenant of Moses. Moses was a specific implementation of the broader Covenant of Noah, a much more clear and precise contextual statement of Noah. During the time of ancient Israel, the path back to Eden – now quite long – meant a great deal of struggle to find the Flaming Sword and make use it for self-death. Moses was meant to create a condition of longing for peace with God, but it was by then a very difficult path. Still, it was the best path, though Noah's Covenant was still open to those who were not called to Moses.

Jesus used the term “born from above” with Nicodemus. Paul says that spiritual birth is entirely a matter of God's initiative; the recipients were elected by God. We do not appropriate spiritual birth; we come to the realization that God chose us and embrace it with joy. It is beyond us to even understand it, and Paul flatly says we cannot want it because self-death is necessary for it. The fleshly self cannot wish for its own death; it cannot embrace the Flaming Sword. Only the power of God awakening the dead human spirit can overcome the resistance of the flesh. Jesus didn't bring us this spiritual birth. It was always there. Abraham was elect; clearly the likes of Samuel and King David were beyond the point of self-death. Jesus was disappointed that Nicodemus exhibited no self-death level of personal faith and understanding after having so long treading the path of the Covenant, because it was inherent in that covenant.

What Jesus brought us was the shortcut back to the Flaming Sword. Instead of treading a long path of conditioning under the Law Covenants (Moses and Noah), we can take a shortcut to the Covenant of Faith (like Abraham) and receive the awakening of our awareness of divine election. We don't have to first submerge our lives in some Law Covenant, but we can find faith freely and seize the Flaming Sword.

But what is supposed to follow that discovery of election is then to go back and devote the rest of our lives to that long path of learning what the Law Covenants were designed to teach our flesh. We can't know what Abraham had accomplished before God called him into a faith covenant, but we do know that his mistakes indicate how his faith had to grow. This is where we find ourselves today. Christ paid the price of that long trek up front; He substituted His own sinless life on the Cross so we didn't have to carry our own cross to get back to the Flaming Sword and the Gate of Eden. But we do have to carry one once we embrace His sacrifice on our behalf.

Just a reminder: In Paul's writings in particular, but in the New Testament in general, the references to “the Law” often mean something other than Moses. You have to read it in context, because sometimes it refers to the Talmud, not Moses. Sometimes it refers to legalism as the mental habit of Pharisees, portraying them as some awful, implacable law, because they were often part of the Jewish government. At other times, it does, indeed, refer to the Covenant of Moses. But because people don't grasp the contextual distinctions, they become legalistic about the words “not under law but under grace.”

Law is grace. It came as a measure of God's mercy to bring us back to the Flaming Sword, and back to the Gate of Eden. The Law points the way, but it cannot of itself give

you faith. That comes only when you embrace self-death. Only God knows if, when and how you can get there.

Christmas

Shall we celebrate Christmas?

Short answer: It is not so much as mentioned anywhere in the Bible. The Hebrew people did not celebrate birthdays. The individual and immediate family kept track, but had nothing like the mental image we have of it. Their sense of calendar was nothing like ours. Thus, it was common to say in that culture: "So-n-so is about X years old." Even then, such comments were typically confined to those threshold points in life that were associated with rites of passage.

Now the longer answer: When Ancient Near Eastern royalty celebrated a "birthday" it was actually the day they were vested with royal authority, not the day of their birth. Such vestment ceremonies were carefully timed to avoid conflicts with other major holidays and celebrations, to prevent dragging vassals in and tying them up with rituals and protocols when it might hinder their productivity on the king's behalf in the first place.

Thus, there is no valid biblical foundation for celebrating Christmas as the birth of Christ.

There are also solid historical reasons for avoiding associating Christ with that holiday. Within the New Testament narrative are multiple clues that Christ could not have been born in winter. For example, shepherds do not sleep out in the fields with their flocks that time of year. It's most likely that Jesus was born in the springtime when shepherds were watching for sheep giving birth. Keep in mind that He was the Lamb of God.

Another issue is that Luke is careful not to compress the events of his narrative the way most Western readers envision it. The hassle of having to return to the clan home in Bethlehem meant the newlywed couple went early, stayed at least a year (and possibly two years) while the Magi arrived, and then left for Egypt. They found the family living in a house by that time. There's no reason to assume Jesus was born the night they arrived. The inn would have remained full for weeks during that kind of census activity. A lot of people had tents or built a shelter, but this couple found space in a stable.

I'm also not going to expound on the question about Quirinius and when he governed Syria versus the timing of the census in question; Quirinius was in and out of Syria several times in varying imperial capacities over some two decades that include a period that overlaps Herod's reign (Jesus was born before 4BC, when Herod died).

Our point here is that we shouldn't celebrate His birth at all, much less on the modern Christmas Day. If all that were not enough, we know for a fact Constantine during the Fourth Century AD corrupted the church leadership so he could use Christianity as his official religion of the masses. It was frankly a smart political move. Meanwhile, he kept his own devotion to the sun god until on his death bed, and Christmas happens to be the annual feast of that deity.

Thus, I celebrate Christmas as an American cultural holiday carried over from paganized European "Christianity." Christ never was in Christmas except in the wild and hugely

mistaken imagination of Westernized Christian believers. I still sing Christmas carols as a mere cultural tradition and because it's pretty nice music. However, it is not a holy night in my religion.

The Trinity

Short answer: Our Radix Fidem covenant is neutral on the doctrine of the Trinity. We are neither for it nor against it.

This requires I remind everyone that our covenant is openly anti-western. We don't believe there is such a thing as objective truth, nor that Scripture contains propositional truth. Granted, it would take a good bit of writing and references to literature from the Ancient Near East, but if you wanted proof, we could prove that the Hebrew intellectual traditions would scoff at the notion of propositional truth. If you really want to read up on that, you can get a bare introduction in my book, [A Course in Biblical Mysticism](#) – and it's a pretty long read just outlining it.

Further, we regard human nature as entirely fallen, intellect and all. You cannot trust the intellect to answer anything of significance in serving Christ. It will at best help you organize and implement what your faith tells you through your convictions. The Bible says your convictions reside in your heart, so we talk about heart-led faith that must rule over the intellect. The New Testament speaks of this world as one giant deception, and only the heart can see through it. In the heart is where the Holy Spirit speaks, not in the fallen intellect. The mind cannot hear the voice of God except as it bows the knee to the heart.

So it should be obvious that the Trinity is a theory of Western minds, neither supported nor denied in Scripture. When the Bible refers to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, it speaks of each in terms of human experience. It's not meant to be regarded as somehow factual. That is, we are flatly told we cannot intellectually comprehend the Father and the Holy Spirit, and we know Christ only from the testimony of trustworthy followers. But we can know God in terms of all three in our hearts in ways that neither the mind can fully grasp nor words can tell.

If the doctrine of the Trinity helps you keep things organized, fine. If it only seems to confuse things, ignore it. There is no one right "orthodox" answer for us. Remember: When you share things, all you can offer is what you have. One of the greatest sins is to believe your answers are the only answers God approves. We each stand before God as individuals He made, and you cannot pretend to speak for God's other servants. This is particularly true of things that are clearly your preferred intellectual construct. God does not conform Himself to your reasonings about Him.

In this, we establish the pattern for dealing with a lot of other historical doctrines found in the academic discipline of theology.

Ecclesiology

We evaluate all things by the Covenants.

That's how God communicates with humanity. The whole revelation of God presumes you understand things in terms of His Covenants. When it comes to questions of human organization in this fallen world, only His Covenants can explain what to expect from

God. Outside of those covenants, mankind is nothing but cattle herded by God, and no amount of human reason can discern His will while walking as a herd beast. No conceptual system or structure can capture the essence of what God blesses or curses without first rising to embrace His Law Covenants.

The Law Covenants together assume certain things as prerequisites. To live under God's Laws, you must organize and form a covenant feudal nation. The entire universe is organized and operates under eastern feudal design. Nature is feudal; reality is feudal. The Garden of Eden was feudal. You simply cannot understand how things work if you don't embrace that truth. This is what God designed us for, and us for it. The very essence of divine revelation is to point out how reality is organized, and it is feudal. Rejecting His brand of feudalism is rejecting His Son's life and sacrifice, and His resurrection.

The doctrine and teaching of Christ was founded on the Law of Moses. For anyone outside the nation of Israel, they are under the Law of Noah. As previously noted, Moses is a specific implementation of Noah; if you do Moses, you are doing Noah. But if you aren't born and raised in Judaism, or if you don't feel called by God to embrace Moses, then you are under Noah. This is your path to understanding how to walk in the faith of Christ. For most of us, faith in Christ includes Noah. Noah is feudal.

So at the very least, no church can claim to be a genuine body of Christ without that feudal organization. Your church must have both an elder (a head of household) and a pastor (priestly figure). That is the goal of any initial formation of a church body. It must be governed by an elder who represents the head of household, who then works with the priestly figure to guide the body in building up the household in the love of Christ. The whole function and purpose of a church is to learn how to organize and work together as a tribal family household. Everything else is just activity; the soul of the church body is coming together as a feudal family household.

This is how we claim the blessings of God. He may see fit to permit or grant a lot of things people like, but as long as churches reject the fundamental element of feudal household structure, they have no claim on God's blessings. Such a church remains de jure a herd of cattle that is not permitted to enter the counsel of God. Even if they share DNA, they are not really a family. But any diverse people can become a spiritual family of God under His feudal covenants.

Given how rare it is to find this kind of tribal feudal communion on the earth today, it's hard to "go to church" without finding yourself in a herd of cattle with no clue on how things actually work. The issue then turns on dominion: How much authority has God granted you? What are the limits and boundaries of your divine calling as a servant of Christ? The next question is tactics: How will God work through you to bring His people under His covenants?

My own experience is that no existing church will tolerate my divine mission and calling. Thus, I am confined to "doing church" within my own home. There is nothing regulatory about my situation; none of my readers should consider themselves required to operate a house church or restricted only to a properly organized feudal household church. Our Radix Fidem covenant is in its infancy in terms of human organization on this earth. There may come a day when the Lord will raise us up as a notable presence in this

world, but we don't have a single church body organized and functioning anywhere that I know of. That is somewhere ahead of us on the path.

Until that day arrives, we are called to invest ourselves in meditating on these things and praying to see them realized by God's hand. If we within ourselves commit to this faith covenant, which faith includes Noah (or Moses if you are a Jewish convert to Christ) as the fundamental expression of how we do religion, then we can claim so much of God's covenant blessings as is possible for the individual of faith. If any one member of your earthly family household stands with you, it is the beginning of a church. You can claim a great deal more of the covenant blessings of *shalom* with two agreeing in heart.

Everything else we could say about what "church" ought to mean starts here.

Our current status as a virtual parish is simply the only way we have for now to commune on any level with those of like faith and calling. Don't pretend this is where it ends. This is simply where God has us now. If we choose to remain faithful to His Word, it won't matter what we call it or who else is involved, He will raise up His church on this earth.

Missions

Covenants remain the measure of all things.

The mission of Israel was to be a covenant nation. Nothing else mattered. Their identity as the people of the Covenant of Moses was everything. The Covenant itself said that DNA didn't matter; national identity was based on adherence to the Covenant. Anyone in the world could become a member of the nation by embracing the Covenant.

The whole point was to vivify the revelation of God. They were to be a people who conspicuously lived the truth of God so that anyone could see it clearly. The business of their land and borders was promised as a resource for this mission, but that real estate was not essential to the Covenant. It was not their land; it was God's. If they were faithful, they could keep it as their inheritance. If they were unfaithful, the land itself would go to war against them.

Now that whole thing is gone. They vacated the Covenant. A critical element in what Christ came to do was give them one last chance to get back on course. He was their Covenant personified. The full authority of that Covenant rested in His Person. They rejected that one last chance, and in so doing, rejected the Covenant. But their mission still stands. So now that mission belongs to Christ and His followers.

This is not Replacement Theology. There is no other Chosen Nation on this earth, nor can there ever be one. Rather, the New Israel is symbolic; it is a nation of hearts, not a human government entity among other governments of this world. The New Israel is a parallel nation rooted in Heaven. But the mission to live by the Word in this world still stands.

Our mission is simply to be a Covenant People. Our embrace of this covenant is our national citizenship in the Nation of Heaven. The Law Covenants still speak to us in terms of conduct. At a minimum, that means the Covenant of Noah in terms of external form. However, our mission in the world presumes moral maturity on the basis of Noah that blossoms into self-death and faith.

What the world around us sees is the Covenant of Noah. If God awakens their souls, then they will see faith, too. But while the mission is to show them our faith, it must be visible first in our adherence to Noah. We shall be within our faith communities a covenant feudal tribe wherever in this world the Lord plants us. We seek no quarrels with the secular governments that rule this world. We shall be among the most patriotic people on that level. But that is merely the tactics by which we portray our fundamental commitment to Christ as Lord.

The world around us should know that we are people apart in that sense. They should know that we belong to the Covenant, and thus belong to each other. They should sense their exclusion on the basis of the Covenant. They should see the winsome beauty of living by that Covenant. We breathe life into the sheer joy of having a home in Eden, of being at one with Creation, including the natural world around us. The power of self-death at the Flaming Sword should be painfully obvious to them as the manifestation of *shalom*.

We do not persuade. That is in the hands of God alone. We are ready to explain in whatever terms we can muster, and in whatever terms we discern they can hear. The persuasion is in the power of divine privileges, our otherworldly mystical pragmatism in having no great care for this life. We present the paradox of living better in this world because we are seeking to leave it. So long as the Father keeps us here, we seek His glory in how we live. He is the Persuader.

We have a mission to infiltrate throughout the whole world of human existence in making the presence of the Covenant felt.

Israel

We reject Dispensationalism and Zionism.

The people of Israel were the Chosen Nation, under the Covenant of Moses. They walked away from that Covenant. The Talmud is a Hellenistic perversion of what was an already shaky adherence to Moses. Judaism is not the religion of the Old Testament. In that sense, Jews have zero claim on the promises of the Covenant of Moses. Political Zionists have even less claim.

However, should any Jew return to Moses, we will be first in line to support them as people of the Chosen Nation. Should they turn to Christ, their promises of *shalom* will be greater than they are for any Gentiles. But they still have to embrace how Christ was the ultimate expression of the Covenant of Moses. What He taught was God's Law, and corrected the weak spots of Moses. His call to faith was the fulfillment of Moses.

While the Jewish people have no legitimate claim to the name "Israel," we can be sure few in this world will ever accept our statement on this.

When the Chosen Nation rejected the Messiah, they were no longer under the feudal protection of Jehovah. Satan stepped forward and claimed them. As a whole, Judaism is Satan's religion (Synagogue of Satan), and Jews are his special nation. Zionism is just a political offshoot of this, even more thoroughly deceived. Thus, modern Jewish political activism serves Satan.

The modern country called “Israel” is incapable of moral justice; she is hostile to it. Her purpose in serving Satan is to provoke and deceive the other nations of this world. She further serves the purpose of deceiving the Elect in Christ. She distracts the Elect from their true mission of living the Covenant on this earth.

The nature of Judaism is to seek dominance over the human race; the Talmud teaches that Gentiles are not human, but animals. In Jewish eyes, it is prejudice and oppression that the world does not serve them slavishly. Thus, it is no surprise that Israel seeks to distract all the world from even what little good they might do by accident as cattle whom God herds. Israel is the single biggest threat to the rest of humanity finding Christ, or even so much as the Covenant of Noah. There can be no peace as long as Zionism exists.

Thus, the only thing that makes Israel special in this world is that she is the one true dedicated servant of Satan, while all other nations are simply herds of cattle before the Lord. Israel will be destroyed in due time; there is no need for any kind of organized activism against her. And Jews are not proper objects of hatred; they are to be pitied. In our daily lives, we pray for their redemption from the Devil’s control. Given the nature of prayer, it works best if you pray for those Jews you encounter personally. Be on guard against demonic activity around them. Live before them the covenant *shalom* they rejected, and so provoke them to envy.

We are not the least concerned with accusations of antisemitism, since such are unavoidable.

Worship

In English, His proper name is Jehovah.

He still answers to a lot of other things, but the business of worship is “calling on the name of the Lord.” That is a very ancient phrase that refers to celebrating the greatness and goodness of some important person. It includes bringing gifts that represent what their benevolence and protection provides to you. It is public promotion and acknowledgment. It means promoting that person’s fame based on their position. Thus, “the name” is a reference to their role in your life. So in English we call Jehovah things like God, Lord, Savior, Creator, etc. We call those “honorifics.”

Worship is shouting, singing, making offerings and similar activities and rituals related to focusing the attention on God. Worship does not include teaching and preaching. Those activities can be conducted in conjunction to gathering for worship, but they are not worship. The modern Western habit of referring to preaching as the “sacrament of the Word” is not biblical. Whatever else it is, it has become a way of focusing attention on the man, not his God. It elevates the preacher far too closely to God Himself.

Saying this does not hinge on some imaginary divine order of things, but is the proper answer to our cultural failures. A critical element of worship is recognizing the tension between the way things were done in some previous cultural context and the way we do things now. The New Testament Christian church meeting was based on the synagogue habit. The structure of synagogue meetings included the awareness that the only place one can hold formal corporate worship was in the Temple. That was commanded by God under the Covenant of Moses.

We are not under Moses and the Temple no longer exists. The collection of offering rituals commanded for Temple worship no longer apply. Christ is the one ritual sacrifice for all time. We now worship Him not in any temple, but in Spirit and in Truth. The location and setting are immaterial; what matters are the psychological and spiritual effects on the worshiper. Thus, we develop a worship experience that pushes aside the world and brings our focus onto God alone.

As a counter to the particular sins of our age, I would suggest our best worship setting is as close to nature as the context permits. There's nothing wrong with fitting a natural setting to the safe gathering of however many bodies show up, and all that it entails, but most public parks are much better than so-called "worship centers" commonly used in Western Christian worship. We need to get away from the imagery of building temples, because it takes the focus away from the nature of God as Spirit and puts too much emphasis on the "sacred" facilities. This only encourages materialism. We need the imagery of you and I as temples of God, that our lives are devoted to His sacred uses, not some material repository that separates us from our holiness.

Whatever reason we might have had for making preaching such a critical part of worship, it has turned out to be a mistake. We need to separate the preaching and prophetic word from worship rituals because our culture cannot avoid worshiping the speaker. We need to avoid placing ministering to people in proximity to ministering to God because it approaches blasphemy even at the best of times. Let us endeavor to stop calling New Testament synagogue meetings "worship." Let us bring the sacrifice of our lives and our worship in purity.

Let's make worship about God and God alone.

Justice

The Law of God, expressed in His Covenants, is the measure of justice.

The fundamental question is: Who has been offended? When one has answered this question, all other issues have already been decided. Once we as children of His covenant household recognize God as the One to whom all are indebted as Creator of all things, the path to restoring justice has already been settled.

Western Civilization on this point is particularly pernicious and false. The ancient Germanic tribal mythology says that justice is a matter of either offense to the individual, or offense against the State. The State is now the stand-in for the Western feudal lord who owned everyone within the boundaries of his physical domain. The State is absolutist punishment. But the sense of personal offense remains a critical part of the Anglo-American sense of justice, and figures into the punitive nature of State-approved justice.

Thus, the Western habit of making punitive justice a tormenting and overwhelming sense of doom on the guilty party serves only to create yet another victim demanding redress. This is how criminals are hardened, since the State clearly rejects them forever and permits no path for return to society. One who has sinned against the State, even when it is merely a proxy for personal offense, is branded forever. The penalties follow them to the grave.

This sets up the false dichotomy of allowing some to get off Scott free because the State needs them for some reason. The other half of that mythology is demanding that “Christians” forgive the most heinous crimes, as if this is actually what God demands. That brand of “heroic forgiveness” is a blasphemous lie, because it rests on pagan mythology.

This is not the biblical approach. The issue in the Bible is that all offense is against God. There is no crime against persons, and the State is not permitted as a proxy in any way. The mere existence of the State is an offense against God, because the fundamental nature of divine justice is that everything is personal. Pretending to make things impersonal (under the guise of objectivity) and enthroning human reason as the demigod of justice is blasphemous. All justice is personal. Justice is a personal attribute of God as Creator, the ultimate Person of persons. Everything rests on His divine moral character, woven into the fabric of reality.

Furthermore, all property is personal in God’s eyes. Everything on this earth is either granted by God or it is stolen. Everything is held in feudal service to the Lord. Thus, justice of material things is restoring God’s dominion; it means restoring things to whom He granted them for the sake of His rule.

We then take all cases to Him for justice. Even in the heat of physical battle, we trust in Him to deliver our opponents in our hands, or accept defeat for His glory, or simply maintain a balance or standoff. Resolution is whatever God says it is. The Covenant of Noah flatly states that blood demands a price; there must be a restoration of divine justice. That price may vary with the context, but no one gets off without making amends or seeking to restore what they took. But it is handled as a divine debt, not as some personal retribution. God is the one who determines justice. He is unfailing in His promise to speak to our hearts about what divine justice means.

Furthermore, divine justice itself is reflected in the tribal feudal structure of government. This is the fundamental requirement of Noah’s Covenant, which now applies to all humanity for so long as there are rainbows in the sky. In Genesis, rainbows and rain came after the Fall, so the Covenant of the Rainbow (Noah) stands until the redemption of all things at Christ’s Return. No government has any business poking into your daily life unless that government is your family by blood or covenant. There can be no justice in God’s eyes under any other system of government.

Our duty under the Covenant of Christ (Biblical Law), which includes Noah, is to strive to the extent He makes possible the standard of justice in the Bible. We tolerate human governments as the result of God’s inscrutable cattle herding, but we never forget that they are not blessed by God under any covenant. There can be no detailed guidelines on how this is supposed to work out. Your calling and mission, and your heart-led guidance from the Lord, is what determines how you will try to execute His justice.

However, what we must understand is that there are no artificial limits on Noahic justice. The elder of the household of faith has full divine authority up to, and including, execution of someone who commits a crime that genuinely threatens *shalom*. Anyone with eldership who refuses to make room in their hearts for such an extremity is rejecting God’s standard of justice. That this will inevitably bring us into conflict with the modern secular State means we all must remain careful to keep our hearts open to

God and dominant over our thinking. God does tell His servants what He requires. That includes His servants accepting whatever human consequences proceed from it, and trusting by faith that God will handle it.

Under the Covenants, forgiveness requires the guilty party make amends. There can be no genuine forgiveness from one party only. All forgiveness is three-way, in that it always includes God as the Guarantor, and He says quite flatly that He requires certain things of those who sin. Whether we as a party of forgiveness ever see the sinner repent is not the issue; but we should expect to see it often enough when we place forgiveness on the altar before the Lord. Eventually the guilty party must also come to that altar to claim it, or they die under wrath.

But the choice to how we respond to offense is a matter of referring all things to the Holy Spirit within. We are obliged to our feudal Sovereign as His vassals to handle His business according to His revealed standards, but revelation does not stop with Scripture. If He requires action to defend His feudal grant to us, we will know in our hearts, and we will know what that response should be – but only if we are soaked in an awareness of His Covenant Law and His revelation of justice. We do not take offense for our own sake, but for the sake of His glory, His reputation.

Justice is whatever God says it is, and His Law says He speaks through hearts committed to His glory.

Heart Led

This becomes a point of theology simply because Western Christians ignore it, or are hostile to it.

The essence of the Fall was choosing human reason over faith. Human reason and intellect is inherently hostile to genuine faith. To then rely on reason to justify faith is the height of stupidity. In Scripture, the very concept of faith – commitment to Jehovah as Lord – starts with subjecting the intellect to the heart. In the Bible, the heart is the seat of conviction and the sole point of contact with the Holy Spirit. Conviction resides in the heart and is awakened by the presence of the Holy Spirit; it is the primary source of our individual knowledge of God. Without conviction, the heart is merely the seat of sentiment, however strongly held.

The heart is also a sensory organ that can directly read and assess the divine moral character of God woven into reality. That is, the heart is able to discern moral truth from Creation itself. However, the mind was given by God to formulate and implement the human response to the demands of faith. The brain must be taught and conditioned by Scripture, especially the Law Covenants, so that it is ready to respond properly to the move of conviction and the wind of the Spirit blowing through our souls.

The breaking point is when the soul embraces self-death. This is when the very root of who we are kneels at the Cross, which is the current manifestation of the Flaming Sword at the Gate of Eden. The Old Testament's turning the Flaming Sword on your fallen nature is the same as the New Testament's nailing your fleshly nature to the Cross. There is no possible way of explaining in clinical terms how the soul arrives at that point, but we do know that Christ made it possible to reach that without first going through the Law Covenants. We have an advantage not available to folks who died prior

to Christ, in that we can turn to Him as the Living Law. But all of this assumes you will still seek to know Biblical Law after embracing Him.

As those who seek to manifest the Covenant of Noah, we must understand that the heart-led way is inherent in that covenant. It is essential to serving Christ, Whom you cannot know without engaging the heart as the center of conscious awareness. You most certainly can belong to Him without shifting to heart leadership, and you can know that you are His, but you cannot follow Him without the leadership of the heart. That is inherent in the gospel message, because it was an *a priori* assumption of His Hebrew cultural and intellectual background.

This fundamental orientation was lost when Hellenism collided with the Hebrew people. This is the primary failure behind the Talmud and Judaism. The heart-led discernment is personal in nature; the intellect without the heart leadership presumes to be logical and objective, and refuses to admit that it cannot shed the personal biases of the flesh. The mind is arrogant and contrary to revelation. This was just getting rolling when Jesus confronted His nation and called them back to the ancient mystical ways of heart-led living.

In the New Testament, you can see references to faith, convictions and being led by, or filled with, the Holy Spirit. All of those refer to the heart-led way, but did not use such language because they took it for granted everyone understood it that way. Since those days, the church leadership of each succeeding generation drifted farther and farther away from it. Today we have major church leaders insisting that faith must be reasonable, when Scripture says reason is hostile to genuine faith. Faith is inherently unreasonable.

You are not following Christ if you aren't a mystic who follows the heart-led way.

Evangelism

We seek and keep *shalom*.

We live by the Covenant and *shalom* is the whole point. It's more than just the blessings granted to obedience; it is obedience itself. Biblical Law is its own reward. It is harmony with reality.

We could use other words here, of course – compassion and mercy, for example. Genuine compassion and mercy are part of the Covenant. It's not enough that we seek to build *shalom* within the covenant community of faith, but that we project it outward. Evangelism as a term generally implies the individual effort toward missions.

First and most obvious is the sensory field of our hearts. Based on our individual mission and calling, we use our heart to identify people to whom the Lord wants us to minister. We aren't looking at instrumentality; we do what is just because it is just. Justice includes compassion and mercy, restoring in some limited ways the justice that should have been there in the first place. The limits are not just the mission and calling, but the very real blessings that God has given us. We cannot give what we do not have from God, and we most certainly cannot trust human reason to decide what we ought to be giving. But we project our overwhelming compassion from our hearts, waiting for the signal from God to give what He says we should give.

But in a broader and more general sense, or very presence is the Presence of God. Our obedience to His Law bleeds away the authority of demons. Our faith moderates the justified wrath of God, unless He warns us to flee a particular situation. This is crucial to the heart-led way. This is how we discern where and to what we called, and whom we touch.

In general, we are inclined to purposeful, and sometimes random, acts of kindness to express the power of *shalom* to others. Naturally, compassion is not defined by human reason. Human need is not the guide to what we do. It has the purpose of our Lord's glory, and human need is simply the opening we use to shine. The Law of Noah teaches us not to be manipulated by shallow human purpose. We can't let them drag us into their concerns. For His glory, there are times we must say, "no."

What most Western Christians don't understand is that we have no interest in simply getting people to hang out with us. Instead, we should expect our pursuit of *shalom* to polarize, to drive away those we cannot help in the first place, while calling out to those whom the Lord has appointed us to serve up a heaping dose of His glory. So all that effort with analyzing the demographics and structured appeals is wasted. We operate under the leading of our convictions, not man-centered reckoning in the flesh. We do what our heart directs us to do, and nothing else.

Walking in Biblical Law, by the power of Christ's Spirit, is in everyone's best interest.

Justification

Like many other classic theological issues arising in Western Church History, this one is mostly silly. Most of them were simply impertinent for us. For example, we have for more than a decade this debate between N.T. Wright and John Piper over what Paul said about the doctrine of justification.

As commonly defined, justification is not a biblical doctrine at all. It arose as a logical implication of some words Paul used in Romans, among other places. It doesn't occur that often. Paul talks about how we are "justified by faith" (Romans 3:28). This declaration comes in the context of discussing "works" and "law" and some other terms that have garnered a lot of attention and debate over the past 2000 years.

Most of the disputes arise from certain *a priori* assumptions about how to approach reading Scripture in the first place. The biggest problem is that most people want to nail down some intellectual statement to lock in place a kind of doctrine and orthodoxy, instead of reading Paul's letter in its own context. They even claim that such orthodoxy is the context.

But what was Paul really saying about the religion of the Jews in his day? If you want to understand how Piper and Wright attempt to address that, you'll have to pay a bit of money. Their books against each other are not free, and some of the most in-depth reporting on their debate is behind paywalls. Meanwhile, the studies of Jewish intellectual culture in Jesus' and Paul's day are broadly available on the Net for free.

That ancient Hebrew tradition would not approach Paul's writings the way Western theologians do, evangelicals in particular. Paul was drawing a contrast between Jewish Talmudic legalism versus the ancient Hebrew mysticism that he shared with Jesus. In summary, Paul was saying the Jewish rabbis were wrong about their Talmudic approach

to things. Their path ends in Hell, and garners God's wrath along the way to Hell. And in the final Day of Judgment, they will be rejected as members of God's family. The word "justified" is a code word for being pronounced by God as free of those penalties. There is no need to dig into long philosophical discussions about precise mechanisms and legal standing. Let's rejoice that by our firm commitment to God, we are welcomed into His home.

But then we have to wrestle with the evangelical fixation on "getting saved" and all that stuff. We reject that obsession because we reject the underlying assumptions. For us, the whole thing is a tornado in a water glass – it may be entertaining briefly, but let's quit playing with our food. We have work to do.

Shalom

Shalom is best understood as peace with God.

Once again, the only way to see this is in the context of covenants. Peace with God is not a reward; it is a context we are driven to build. It is the protective shade of Eden, available only by hanging around the gate where the Flaming Sword stands waiting.

The only proper way to tell of this is through parables, symbols, figures of speech taken from the Bible. The whole idea with the Flaming Sword is that you turn that blade on your own fallen nature. It's the same idea as nailing your fleshly nature to the Cross. The Flaming Sword is simply the older symbol from Genesis, while the Cross is the foundation of the New Testament. Either way, the whole point of God's redemptive revelation is to bring you to the point of self-death.

There is a proximity factor here. The closer you get to God's truth, the better things can be. The whole idea of the Law Covenants was to draw you closer to Eden. You can gain some measure of blessing without quite reaching the threshold of self-death. But the whole point was to bring you to that place where you no longer trust your fleshly capabilities. You should stop trusting your talents, intelligence, and human reason to answer the important questions (the nature of good and evil). The only valid answer is divine revelation.

Eden represents full and natural communion with God in an unfallen condition. It's what we were designed for from the moment of Creation. It has us in a form that is not bound by space-time, but a form that can move within it. This the meaning behind the image of the Tree of Life. Adam and Eve bought into the lie of Satan that their own human capabilities were enough to judge what was morally good and evil. The Tree of the Knowledge, with its the Forbidden Fruit, represents judging good and evil without reference to God's revelation. We were designed to operate under communion with the Holy Spirit through our hearts; our hearts are supposed to dominate our intellects.

So the Fall was closing off our minds from our hearts, and ignoring that "still small voice" in our souls that knows the truth instinctively. Where we stand today, we've had our minds trained and conditioned by centuries of lies. We are far, far from the shady borders of Eden. We have labored and all we have is thistles and thorns, nothing really useful for our human existence. We cannot enjoy the shade of Eden until we move back in that direction. The question is: How good is your shelter from God's wrath on sin? Moral nakedness is full exposure to wrath. Eden's garden canopy is a complete shelter,

but the Law Covenants were meant to provide partial covering, to get us on the right path (skins instead of fig leaves). The path of revelation brings us closer to Eden. A partial truth will work better than none at all. The whole point of the Law Covenants is then to get us moving in the right direction, back toward Eden.

The Law of Moses offered blessings for those who would not walk the whole way. The blessings of *shalom* are there in part for those whose consciousness never fully awakens to the moral sphere. An element in that partial blessing is living with folks who have been fully awakened. That's part of the proximity principle that makes evangelism and missions so powerful.

Thus, as far as the fallen world is concerned, *shalom* carries a massive element of pragmatism. It is in this sense that "all truth is God's truth." Figuring out how this reality actually works is a part of *shalom* and some elements are within reach of minds that are simply closer to divine revelation. This is why we can characterize *shalom* as "social stability." In broad terms, whatever social stability God offers under Biblical Law is the best anyone can hope for without Christ.

We further break *shalom* down into comfortable prosperity, better health and disease resistance, safety from human and natural threats, and a stable social order based on how humans are actually designed. Biblical Law is more practical than anything humans can cook up without revelation, though the two will surely overlap some. For example, the Red Pill men's movement does reflect to some degree the biblical truth of human nature after the Fall. The Red Pill will not give you the full wisdom of distinguishing between divine design and what we have because of the Curse of the Fall, but it will explain what we are facing right now in terms of human nature. There are a whole range of things where we can find revelation overlapping with things humans can discern, if they begin moving back toward Eden.

Dare I say that *shalom* also blesses things like tech support and sanity with using computers? Or that *shalom* includes good automotive maintenance? This is along with communion and peace with the natural world, and good stewardship of natural resources.

A critical element in Biblical Law is how to make the most of the situation after the Fall. The best way to deal with that is to begin the process of weakening the fleshly nature and strengthening the divine nature we all have. Jesus on the Cross paid for a shortcut to the breakpoint of self-death, but that in turn is a call to then spend the rest of our human lives restoring the reign of revelation through our hearts. Church is the place where we gather and study how to implement *shalom*. There is no other accomplishment that matters; church is not about growing in membership, wealth or social/political influence. Those are nice things, but not the goal. It's all about *shalom* as the divine heritage we reclaim.

Let's not get lost in artificial absolutism. There is no perfect paradise on this earth. The realization of *shalom* is meant to be fuzzy, not sharply defined. It involves multiple people with their own individual callings and missions. It cannot conform to any human notions of precision. People inclined away from revelation should be able to ignore the difference it makes to serve the Lord. There has to be a measure of deniability because *shalom* requires volition. God will not violate the freedom of conscience in terms of

living in this fallen world. Thus, our *shalom* is a matter of good or better, but perfection is not even on the map.

Our God is not a brittle and sharp objective standard; He is a real Person with a dynamic and flowing relationship we would expect from any person.

Divine Sovereignty

The doctrine of Divine Sovereignty includes several related theological controversies, most notably predestination and spiritual birth. The problem is that most of what is out there rests on some false assumptions about God and His revelation. Once more: The God of the Bible is a covenant deity. If you are outside of the covenants, you cannot hope to understand nor benefit from understanding. The fundamental issue is human submission to the Creator, and submission means an eastern feudal covenant. Every question rests on whether you have first knelt before Him in covenant loyalty.

For everyone else, God characterizes His authority over humanity as herding cattle. The symbolism is consistent in Hebrew literature. For example, King David uses this image several times in the Psalms (68:30 for one), in contrast to the image of herding the sheep of His pasture. Ask anyone with experience dealing with these animals; it's two totally different worlds. Thus, we know that cattle can be individually relational with their herders, but once in the herd, everything changes. They are then moved around by pushing, and often act confused. Sheep are led by the voice of the shepherd, and each one responds rather individually, so long as there is no perceived threat.

His sheep are under His covenant; the cattle are not.

This whole question, then, operates on two levels. In terms of the Spirit Realm, everything is incomprehensible to the intellect. The Lord has created a culture of ANE mysticism that permits the heart to understand and lead, but the mind is supposed to serve and obey the heart. Parables are the language by which the mind is conditioned to obey the heart. I can explain some of the symbolism, but if your heart is not in the lead, your brain will struggle with the symbols. The critical element is submission; the heart of submission to God can understand God. The mind without the leadership of the heart is inherently rebellious and asks all kinds of impertinent questions, makes demands that God won't even answer.

The teaching in the Bible that God is sovereign registers poorly with human reason, but is reassuring and joyous to the heart. The heart recognizes what this points to, while the intellect refuses to go there. Thus, the idea that those who will enter God's household as adopted family members are Elect, chosen by God despite our rotten unworthiness. To the intellect, this is "unfair" because it obviously means some are not chosen. But it is utterly impossible to explain the basis for God's election of some, so the Bible makes no effort to declare it. This is also unfair to the intellect. Human reason misses the point; logic cannot get it.

But the Bible also says that in the Fallen Realm, humans do have choices. There is an element of volition that justifies separating out sheep from cattle. Anyone can be a sheep under His covenants. Most of humanity sees no reason for it, and so end up herded like cattle. Why was the Pharaoh of Exodus herded like a bull? Because he refused to be a sheep. He thus left God no choice but to train him like a rodeo bull that would buck and

twist and refuse to be led quietly to his own benefit. But did Pharaoh end up in Hell? Only God knows; don't ask.

Part of this picture is that anyone who seeks human political authority is already morally degraded. His sheep know better than to seek such power. God's people will accept authority from the hands of God and serve His will. Everyone else will seize power by any means they see useful, and they are fundamentally unfit to rule. So God's prodding and herding of political rulers tends to be fairly harsh and painful, more so than His prodding of less ambitious cattle.

Often in the New Testament, the term "salvation" does not refer directly to being Spirit born. Spiritual birth is implied as the natural culmination of the self-death. Scripture flatly states that God alone understands spiritual birth, and controls that process entirely. No one can choose spiritual birth; their fleshly nature excludes it (see Romans 8 and "carnal mind"). However, it is possible to be a good servant of God without being family. It's a false dichotomy to assume all His sheep are born-again. The Bible says quite clearly that one can reasonably choose the noble path of obedience to the Law Covenants, that one can be heart-led without spiritual birth. The Scripture frequently demands that people submit to God as Lord from the heart, that this is a human choice God holds open for all humanity.

Lots of people camp in the shade of Eden without ever getting through the Flaming Sword gate. This is what the Old Testament (AKA, Covenant of Moses) was all about. It was to bring everyone close enough to see the Flaming Sword, the final requirement of self-death to become a member of God's family. The fleshly nature had to taste execution by the hand of the one who had the fleshly nature. For those whom God has elected for eternity, the process is relatively easy. They already have the power to choose self-death. Those who lack election won't find that power. But an awful lot of *shalom* is available to folks who just can't go through that. And this is why the New Testament refers to the kind of "salvation" that means heart-led obedience to Christ as Lord, the Living Law of God, but does not make it necessarily equivalent to spiritual birth.

This is where mainstream evangelicals fail: They do not make adequate allowance for the household of God to include willing servants who aren't slaves. It's easy to understand how most of the world is going to Hell and are thus unwitting slaves of God's plans. And it's not too hard to grasp how His Children are not slaves. But virtually no one among evangelical leaders understands the place of free servants in the household of God. And because they leave that out of the picture, they tend to develop a lot of theology that ignores this middle category, and misunderstand the way the Bible talks about them. Their theology is built on a false dichotomy.

This is why we have these highly manipulative "invitations" after the sermon in evangelical churches. Meanwhile, liturgical churches tend to dismiss the whole idea of spiritual birth in the first place, and no one is thought of as anything more than a servant of God, but on different terms from what the Bible portrays.

As a doctrine, the Sovereignty of God, along with Predestination, is falsely understood by most of those who profess Christian religion. Divine Election is quite real, but is not the end of every question. All the various attempts to nail it down with logic and reason are based on rejecting the heart-led understanding that the Bible takes for granted. The

Bibles teaches us to work with everyone as if they were either slaves (cattle) or servants of God (sheep), and never mind the question of whether they are Elect or born-again. We can have limited discussions about the significance of spiritual birth and some of the implications, but it has nothing at all to do with human choice except as a consequence of spiritual birth. We want people closer to Eden's Gate on whatever terms God allows; He is the Master on who gets through that gate after death.

Our church activities should assume conversion is separate from spiritual birth. And we should be very careful to make conversion not a sales pitch, but a genuine choice for someone drawn to it on their own volition. The church is a converted body of people who cling to a shared covenant. Don't assume everyone is born-again and so build policies and activities on that. We need a radical redefinition of church that aims at the heart-led way of serving Christ.

I can know that I am born-again. That is the power of conviction in my heart. You cannot know for sure that I am born-again, even if I tell you. What you can know is that I am heart-led and committed to Christ, if you use your heart as a sensory organ to discern my heart. That's the basis for doing church. That's the proper basis for building a theology about the sovereignty of God.

Eschatology

This is a big can of worms. There is such a load of manure out there and it needs to be buried and composted where it will do some good. I'm not going to bother listing all the crazy theories, nor addressing them directly.

Jesus Christ will return someday in the future, quite literally. He warned us that it would be impossible to know, or even guess intelligently, based on any current events leading up to that moment. He pointedly said that the Father keeps it a secret from all other beings, including Jesus Himself. But we do have some idea what will take place when He does return.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 – Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 – For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

2 Peter 3:10 – But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

Paul and Peter were addressing contextual questions from those whom they wrote. We also have the passage in Matthew 24-25 that most Western Christians get all muddled up. And they refuse to understand that the Book of Revelation says darned little about the End Times and a lot about how God operates, particularly in terms of His wrath on

sin. There have been, and will be, times of great tribulation, but there will be no Great Tribulation as taught in the Dispensationalist mythology. There will be no preceding clues to His Return.

What will happen when He does return is a grand homecoming in the sky. All of the Elect will rise to meet Him in the air, with the dead rising first from their graves. While we are up there, He will restore Eden. That is, everything mankind has done to Creation since the Fall will be destroyed and forgotten. There is no human accomplishment that matters to God. Only the changes in our souls are eternal. Somewhere during this process, everyone who is not Elect will go to face eternal judgment. Their presence on the earth will be forgotten, too.

Once things have been restored, we will all descend and go about whatever it was God designed us for in the first place. Since all of this is incomprehensible to us, that's the end of the story – Eternally Happy Ever After.

Further embellishments are obscene.

Odds and Ends

The only means of grace is the Holy Spirit, and He doesn't inhabit objects nor offices, only souls. However, the mercy of God is recognized in symbols, so we do have some prescribed rituals.

One such ritual is translated into English as "baptism." It was a bathing ritual in the Old Testament, something someone might do any number of times during their adult life. Suddenly it reappears in the New Testament as part of the formal declaration of conversion, and all we have is the example of John the Baptist to set things up. The physical details of the ritual varied with the context. Sometimes a sprinkling was considered appropriate; at other times it was obvious that the whole body had to be immersed. Sometimes it was a private washing naked and sometimes it was in public with someone presiding over the process.

Most of the baggage attached to this ritual since the end of the First Century is nonsense. Baptism is a penitent ritual in the New Testament, celebrating a new lease on life. It's not a one-time thing like circumcision, but you do naturally have a first time in recognition of that first moment you recognize the stirring of the Lord in your heart. It's up to Him when you might need to engage in this ritual again later; He will tell you. The method you use will depend on what your heart demands of you. For the most part, new converts should probably be immersed in a public ritual, but it depends on available facilities. There is no one right way to do it.

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus during His final Passover meal on the earth. It is pretty well covered in Paul's letters, but most people read too much into what he wrote. I'll go so far as to suggest that it can be any grain (in any form) and any fruit juice, and fermentation is not a significant factor. It should reflect the common food items grown in your area. Context is everything and we are not Israelis in Palestine. There is no prescribed schedule, but it's pretty cool to do it near Jewish Passover at least.

The Lord's Day is your choice. There is reasonable support for either the Sabbath or Sunday. Pick one and be consistent, but if you think it's worth fighting over, you don't

get what Radix Fidem is all about. My personal habit is Sunday worship with others, and I have peace with God about that. However, I tend to worship every day, all day long in my heart. Paul flatly said that honoring one day over another is a matter of conviction, not a universal command from God.

Marriage is a private covenant. The state has no business getting involved, so there's nothing sacred about a marriage license. Obey the relevant laws, take advantage of the loopholes, etc. What matters is that you covenant together as husband and wife in the presence of the Lord and with the support of your covenant family of faith. You two are on the same team. Yes, it is man and woman, and it is feudal and patriarchal, but not with all of the pool of meaning Westerners attach to those terms. I wrote two books about this, so there's no need to chase all the details here.

Church offices are easy to figure out if you don't read all your cultural and historical biases back into the New Testament. What the Bible calls "pastor" refers to a priestly figure that handles the rituals and is male only. There are also elders, those who actually lead and govern the body, and they tend to be male for the obvious reason that they become elders when people choose to follow them. An apostle is someone like a founding missionary, or someone who manages multiple churches in some sense, and tends to engage in the leadership work of both pastor and elder. Deacons are not elders; deacons are servants of the church, rather like attendants, both male and female. The term "teacher" refers to someone more professorial, a genuine scholar, a living treasury of biblical lore who leads the church's education efforts, and they are elders in effect.

Other offices are more contextual. The church is supposed to be a feudal covenant clan, all adopting each other as family. It's a tall order for Westerners, so until we get a body of experience to draw on, it's hard to say much more about the signal roles in a church body.