

07 – Living in Light of the Covenants: Borders and Boundaries

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Scripture 1: (Gen. 2:4-15 ESV)

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up-- for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground-- then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

Scripture 2: (Acts 17:16-34 ESV)

Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.

Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babblers wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities"-- because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean." Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. *And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.* Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for "'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, "'For we are indeed his offspring.' Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this." So Paul went out from their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

Scripture 3: (Matt. 7:13-14 ESV)

Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Scripture 4: (1 Pet. 2:11 ESV)

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

Scripture 5: (Num. 15:15-16 ESV)

For the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a statute forever throughout your generations. You and the sojourner shall be alike before the LORD. One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you.

Scripture 6: (Exod. 23:9 ESV)

You shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

Scripture 7: (Ps. 119:19 ESV)

I am a sojourner on the earth; hide not your commandments from me!

Scripture 8: (Exod. 12:43-49 ESV)

And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it, but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him. No foreigner or hired worker may eat of it. It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it.

If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you."

Scripture 9: (Phil. 3:20-21 ESV)

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Scripture 10: (Jos. 8:33 ESV)

And all Israel, sojourner as well as native born, with their elders and officers and their judges, stood on opposite sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, half of them in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded at the first, to bless the people of Israel.

Sermon:

The second contemporary issue related to civic matters that we will consider and apply using the lens of Covenant Theology concerns the establishment of borders and international boundaries. The three questions guiding our application are:

- What is the origin and purpose of borders and boundaries?
- How should Christians interact and engage with people in the world because of our borders and boundaries?
- How should Christians respond to the idea of borders and boundaries, spiritually?

The subject of borders has become controversial and divisive in our present cultural moment, but that has not been the case throughout history. Established borders and boundaries have been an ordinary and necessary feature of human society since the very beginning. Although we rarely consider the question, the establishment of borders and boundaries is grounded in God's work of creation.

- On the first day of creation, “*God separated the light from the darkness.*” (Gen. 1:4 ESV). God established a border by separating light from dark.
- On the second day of creation, “*God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."*” (Gen. 1:6 ESV). God established heaven (Genesis 1:8) as a border separating the waters above from the waters below.
- On the third day of creation, “*God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear."*” (Gen. 1:9 ESV). God established boundaries between the dry land and all the oceans, seas, rivers, and lakes.

While borders like these are naturally fixed and only penetrable as the LORD's providence allows, we should not assume that the mere fact of them is enough to justify boundaries between nations or people by interpretation alone. Yet there is something often overlooked within the creation narrative of Genesis 2, in the midst of man's creation. There are many details within this passage that get missed or are ignored in the re-telling and our general familiarity with the story; details which may impact our interpretations significantly.

Trivia Time: What is the name of the garden that the LORD placed Adam in?

If you answered Eden, then please re-read Genesis 2:8-10 because that is not precisely correct: “*And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden*” (Gen. 2:8 ESV) and “*A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden*” (Gen. 2:10 ESV); it was the “*garden of Eden*” (Genesis 3:23). The garden was not itself called Eden but, was a location within the land of Eden. Furthermore, noting that the river “*flowed out of Eden*” implies that Eden was a limited territory with a definite, external boundary. Neither Eden nor its garden encompassed the whole of creation

Next, whether within or somewhere downstream from the garden, the river became divided into four distinct rivers: the Pishon, the Gihon, the Tigris, and the Euphrates.

- The Pishon “*flowed around the whole land of Havilah*”, where it was a border that defined the territory.
- The Gihon “*flowed around the whole land of Cush*”, where it also defined the territory's border.
- The Tigris flowed “*east of Assyria*”, where it was the territory's border on one side.
- Lastly, the Euphrates was not mentioned as being used to define the borders of any nation or territory.

Already, within the first two chapters of Genesis, we find four named territories or nations with established borders. Two of these nations are confidently identified by scholars: Assyria, Israel's future oppressor, and Cush, a nation which encompassed modern Ethiopia and Sudan. Although there are no modern rivers identified as the Pishon or Gihon, we are confident, because of linguistic continuity between the ancient semetic languages and Hebrew, that the biblical text does refer to the modern rivers named the Tigris and Euphrates, despite the fact that their courses have changed over the centuries. This interpretation is further supported by secular, historical scholarship which calls the region around these two rivers the “fertile crescent” and associate it with the rise of human civilization¹, particularly the Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian empires.

When the Apostle Paul engaged the pagan philosophers of Athens in religious debate, he declared that the LORD, whom he identified as their “unknown god” (Acts 17:23), had “*made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.*”. Paul taught that during His work of creation, God ordained and established borders and boundaries to separate one place from another and to distinguish between peoples and nations. The LORD decreed the historical rise and fall of nations, establishing them where He would for a time and then, He removed them when their time was over.

Furthermore, after Adam had plunged humanity into sin, when the LORD drove humanity into exile, “*at the east of the garden of Eden he [God] placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.*” (Gen. 3:24 ESV). The border of Eden was already established, but in response to human sinfulness, the LORD created the first “border patrol” charged with enforcing the border's sovereignty. The angelic cherubim² defended the borders of Eden and its garden against incursion or invasion by humanity.

While the LORD originally established borders as passive boundary markers, because of our sin, they now require active, forceful defense to ensure that they are respected and not transgressed. Likewise, this defense of boundaries applies in every sphere of life: in our personal lives, between nations, and in the spiritual realm.

There is a grievous theological error often assumed by people in our modern culture: functional universalism. Culture has adopted ecumenical heresies promoting certain popular lies: that Jews, Christians, and Muslims all worship the same God³ (Second Vatican Council, Lumen Gentium 16, November 21, 1964); that “all paths lead to god” or to heaven (religious pluralism; the “COEXIST” movement); that all people are born naturally and morally good or neutral (the Pelagian heresy which was condemned at the Councils of Carthage in 418 AD and Ephesus in 431 AD); and, that a “good and loving god” would not send anyone to hell⁴. These lies promote the common disbelief in the biblical consequence of hell for the reprobate, and a denial of the sinfulness of sin. Instead of affirming biblical truth, our culture teaches that sin is “egalitarian” (asserting that all sins are equally bad). But, then it immediately contradicts itself by teaching that individuals may be compared against one another and ranked, as being better or worse, according to the quantity or severity of their publicly known sins: “At least I'm not as bad as 'so and so'.”. These heresies, these “comfortable lies”, deny the biblical witness that teaches about God's justice and grace, His love and mercy.

The spiritual reality taught in Scripture, is that there are two kingdoms: the Kingdom of God {Matthew frequently calls it the “kingdom of heaven”} and the domain of the Devil. Although Satan's power may be great, he remains subordinate to Christ and will be utterly defeated one day and cast into the eternal lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). Despite the fantasies of non-canonical and extra-biblical sources which describe Satanic attempts to invade heaven, the true reality is that, when the Son of God became incarnate, Heaven invaded

¹<https://www.britannica.com/place/Fertile-Crescent>

²Hebrew *cherubim* is a plural term, the singular form is *cherub*. Therefore, a singular angel was not tasked with the defense of Eden's border, but an unknown number of angels.

³<https://www.usccb.org/committees/ecumenical-interreligious-affairs/vatican-council-and-papal-statements-islam>

⁴<https://billygraham.org/answers/my-friend-believes-a-loving-god-wouldnt-send-anyone-to-hell-is-he-right>

Satan's realm to reclaim the territory that Adam had surrendered (Matthew 12:29; Luke 10:9-11; Revelation 19:11).

This may sound shocking but, even if it sounds intolerant, it is the truth. The plain testimony of Scripture teaches us that:

- Hell has “open borders”. It is inclusive and tolerant of everything that is in rebellion against the authority of Christ.
- Heaven has a closed border; an impenetrable wall. It has the most strict and exclusive immigration policy, by invitation only. Yet that invitation is also the most inclusive because it is extended to all of the nations (every tribe and tongue) through the proclamation of the Gospel.

Jesus declared, *“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”* (Matthew 7:13-14). Jesus describes the “gate” to the devil's domain as being very “wide” and offering an “easy” path to self-destruction. Many people will enter hell through this gate because it is easy to find, broadly inclusive and wide open. Alternatively, Jesus describes the “gate” into heaven as “narrow” and promising a “hard” and challenging path to reach life in the Kingdom of God. Few people will find this gate and, fewer still will enter through it because of its strict and exclusive requirement for entrance: faith in Christ Jesus, alone.

Even though this statement can be interpreted as a spiritual allegory, the presence of a gate still implies the presence of a wall or other barrier to prevent the illicit crossing of a border. Furthermore, elsewhere within Matthew's Gospel, Jesus emphasized the difficulty to cross this border saying, *“Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”*, prompting His disciples to ask, *“Who then can be saved?”*. Jesus answered, *“With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”* (Matt. 19:22-26 ESV).

How does someone enter through this “narrow gate”? How does God make our entrance possible?

By placing your faith in Jesus Christ alone. If you desire to cross the threshold in heaven, then trust Jesus Christ and obey His commandments. We must do as Peter proclaimed on Pentecost, *“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”* (Acts 2:38-39 ESV).

So, if even Heaven has a “border wall”, keeping the holy separate from the profane, and a regulated method controlling entry then, we should not be surprised to find a similarity in the world because we often pray, *“...on earth as it is in heaven.”* (Matthew 6:10).

Few people would argue that the establishment and preservation of boundaries is not a good thing. Everyone establishes boundaries in their lives. We establish healthy boundaries with our employers to prevent their abuse of our personal lives. We establish healthy boundaries with our family members to preserve our relationships. Our home's walls create a border separating our family from the external world: both from people who do not belong to our family and from natural elements like the weather. Like our homes, nations also have borders and, since they are the divinely ordained defender of justice, our federal government is morally obligated to enforce our borders in defense of the eighth commandment (WLC 140-142) and the whole second table of the Law.

But borders were not originally meant to be absolute barriers preventing any possibility of crossing. They should be semi-permeable, allowing for regulated crossing. Locks help to keep strangers out of our home, but

doors may be opened to welcome our friends and family in. Spiritually, if hope for a legal means to enter heaven's borders were impossible, if heavenly immigration was utterly prohibited, then the LORD would not have set the cherubim to defend the border of Eden's garden but instead, He would have removed it entirely; denying humanity hope of regaining access. Therefore, we believe that facilitating lawful immigration in the world is a morally good thing because, by God's grace, Christians have a confident hope of crossing that spiritual border and emmigrating into the heavenly paradise, first promised in Eden.

Thus the answer to our question about the origin and purpose of borders and boundaries is that they are established by the LORD as a providential means to lawfully divide and distinguish between all of the nations and people who would arise in history.

Since every kind of border or boundary has been ordained and decreed by the LORD before humanity's fall into sin, the preservation and defense of all our many boundaries is a moral obligation governed by the covenant of works. Under the original covenant of works, we are morally obligated to defend all of our boundaries and respect and keep inviolate the established boundaries of people around us. Therefore, every "governing authority" has the moral duty to protect and defend our respective borders in fulfillment of their obligation to enforce justice within their sphere of influence.

Unfortunately, vigilance to defend of our many boundaries is necessary because of our human sinfulness. There are countless wicked and immoral people who want to transgress them to steal (whether property or territory) and destroy (property, people, or the social peace). We must defend our social boundaries to prevent things like gossip (as the theft and inappropriate, public spread of personal information) or interference (as the exercise of unlawful authority or power upon those who are not someone's responsibility). We must defend our work-place boundaries to avoid the appearance of favoritism or to preserve a healthy work-life/home-life balance. We must remember that boundaries between nations are divinely ordained for our good benefit and that the government has the moral obligation to defend them to protect all whom they are responsible for and to. Therefore, we may affirm that establishing and maintaining healthy boundaries in life is a spiritual good.

But, while the mere fact or presence of borders and boundaries does not suggest that there is a natural or essential (as human essence or nature) division within the human race, it does foreshadow that, from the beginning there is an ordained good expected as a consequence of interactions between the multiplicity of nations and peoples that would become expressed in ethnic diversity. Borders also function, by their work of division, to preserve the beauty of diversity in God's creation and facilitate all of the good which has been derived from humanity's lack of absolute homogeny. But that is subject for discussion later.

Our second question for applying our faith in relation to this issue asks us, how should Christians interact and engage with the world because of the presence of our borders and boundaries?

After we understand the divine purpose for borders and boundaries, then we are able to discern three categories of people within any discrete territory: citizens, resident aliens, and invaders.

- Citizens belong inside the territory. They may be naturally native to the territory or, they may be immigrants who have become naturalized.
- Resident aliens do not naturally belong within the territory yet they possess a lawful right to be present. They may have been admitted to work or to attend school but, their stay is regulated by terms and conditions that have been imposed by the government. Their expected length of stay is limited and they are required to submit to the authority of the local government for the duration.
- Invaders are anyone who does not have a lawful right to be present within or gain admittance to the territory. Their unlawful presence is a natural act of defiance against the government's authority and also

a moral transgression against the divinely established border. Furthermore, invaders never transgress a border with good and positive intentions towards citizens or resident aliens, only selfish intent.

While these terms are used broadly in regards to international borders, the same concepts may also be fairly applied on a smaller scale, to similar sets of borders like those around a person's home.

- The homeowner and their family are citizens, while an immigrant eligible to become a naturalized citizen, might be a girlfriend who becomes a fiancée and then a wife.
- Friends and visiting guests are resident aliens. They are invited in and they are welcome to stay for a limited duration, subject to the rules of the house. Another example of a resident alien might be a mother-in-law who comes to stay and be taken care of.
- Burglers or robbers are invaders. They have no lawful right to be on the property. They have clearly bad intentions towards the property owner and their property.

These three categories are universal principles which apply at every scale in creation, even within the borders of a human body.

- All types of blood cells, like red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets, are citizens.
- Beneficial, pro-biotic bacteria within the gastro-intestinal (G.I.) tract are resident aliens.
- Viruses or other harmful bacteria are invaders.

These categories and labels are as abstract ideas and principles. When they are being used to describe people, we must remember that those people are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27-28) and that they are also our neighbors (Luke 10:25-37). Therefore, we must be careful to not devalue their humanity.

Meanwhile, these categories are drawn from Scripture and Scripture defines the relationships between them. When the LORD gave Moses the instructions for the first Passover in Exodus 12. *“And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ‘This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it, but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him. No foreigner or hired worker may eat of it. It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you.”* (Exod. 12:43-49 ESV).

The Israelites were citizens in the Old Testament. Sojourners: friendly or subservient Gentiles living and working within Israel's territory; were resident aliens. Foreigners: hostile Gentiles living beyond Israel's borders working to destroy, enslave, or oppress the Israelites; were invaders. Similarly, we would understand the Jews as citizens in the New Testament, “god-fearers” such as Cornelius (Acts 10:22) were resident aliens, while the Romans were clearly invaders.

However, while the categories of citizen or invader are simple and straight-forward to understand, we must be careful to rightly understand what Scripture means by “sojourner”. The Hebrew term translated as sojourner, *geer*, describes a non-native person who lives, works, and resides temporarily within a territory in submission to the local authorities. Sojourner therefore, is **not** synonymous with immigrant.

- Abraham was a sojourner in Canaan (Genesis 23:4), but he did not become a Canaanite.
- Moses was a sojourner in Midian (Exodus 2:22), but he did not become a Midianite.

- The Hebrews were sojourners in Egypt (Exodus 23:9), but they did not become Egyptians.
- The Gibeonites, as a subordinate people, were sojourners in Israel (Joshua 9; 2 Samuel 21).
- The man who killed king Saul was a sojourner in Israel (2 Samuel 1:13-16).

Sojourners retained their own unique identity while living and working in a territory not their own. They maintained their own customs and religion, refusing to become integrated into the dominant culture. But, they were in submission to the local authorities, following all of the local laws and customs, so long as they were not contrary to their own. Sojourners may have been united with the whole, but they still remained distinct. The same system of law governed both the native and the sojourner. They may have been within, but they were also outside and kept apart. Ultimately, obedience to the local law is what distinguished a sojourner from an invader.

But sojourners could become as the native. Sojourners and resident aliens could become citizens through a defined immigration process, if they desired. They only had to surrender their old identity and be transformed, conformed, and assimilated into the majority and dominant culture. Thus, a sojourner could become an immigrant, temporarily. An immigrant was a sojourner who did whatever was required to become a citizen. Just as lawful obedience distinguished the sojourner from the invader, the intent to become a citizen distinguished an immigrant from being just a mere sojourner.

God explained to Moses that only His covenant people could eat the Passover; only citizens of the Kingdom of God. Celebrating and eating the Passover required the sign of membership in the old covenant of grace, circumcision. While only citizens could eat the meal, sojourners still enjoyed some secondary civil benefits from their obedient submission to God's authority. But, if a sojourner wanted to enjoy the whole benefit of God's covenant, then they must become circumcised and join Israel as a citizen. *"Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land."* Once a person joined Israel, their old identity and allegiance was stripped away. They were no longer who or what they once were (1 Corinthians 6:9). Instead, now they were like a native born Israelite. There were no Philistine-Israelites, nor were there any Moabite-Hebrews. They were merely Israelites. After a sojourner was "naturalized", they were no longer an immigrant or resident alien, but a citizen who possessed all of the same benefits, rights, and responsibilities as the native-born.

Thinking through these three biblical categories and their definitions is helpful (and needful) before we try to use them for interpreting our present cultural moment. After thinking through them biblically, we realize that they require us to re-examine all of the terms commonly used within the nationalistic immigration conversation.

- First, citizens are everyone who is native-born or who became naturalized through the lawful immigration process.
- Second, sojourners, or resident aliens, are citizens of foreign nations that are granted lawful entry by the federal government and have approval to live, work, or attend school. Many resident aliens are also immigrants because they are engaged in the immigration process, patiently waiting for citizenship.
- Third, the term "illegal immigrant" is inappropriate and a logical misnomer because immigration assumes a person's submission to the local authorities and their active participation in the lawful process. A person cannot immigrate illegally because they could not gain citizenship. Violation of relevant laws and the circumvention of due process is a clear rejection of the lawful requirement for conformity and assimilation by an immigrant.
- Fourth, while the term "illegal alien" may be appropriate and technically correct, it is frequently misused and may be considered offensive because of how it dehumanizes. However, it does describe a foreign citizen present within our territory without the government's permission or approval. They are persons unlawfully or illegally present within our borders. They are invaders, by definition, because they have

not respected our national border, nor are they respecting or submitting to the government's authority to defend our border. Their disobedience is an act of rebellion against a lawful authority that God has ordained and established.

We are obligated, as faithful Christians, to “*be subject to the governing authorities.*” (Rom. 13:1 ESV). Although it is not necessarily our duty, as individuals, to defend the border, we are morally obligated as citizens to support the lawful authorities who have that responsibility. Therefore, we may not lawfully impede or obstruct the government's efforts. Nor may we encourage people to cross the border illegally, because that is rebellion against the lawful authority. We may not support or aid them against the lawful authorities because, by doing so, we would join in their sin.

However, since we are also under the “*law of Christ*” (Galatians 6:2) we also must work to fulfill the “*royal law*” of loving our neighbors (Jas. 2:8 ESV). This means that, as our neighbor, we are morally obligated to help them to survive and lawfully thrive. We are morally obligated under the covenant of works to clothe them if they are naked, or to feed them if they are hungry (Matthew 25:31-46), or even to provide them with emergency medical care (Luke 10:33), to the extent of our own personal capability just as we should for any other needful person. We should be glad to show them mercy and give them grace because of the mercy and grace we have received under Christ's covenant of grace.

But, we should also encourage and help them to do what is right and lawful. We should encourage them to repent of their lawbreaking, to confess and surrender themselves to the lawful authorities or, to willfully exit and then do whatever is required to return to our country lawfully. Ultimately, we should be encouraging them to stop being invaders and to become sojourners or citizens instead.

After considering how Christians should engage with the world and the effect of our borders, how should we respond to this idea about borders and boundaries, spiritually?

It is important that we remember this world is not our home. Although we live in the world, we do not belong to the world (John 17:11, 16). This world has been under the authority and power of Satan ever since Adam transferred his allegiance to him. Satan is a fearsome invader. Yet, despite humanity having turned traitor, Satan's grip on temporal power is weak. Satan may be the “*prince of the power of the air*” (Eph. 2:2 ESV) and spiritually rule over the fallen *kosmos* though “*the cosmic powers over this present darkness*” and “*the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*” (Eph. 6:12 ESV) but, Satan is not the LORD and his stolen authority is unlawful. Christians are not beholden to him and we do not fear him. We belong to Jesus Christ, whom we love and seek to obey in all things.

Christians are not citizens of the world. Rather, Scripture declares that God's people are sojourners in the world, both under the old covenant and the new covenant. The psalmist declared, “*I am a sojourner on the earth; hide not your commandments from me!*” (Ps. 119:19 ESV) while Peter encouraged the church, “*Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.*” (1 Pet. 2:11 ESV). We are resident aliens, not immigrants. Our time in the world is of a short duration, but our time in the Kingdom of God will be forever. The Apostle Paul reminds us that “*our citizenship is in heaven*” (Philippians 3:20), therefore, that is where our ultimate allegiance must lie. The authority of Christ is the highest authority and the text of Scripture is the best, most reliable revelation of His divine will and sovereign commandments.

Understanding this should guide and inform all of our worldly decisions and activities. This should encourage us because all of our near-term trials and tribulations, our problems and solutions, or causes and effects in the world are merely temporary and often of secondary importance or concern. As sojourners and exiles, we should do as Jeremiah exhorted the Babylonian exiles to do while we remain in the world. We should seek the positive welfare and good benefit of the world and for everyone around us (Jeremiah 29:7). We may do this through our

submission to the lawful authorities and helping their efforts in support of the common good. We may do this by being good stewards of the environment and by responsibly using the resources which the LORD has provided us. We may do this through expressions of love for our neighbors: in service and charity, by giving grace and mercy, through forgiving others, and by mediating and facilitating reconciliation between people.

We should also do as Paul urges, “*that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.*” (1 Tim. 2:1-2 ESV). Therefore, we should pray the world, for our nation, for our city or town, and for our home and family.

Just as important as doing good works of charity and prayer, we should be always working with Christ's Great Commission at the forefront of our minds. Jesus has commanded His Church to “*make disciples of all nations*” by teaching them to follow and obey Christ (Matthew 29:18-20). Therefore, as our greatest expression of love for our neighbor and in obedience to the ultimate authority, we should work towards the conversion Satan's occupying army, of people who are blinded by and enslaved to sin, into sojourners like us. We should warn them away from the wide gate to hell and redirect them towards the narrow gate of heaven instead. We should give them the hope of the Gospel, sharing the good news about the great redemption that Christ has purchased for His people. We should help them through the spiritual immigration process: to know Jesus, to love Jesus, and to trust in Jesus and all of His promises.

- Let us remember that borders and boundaries are a good thing and that the LORD has established them for our good benefit. They help to preserve order and to keep separate that which is needful to be kept apart.
- Let us be careful to establish and defend our own borders and boundaries in preservation of our own health and well-being.
- Finally, let us, in willing subjection to our governing authorities, aid and not hinder those with lawful authority and power in defending our borders, to preserve morality and the cause of justice for the glory of God alone.

AMEN

Terms:

Covenant Theology – a systematic, biblical theology framework which understands and explains redemptive history through the lens of the covenants which the LORD God has made.

Covenant of Works – the first (in time) covenant instituted by the LORD, with Adam, on behalf of all humanity. This covenant promised the reward of continuing life upon the condition of perfect obedience to God's law [Genesis 2:15-17].

Covenant of Grace – the second (in time) covenant instituted by the LORD, on behalf of the Elect, for their salvation. Although there are multiple gracious covenants described within Scripture (such as the Noahic covenant [Genesis 9], the Abrahamic covenant [Genesis 15 and 17], and the David covenant [2 Samuel 7]), their specific promises are all encapsulated and included within the broader Covenant of Grace.

The Old Covenant – also known as the Sinaiatic Covenant; refers to the Mosaic administration of the Covenant of Grace which is contained within the Law, and which lends its title to describe the Hebrew Scriptures as the Old Testament (Greek: *diatheke*; covenant).

The New Covenant – refers to the Gospel administration of the Covenant of Grace which was first prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah [Jeremiah 31:31-34] and later proclaimed by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, and which lends its title to describe the Greek Scriptures as the New Testament. Through this covenant, Jesus has redeemed the Elect from the justice which their sin deserves by suffering it on their behalf [Isaiah 52:13-53:12; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32], and Jesus has justified the Elect by the imputation of His perfectly righteous obedience to God's Law on their behalf [Galatians 2:16], and Jesus has sent God the Holy Spirit to apply this redemption and justification to the Elect [John 3:1-21], sanctifying them in holiness and adopting them as the children of God [John 1:12].

tselem - Hebrew noun meaning “image”; describes a type of physical representation.

demot – Hebrew noun meaning “likeness”; describes a kind of regular pattern, like a copy.

geer – Hebrew noun meaning “sojourner” or “alien”; describes a non-native person living, working, and residing within a territory in willing, peaceful submission to the local governing authorities.

avad – Hebrew verb meaning “to work”; possesses a variety of senses, including: to work, to cultivate or to tend, to serve, and to worship.

shamar - Hebrew verb meaning “to keep”; possesses the senses of: to keep watch, to guard, and to protect.

ezer – Hebrew noun meaning “helper”; possessing the sense of supporter and one who works to aid the other.

exousia – Greek term meaning “authority” or “power”, generally referring to an inherent or imbued power of authority (Friberg, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*); commonly used throughout the New Testament (102 times, 93 verses).

authentēo – Greek term translated as “to have authority” or to “domineer [over someone]”; imbued with negative connotations as being abusive, domineering, or false (Friberg, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*; Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian Literature* p. 120). The term is used only once in the New Testament and was otherwise rare or uncommonly used in contemporary literature.

Paradidomai - (3) as a legal technical term for passing someone along in the judicial process *hand over, turn over, deliver up* (MK 15.1); of an unjustified act of handing someone over to judicial authorities *betray* (MT 10.4); of God's judicial act of handing someone over to suffer the consequences of his wrongdoing *deliver up*,

hand over, give up (to) (RO 1.24); of the church's authoritative disciplining *deliver over, hand over to the control of* (1C 5.5); (**Friberg, Analytical Greek Lexicon**)

Porneia - (1) generally, of every kind of extramarital, unlawful, or unnatural sexual intercourse *fornication, sexual immorality, prostitution* (1C 5.1); (2) when distinguished from adultery (μοιχεία) in the same context *extramarital intercourse, sexual immorality, fornication* (MT 15.19); (3) as a synonym for μοιχεία (*marital*) *unfaithfulness, adultery* (MT 5.32); (4) metaphorically, as apostasy from God through idolatry (*spiritual*) *immorality, unfaithfulness* (RV 19.2); (**Friberg, Analytical Greek Lexicon**)