

KeyNote 2024—Sound the Alarm! Understanding the Times Through a Covenantal Worldview

by David Orton

<http://lifemessenger.org/keynote-2024-sound-the-alarm-the-necessity-of-understanding-the-times-through-a-covenantal-worldview/>

Part 1 of 4

Now these are the men who came to David at Ziklag, while he could not move about freely because of Saul the son of Kish. And they were among the mighty men who helped him in war.

Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, 200 chiefs, and all their kinsmen under their command.

All these, men of war, arrayed in battle order, came to Hebron with a whole heart to make David king over all Israel. Likewise, all the rest of Israel were of a single mind to make David king.

1 Chronicles 12:1, 32, 38

“Make two silver trumpets. Of hammered work you shall make them, and you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for breaking camp.

And when you go to war in your land against the adversary who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the Lord your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies.

Numbers 10:2, 9

Blow a trumpet in Zion;
sound an alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
for the day of the Lord is coming; it is near,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains
a great and powerful people;
their like has never been before,
nor will be again after them
through the years of all generations.

Before them peoples are in anguish;
all faces grow pale.

Blow the trumpet in Zion;
consecrate a fast;
call a solemn assembly;

Joel 2:1–2, 6, 15

As a foreshadowing of the present day, the Old Testament church's corporate life was governed by the blowing of trumpets.

For going up to Zion to celebrate the three great national feasts of the Lord, for breaking camp to follow the cloud of Yahweh's presence throughout Israel's wilderness journeyings, and for time of war, the trumpets were blown by the priests of the Lord. Isaiah was commanded to:

“Cry aloud; do not hold back;
lift up your voice like a trumpet;
declare to my people their transgression,
to the house of Jacob their sins.”

Isaiah 58:1

The voice of the prophet was, hence, a trumpet, alerting the people of God to their sins, calling them up Zion's hill to renew the covenant in the great feasts of the Lord, to move camp, or to prepare for war. In fact, the role of the prophet was always to call Israel back to covenant fidelity.

But how will the priests and prophets of the Lord today – the ascension-gift ministries of Ephesians 4:11 (the preachers and teachers of God's word) – sound the trumpet if they do not understand the Lord's covenant and his purpose?

The Covenant Formula

This demands that every minister of God's word be immersed in the covenant, in its design and purpose. Very simply, the covenant formula pronounces: “My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Ezek. 37:27). In other words, God so graciously condescends to dwell among us, that we cannot but live in deference to his sovereign lordship, entailing obedience to his ethical demands, and that in response he cannot but bless us with the covenant promises of victory and prosperity, manifestly demonstrating therefore that he is our God, and we are his people. This then provides a lens through which to view the world and, more especially, the circumstances of God's people. The covenant with its ethical demands becomes the interpreter of the situation of church and culture, whether one of prosperity or distress, of blessing or curse. Hence, God's servants cannot prophetically discern the times without understanding the workings of the covenant.

The Covenant Structure

Every biblical covenant, and interestingly the suzerain-vassal treaties of the ancient Near East, entail not only a ‘superior’ (the suzerain - the victorious king; in the Bible's case, Yahweh) but also an ‘inferior’ (the vassal – the conquered king, Israel). Additionally, the treaty or covenant structure occasions several parts, including at its core, terms that establish both what is required by the victorious king and what the consequences are for the vassal's compliance or non-compliance. These are the *stipulations* (commands) and *sanctions* (blessings and curses) of the covenant; for example, “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant [stipulations], you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation [sanctions].’ ...” (Ex. 19:5–6). Significantly, the citation of this text in 1 Peter 2:9 demonstrates the principle of covenant continuity, flowing from the Old Testament (OT) into the New (NT). The New is firmly rooted in the covenant history and structure of the Old. Both Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 outline the blessings and curses for obedience and disobedience. In fact, the covenant formula demonstrates two clear maxims: 1) that obedience leads to possession, and 2) that disobedience leads to dispossession (Ps. 37:9, 29; Prov. 2:21; 10:30). At the heart of the covenant, obedience is required by the superior of the inferior.

The Covenant as Interpretive Grid

As mentioned, this then provides the interpretive grid for all God's dealings with his people. It explains all Israel's many captivities and indeed her present diaspora. Viewing the circumstances of God's people – OT and NT – through the lens of the covenant provides prophetic wisdom, like the sons of Issachar, “who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel

ought to do.” Without this wisdom David’s throne would not have been established.

Likewise, today. The Messianic throne of David, the Kingdom of God, advances in and through the church to the culture and, hence, to the nations only by means of the covenant. The covenant is indeed the constitution of the government of God, which Jesus summarised as two-fold when asked to identify the greatest commandment: 1) love God, and 2) love man (Mt. 22:36-40). Under these two summary heads, the rest of the law fleshes out in detail God’s covenant requirements. To the measure God’s people obey these requirements in every sphere of life the government of God increases. Obedience leads to possession of the Kingdom but disobedience to dispossession. Thus the awful pronouncement made to Israel by our Lord: “Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits” (Mt. 21:43). But even though the Kingdom has now been given to the true Israel of God – the church in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek – Paul warns her to fear lest she too be cut off (Rom. 11:22). The same covenant realities apply in the new economy.

Assyria: the Rod of God’s Anger

This is exactly where the contemporary Western church now finds herself. Apart from a root and branch repentance – a mending of her ways – her lampstand has been removed (Rev. 2:5). She is no longer light or salt to the world. Hence, as the pillar and ground of truth (1 Tim 3:15), so goes the church so goes the culture. Society is where it is because of the church, either positively or negatively. Without a return to biblical orthodoxy and orthopraxy, therefore, like Israel she is consigned to be trodden under foot of men (Mt. 5:13). God uses pagan peoples to judge his people. He refers to Assyria as “the rod of my anger” (Isa. 10:5), as it is lifted against Israel. The tyranny of today’s unelected global elites is the equivalent of Assyria—God’s rod raised against the apostate West as a covenant judgment (Dt. 28:32, 41).

These tyrannical oligarchs (e.g. WEF, IMF, CFR, WHO, UN, British and European Royal families, international banking cartels, and multinational corporate conglomerates), with treasonous politicians in their back pocket, have been consigned to judgment: first, to be a rod of judgment and, second, to their own judgment.

As the world-power, Assyria boasts of its conquests as city after city fall (Isa 10:13-14), taking Samaria and finally entering Judah. Believing it is the governor of history, Assyria arrogates to itself the kudos for what God alone does: “By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I have understanding; I remove the boundaries of peoples, and plunder their treasures; like a bull I bring down those who sit on thrones.” (v.13). In its pride, though, Assyria overreaches its assignment, blasphemously equating Jerusalem’s Yahweh with the gods of the nations. It boasts, “As my hand has reached to the kingdoms of the idols, whose carved images were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria, shall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols as I have done to Samaria and her images?” (vv. 10–11). Like Assyria, the global elites are filled with arrogance over those whom God judges through them, believing that they are easy prey. But Yahweh’s wrath is soon provoked, as he pronounces over the then world-power: “Woe to Assyria, the rod of my anger...!” (v. 5). The one who was used as the rod of God’s judgment is now judged. And so, Yahweh declares rhetorically, “Shall the axe boast over him who hews with it, or the saw magnify itself against him who wields it? As if a rod should wield him who lifts it, or as if a staff should lift him who is not wood!” (v. 15). Assyria’s assumed control of history is as absurd as an axe wielding itself. Because of its pride Yahweh’s wrath is provoked: “Therefore the Lord GOD of hosts will send wasting sickness among his stout warriors, and under his glory a burning will be kindled, like the burning of fire.” (v. 16). Assyria will be initially weakened and then rapidly go up in smoke. And the incendiary used is none other than Yahweh himself: “The light of Israel will become a fire, and his Holy One a flame, and it will burn and devour his thorns and briers in one day.” (v. 17; cf. 1:4). As the Holy One of Israel, Yahweh is a consuming fire to his enemies (Dt. 9:3; Heb. 12:29). The destruction of Assyria, therefore, will be sudden and comprehensive, the conflagration quickly spreading from its thorns and briers (v. 17) to its mighty forests (v. 18)—from Assyria’s ground troops to its leaders and king. In that “one day”, the allegiance and reliance of the remnant of Israel will transfer from Assyria to Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel (v. 20). No longer will God’s people be beholden to the world-system; deceived by its lies and false promises. The messianic claims of the pagan power-state (statism, socialism) will be seen for what it is—a blasphemy and an offence. The victory of God’s people, though a remnant, is assured in history. While Samaria was taken and Judah was penetrated, Jerusalem never fell to Assyria.

But here is the rub. For the victory to be assured, Zion must first submit to a season of God’s discipline: “When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will punish the speech of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the boastful look in his eyes.” (v. 12). The covenant promise of victory in history is contingent upon covenant obedience. Only by going through the judgment and proving to be faithful in it will God’s people – church and culture – emerge victorious, for the rebuilding of a new Christian civilization.

Assyria: not to be feared

What does this mean for the present crisis? *First*, it doesn't mean mutely surrendering to every illegal dictate of the new police-state. We must urgently recover the doctrine of Christian resistance to tyrants, along with its delimitations. *Second*, it doesn't mean that we need be fearful of Assyria:

Therefore thus says the Lord God of hosts: "O my people, who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrians when they strike with the rod and lift up their staff against you as the Egyptians did. For in a very little while my fury will come to an end, and my anger will be directed to their destruction. And the Lord of hosts will wield against them a whip, as when he struck Midian at the rock of Oreb. And his staff will be over the sea, and he will lift it as he did in Egypt. And in that day his burden will depart from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck; and the yoke will be broken because of the fat."

Isaiah 10:24–27

God will perform a New Exodus from the midst of the present crisis, which history will remember as the turning point of a new epoch in the advance of the Kingdom of God. He will deliver his people and decimate the Egyptians. But only after the allotted time in captivity has been served. Because God is the controller of history we need not fear. *Third*, it does mean that the elites will continue to build their tower of Babel. And that there is no escape from God's hand and his determined season of judgment. No amount of human rebellion and contrivance will deliver us—there is no self-salvation from the present crisis through activism, whether political, journalistic, or through the truth and freedom movement. Nonetheless, this does not negate the importance of the research and development currently performed by the freedom movement and of independent investigative journalism. These are non sequiturs. Blueprints for every cultural sphere – health, science, economics, media etc. – must be developed in readiness for the rebuilding of a new Christian civilization. His hand, however, will not be lifted until we learn the lesson, and the church and culture repent of its unbelief and treachery. Therefore, we must submit under the mighty hand of God (1 Pet. 5:6). This demands exorcising the people of God from every escapist reflex: socialism, dispensationalism, pietism, and existentialism. Only when God has completed judging Zion will Assyria be judged. Until then, like a rod of judgment, the elite's attempts at 'global governance' (aka the 'New World Order') will increasingly come to bear, entailing:

- Religious precommitment to scientism (the absolutisation of science), and the inevitable corruption of the scientific method for political ends (social engineering).
- The tyranny of technocracy and AI.
- The myth of overpopulation based on the falsified Malthusian population principle that population growth outstrips productivity, and hence food supply. Rooted in this false assumption, is the fallacious notion of 'sustainable development', serving as the primary driver of the WEF and UN agendas.
- The 'masses' viewed as 'useless eaters', damaging the planet.
- Fabricated 'climate-crisis', based on Malthus' falsified population theory.
- Attempts at mass bionic transhumanism (cyborgs) using AI, facilitated by nano-particle contamination of injectables, food, air, and water, and activated by 5G.
- Medical tyranny and depopulation through fraudulent viruses and vaccines (e.g. COVID-19).
- Vaccine or 'health' passports (a de facto mandate) to control freedom of movement.
- Digital ID and digital currency as a form of social-credit.
- Big-pharma and state control of the medical profession and training.
- Food and water control from production to consumption.
- Fabricated food and energy scarcity.
- Dissolution of national identity (e.g. anti-Western agenda, open borders, multiculturalism).
- Diminution of personal property rights (e.g. eminent domain), with WEF declaring that no one will own anything by 2030 and be happy (WEF's [8 Predictions for the World in 2030](#), but now archived).
- Censorship of social-media, free speech and free flow of information and ideas (e.g. the notion of 'misinformation/disinformation' which has historically been characteristic of wartime state propaganda).
- Mainstream media owned and controlled by the elites.

- Diminution of constitutional freedoms and traditions.
- Control of the courts and legislatures.
- Policies of death (e.g. euthanasia, abortion, depopulation, sterilisation, war).
- Institutionalised occultism in the guise of respect for indigenous cultures.
- Human trafficking, paedophilia rings, and the illegal drug trade (with its origins in the British East India Company) all controlled by the elites.
- Destruction of the family through homosexual marriage and gender fluidity.
- Dismantling of the West's industrial base.
- Total control and dumbing-down of education.
- A total surveillance-state through the internet of everything.
- Neutralisation of the church through a false church/state divide, antinomianism, dispensationalism, ecumenism, liberalism, and neoorthodoxy.

All of which are designed to reduce the masses to compliance, to a slave mentality. Fear and propaganda are basic to this agenda. Government intelligence agencies are complicit in orchestrating psychological operations ('psy-ops') to condition the masses, manipulating them through fear to accept otherwise draconian laws and executive decrees. The most powerful of the elites espouse eugenics and therefore policies of widespread depopulation (e.g. Bill Gates). They inevitably implement policies of death. Because sin enslaves, those who are sinners by nature enslave. Furthermore, they pursue policies that not only enslave but also kill: "But he who sins against me injures himself; All those who hate me love death." (Proverbs 8:36). Their goal is to reduce global population to an assumed 'sustainable' level, with 'experts' ranging from 600 million to 3 billion. Even based on the least drastic figure of 3 billion this still demands the eradication of a mere 5.1 billion based on the present global population of 8.1 billion!

The Role of the State

As the wisdom-writer so aptly teaches, when the king (i.e. the state, the civil government) forsakes righteousness and justice, disorder and distress prevail:

For the upright will inhabit the land,
and those with integrity will remain in it,

In a multitude of people is the glory of a king,
but without people a prince is ruined.

Righteousness exalts a nation,
but sin is a reproach to any people.

Steadfast love and faithfulness preserve the king,
and by steadfast love his throne is upheld.

Whoever says to the wicked, "You are in the right,"
will be cursed by peoples, abhorred by nations,

When a land transgresses, it has many rulers,
but with a man of understanding and knowledge,
its stability will long continue.

If a king faithfully judges the poor,

his throne will be established forever.

take away the wicked from the presence of the king,
and his throne will be established in righteousness.

When the righteous increase, the people rejoice,
but when the wicked rule, the people groan.

By justice a king builds up the land,
but he who exacts gifts tears it down.

Proverbs 2:21; 14:28, 34; 20:28; 24:24; 28:2; 29:14; 25:5; 29:2, 4

Nevertheless, the state has been instituted by God and is *his* minister (Rom. 13:1-7). As such it is beholden, as all God's servants, to do *his* will. And this is revealed in his law-word, the Bible. As Romans 13 teaches, its role is to administer justice, but how will it know God's standard of justice apart from the word of God and the teaching ministry of the church. And this entails both OT and NT, both Law and Gospel, because "*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*" (2 Tim. 3:16–17). The state, as God's servant, is not free to invent its own laws. Rather, the word of God by its laws, statutes, and precepts not only delimits the role of the state but also stipulates the righteous standards by which it is to rule:

Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

1 Timothy 1:8–11

Notwithstanding Calvin's endorsement of the law of nations, this therefore, eliminates any notion of 'natural law' or 'positivist law'—any law of man's own creation.

The divine ordination of the state and the continued applicability of the law demands two things.

First, that Christians be rid of any antinomian or Marcion tendency that would denigrate the law of God, relegating it to an inferior status and to the OT era only. David's heart for God and love for the law were synonymous. He could testify concerning the inscripturated law of God, that:

the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure,
enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is clean,
enduring forever;
the rules of the Lord are true,
and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;

sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb.

Psalm 19:8–10

Paul likewise extolled the law:

So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

For we know that the law is spiritual

Romans 7:12, 14

And Jesus was categorical in his declaration that he had not come to abolish the law, for not one iota nor dot will pass until it is obeyed in its entirety. Moreover, he warns that whoever relaxes even the least commandment, and teaches likewise, is himself least in the Kingdom of God (Mt. 5:17-20). To deny the continuity of the OT law of God into the NT era is not a light matter.

Second, that the doctrine of the ‘Christian state’ must be recovered (see Stephen C. Perks, *A Defence of the Christian State*). The so-called ‘secular state’ is the product of the French Enlightenment and Revolution. It is revolutionist to the core, the French Revolution being the first anti-Christian revolution in history. The ‘secular state’, rooted in enmity with God, cannot but also be at enmity with man, made in the image of God. For this reason, today’s revolution is not so much the treason of the citizenry against the state but rather the treason of the state against its citizenry. The political class are, therefore, not only increasingly in betrayal of their constituencies who they have sworn to represent but also the parliamentary values they are constitutionally bound to uphold. This revolution is the most deceptive of history, serving in the name of ‘democracy’ while advancing a totalitarian agenda. Nevertheless, predating this revolution the Puritans in the 17th Century developed a strong doctrine of the state as God’s minister and thus as beholden to his law. This was developed in the face of tyrannical kings that espoused the divine right to absolute power; for example, the Puritan response under Oliver Cromwell in England’s Civil War, resisting Charles I. Scotland had previously confronted this with John Knox’s 16th Century encounters with ‘Bloody Mary’ and a century later the Covenanters with James VI of Scotland (aka James I of England). This resistance to tyrants in England and Scotland provided, in the tradition of the English *Magna Carta* and Calvin’s Institutes, not only a restatement of the doctrine of the Christian magistrate (see Westminster Confession 23.1-4) and the legitimacy of resisting tyrants (see Samuel Rutherford’s *Lex Rex*; Junius Brutus, *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos: A Defence of Liberty Against Tyrants*), but also provided the impetus for the development of Parliament’s checks-and-balances against total power.

Summary Conclusion

In summary, the present situation of the church and the culture of the West calls for a recovery of the covenant. As I have argued, God’s in-scripturated law is *covenant-law*, serving as the terms for Yahweh’s victorious reign over his vassals. The covenant-law of God therefore serves not only as the legal constitution of God’s government over men but also as the judicial law for civil government and its administration of justice. Its terms – *stipulations* (commands) and *sanctions* (penalties and promises, curses and blessings) – are God’s lens through which to view the world. A nation’s obedience to the terms of the covenant will determine whether it prospers under the blessing of God or perishes. Its rejection of the covenant is in fact a rejection of the Lord of the covenant and invites his judicial wrath, his redemptive judgment until repentance occurs. As Jesus announced “Woe” to cities in Palestine—to Jerusalem (Mt. 23), to Chorazin and Bethsaida (Mt. 11:21), he too declares the same over cities and nations in this day. They too are accountable to God, the Lord of the whole earth, and will be judged in

history and at the final Assize.

In conclusion, this is a battle for the mind. The statist agenda, promoted through education and propaganda, is aimed at controlling how one thinks. This therefore underscores the non-negotiable imperative of learning to think Christianly, of mastering a covenantal (biblical) worldview. This is what it means to have the mind of Christ (1Cor. 2:16). Above all it is a battle to the death: a cosmic battle between secular-humanism and Christianity.

In Parts 2 & 3 we will discover how a covenant (biblical) worldview provides the lens through which to discern the times. Without that lens we will misread the present crisis. We will be susceptible to the propaganda of the elites and indeed to the zeitgeist. Without a clear doctrine of sin and the Fall our estimation of the human condition and therefore the cultural-political crisis will be naively sanguine. But more importantly without a strong doctrine of Creation and Redemption the gospel will be truncated, catering only to one's eternal concerns, rather than to God's interests in history—to the coming of the Kingdom of God in the affairs of men.

Throughout 2024 we will release various resources to equip Christians in a covenantal (biblical) worldview.

It is more than time to sound the alarm in Zion, to be fully informed and prepared for war!

Postscript:

You may be asking, *Are you a conspiracy theorist?!*

My response:

A biblical view of history is inescapably conspiratorial. Psalm 2 shows that the nations and their kings conspire against the Lord and his anointed. Biblical Christians, of all people, should be the ones wise to “spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12). Although, the West's present situation is best described as an ‘open conspiracy’. Most of the information about the elite's revolutionary agenda can be found on their own websites and documents (e.g. WEF, UN, WHO). Our present cultural crisis has been three centuries in the making. Since the 18th Century Enlightenment the West has apostatized. It has turned its back on God and pursued a revolutionary agenda that, in its maturity, is brazen in its public declarations. Nonetheless, as Psalm 2 shows the Lord has the last laugh! He conspires against the conspirators! And *his* people ultimately prevail in history.

Read: [Part 2 | KeyNote 2024—Sound the Alarm! Understanding the Times Through a Covenantal Worldview](#)

Read: [Part 3 | KeyNote 2024—Sound the Alarm! Understanding the Times Through a Covenantal Worldview](#)

Read: [Part 4 | KeyNote 2024—Sound the Alarm! Understanding the Times Through a Covenantal Worldview](#)

Copyright © 2024 Lifemessenger Inc.

www.lifemessenger.org

Facilitating biblical teaching & thinking for church & culture

REPRINT AGREEMENT: Duplication and re-transmission of this writing is permitted provided that complete source and website information is included