

1

Hierarchical Polity: A Critique

- “The power which Christ has committed to His Church vests in the whole body, the rulers and those ruled, constituting it a spiritual commonwealth. This power, as **exercised by the people, extends to the choice of those officers whom He has appointed in His Church.**” PCA BCO 3-1
- “The **exercise of ecclesiastical power**, whether joint or several, has the divine sanction when in conformity with the statutes enacted by Christ, the Lawgiver, and **when put forth by courts or by officers appointed thereunto in His Word.**” PCA BCO 3-6
- “The officers of the Church, **by whom all its powers are administered, are, according to the Scriptures, teaching and ruling elders and deacons.**” PCA BCO 1-4

2

Hierarchical Polity: A Critique

- Matt. 16 | The Giving of the Keys to the Church
 - In this context, Peter is the Rock because he confessed Jesus— Peter and his confession cannot be separated. The church will be built on persons (“who”) confessing the right truths (“what”)— confessors.
- Matt. 18 | The Keys in Use by the Church – Keeping the Camp Holy
 - The church as the final appeal in judgment (15-17)
 - The church exercising the keys (18)
 - The gathered church as the basic unit for exercising the Keys (19-20)

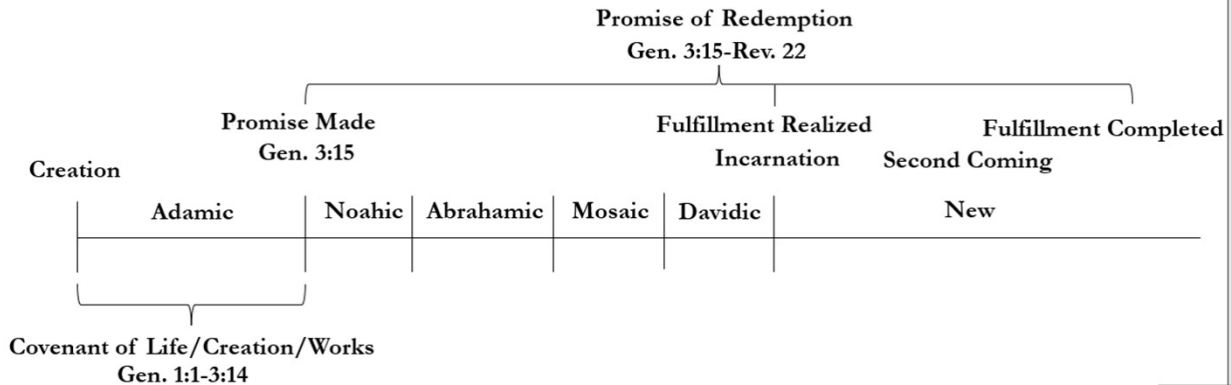
3

Hierarchical Polity: A Critique

- Gal. 1 | The Keys Required to Be Used by the Church – Discerning False Teaching
- 1 Cor. 5 | The Keys in Use by the Church – Keeping the Camp Holy
- 2 Cor. 2 | The Keys in Use by the Church – The Authoritative Majority
- Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5 | The Keys without Elders
- NT Occasional Letters – Most Often Addressed to the Church
- Ekklesia in the first century
 - The Greek word “ekklesia” both in Jewish and first century Greek contexts understood an ekklesia to refer to a gathered body, with the Greek concept including the ability to shape decision-making through voting rights as citizens as opposed to merely enacting the rulings of a sovereign as subjects.

4

Presbyterian CT: A Critique



5

Presbyterian CT: A Critique

- Infant Baptism—an argument from covenantal continuity
 - Abrahamic genealogical principle (Gen. 17:1-14)
 - Abraham’s “seed”: 1) All of Abraham’s offspring (including Ishmael and the sons of Keturah—Gen. 25) 2) Abraham’s special, physical offspring in the line of promise (Isaac, Jacob, the Twelve tribes) 3) those who are “in Christ” (Gal. 3:29) and 4) Christ himself (Gal. 3:16).
 - “for you and for your children” – Acts 2:38-39

6

Presbyterian CT: A Critique

- Infant Baptism—a (secondary) argument from household baptisms (Acts 10:46-48; 16:15; 16:33; 1 Cor. 1:16)
- Baptism/Circumcision—baptism replaces circumcision as the external sign of the covenant and functions identically to it.
- Consider the following parody argument:
 - Premise 1: My Rand McNally map book signifies the roads around me for the purpose of navigation.
 - Premise 2: My GPS signifies the roads around me for the purpose of the navigation.
 - Conclusion: Because map books and GPSs both signify the roads around me for the purpose of navigation, map books and GPSs are identical in what they signify and how they function.

7

Presbyterian CT: A Critique

Baptists affirm the necessity of household baptism—particularly of infants—on the basis of the head of the household and that God's primary operative unit is still the family.

That's because they believe that those who enter into the household of God (Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:13) by being born from above (Jn. 3:3-4) are entitled to receive the covenant sign (Matt. 28:19-20) without delay as infants in Christ (1 Cor. 3:1) and children adopted into the family (Rom. 8:15-17) following the example and command of Christ (Matt. 3:13-17), the head of the household (Eph. 5:23).

8