

2026-04-24 A Review of Covenantless by Jonathan Welton

Summary of *Covenantless: The Radiant Bride & The Defeat of Darkness*

Welton's central argument is that the New Covenant is not between God and Israel, nor between God and the Church — it exists *within the Godhead itself*, between the Father and the Son. Believers participate in it only through union with Christ as His Bride. This is the "covenantless" thesis: we are not party to a covenant in the traditional bilateral sense; we are participants in one through identity and union.

From that foundation he builds several major claims:

- The Old Testament is not "the old covenant" and the New Testament is not "the new covenant." The Mosaic covenant has been fully fulfilled and permanently removed. The promises to Abraham and David were completed in Christ. There is only one covenant standing today, and it lives within the Trinity.
- Drawing from Scripture, historical context, and Ancient Near Eastern covenant structures, the book dismantles common assumptions about Israel, the Law, eschatology, and the Church's mission, replacing them with a cohesive, Christ-centered framework.
- The book challenges dispensationalism, Christian Zionism, and Replacement Theology — refusing to filter Scripture through political or traditional frameworks, instead tracing the Bible as a unified covenant story culminating at the Cross.
- Welton's companion volume on Revelation argues the book was written before AD 70, addressed to first-century believers, and concerned with the imminent destruction of the old covenant system — not the end of the world.

Covenantless is essentially the capstone of Welton's Better Covenant Theology (BCT) series, following *Raptureless* and his *Understanding the Whole Bible* textbook — a systematic, academically argued case for full preterism from a covenant-structure angle.

Contrast with Your Framework

There is significant *convergence* at the foundation but a sharp *divergence* in destination and application.

Where you agree strongly:

Both frameworks reject dispensationalism root and branch. Welton's demolition of Christian Zionism, the Scofield-era covenant framework, and the rapture narrative lines up directly with the strongholds you've identified — Sacred/Secular Divide, Dispensationalism, Cessationism—as *ochuroma* structures that keep the Church passive and culturally disengaged. You share the preterist reading that the great tribulation, the judgment of Jerusalem, and the fulfillment of Old Covenant promises are past events, not future ones. That settled eschatology is the shared ground.

Where your emphasis diverges:

Welton stays primarily in the *doctrinal courtroom* — his project is hermeneutical and theological, dismantling wrong frameworks and replacing them with better ones. The destination of *Covenantless* is accurate *understanding* of how the covenants work.

Your framework begins where his ends. The Sonship, Ascension, and Reformation model takes the settled preterist foundation and asks: *so now what do sons and daughters actually do?* Your answer — Council sessions, Living Words, Purpose Profiles, Greater Works in every mountain of culture — is an activation theology that Welton's system largely leaves unaddressed. BCT clears the battlefield; your work hands sons a sword and a calling.

A specific doctrinal distinction worth noting:

Welton's "covenantless" move — placing the New Covenant *within the Godhead* rather than between God and humanity — has implications he doesn't fully develop in the practical direction. In your framework, Sonship is not primarily a covenantal status to be intellectually or doctrinally understood; it's a *relational and functional identity* to be inhabited. The son doesn't relate to Father through covenant architecture — he relates through conversation, co-laboring, and shared purpose. That's a different center of gravity: Welton's is juridical-covenantal, yours is relational-vocational.

On Reformation:

This is the sharpest divergence. Welton's BCT is largely *church-correcting* — it aims to free believers from bad theology. Your Reformation framework is *culture-transforming* — it aims to release sons and daughters into every mountain of business, government, arts, media, education, and family to bring Heaven to earth. Welton's reader finishes the book with better doctrine. Your reader finishes with a Kingdom Business assignment, a seat in the Council, and a Purpose Profile.

In short: Welton does the theological groundwork your framework presupposes and builds on. He's a strong ally in clearing the dispensationalist stronghold — and a useful resource to put in the hands of someone whose eschatology needs correcting before they can receive the Sonship and Reformation framework.

Summarize Welton's story on how we have viewed the portions of scripture related to the Mosaic covenant and form a distorted view of the nature of God. Include the explanation of the 3 ANE covenant structures and how Israel ended up in a vassal covenant by refusing to relate to God directly at Mt Sinai.

The search confirmed the three ANE covenant structures thoroughly and the Exodus 20 pattern of Israel's refusal. Welton uses this framework in *Covenantless* but the specific ANE taxonomy is standard scholarship he draws on — I'll attribute it accurately as his application of that material. Here is the full revised piece with that section integrated in its proper place:

Welton's Argument: The Mosaic Covenant and the Distorted God

The presenting problem

For many years, Christians and non-Christians alike have struggled to reconcile the seemingly conflicting depictions of God found in the Bible — the legalistic, punishing God of the Old Testament alongside the loving Father that Jesus revealed in the New Testament. Welton's thesis is that this is not a tension within God's character — it is a reading error. The confusion is entirely the result of failing to distinguish *which covenant* is operating in any given passage, and more specifically, *what kind of covenant* the Mosaic arrangement actually was.

The three contextual (Ancient Near East) ANE covenant structures

Welton draws on Ancient Near Eastern scholarship to establish that there were three distinct covenant structures in the ancient world, and that confusing them is the root of most theological distortion about God's nature.

- 1) The first is the **Parity covenant** — an agreement between equals. A parity covenant between equals created the family bond of "brothers." David and Jonathan's covenant is the biblical example. Neither party holds power over the other; it is a relationship of mutual loyalty and shared honor.
- 2) The second is the **Royal Grant covenant** — a unilateral, unconditional gift from a greater party to a lesser one, based entirely on the giver's faithfulness rather than the recipient's performance. The covenant between God and Abraham was wholly a Royal Grant covenant and was promissory in nature — God made the covenant with Himself; Abraham had no part, he was asleep. God walked through the pieces alone in Genesis 15. Abraham could not break this covenant because Abraham never made it. It rests entirely on God's own oath. The Davidic covenant carries the same character — God promising an eternal throne, unconditionally.
- 3) The third is the **Suzerain-Vassal treaty** — a conditional, bilateral agreement between a greater and lesser party. In these treaties the suzerain, or superior ruler, promised blessings for loyalty and obedience, and curses for rebellion. The vassal owes performance; the suzerain enforces consequences. This is the structure of the Mosaic covenant. The Mosaic covenant differed from the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants in that it was not a promise of future blessing. Instead it was a set of rules for how to be blessed, accompanied by curses for disobedience.

Understanding which structure is in operation in any passage is everything. The Royal Grant reveals a God who keeps promises regardless of human failure. The Suzerain-Vassal reveals a God administering consequences within a conditional performance system. Reading Mosaic-era judgment passages as if they reveal God's eternal character — rather than His faithful administration of a temporary, bilateral covenant — is the error that produces the distorted God.

How Israel ended up in a vassal covenant — and why

This is where Welton makes one of his most provocative and pastorally loaded observations. The Suzerain-Vassal structure was not God's original intention for Israel. God came down to Sinai with something more direct in mind.

In Exodus 19, God descended on the mountain in fire, smoke, and thunder — not to terrify the people into submission, but to meet with them. His stated intention was to make Israel "a kingdom of priests" (Ex. 19:6), a nation of sons and daughters who would relate to Him directly, hearing His voice personally without need of a mediating structure. But when the thunder rolled and the mountain shook, Israel recoiled. In Exodus 20:18-19, the people drew back and said to Moses: *"Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."* They refused direct encounter. They demanded a mediator.

That refusal was the pivot point. From that moment, Moses became the intermediary, so God spoke through him instead of directly to the people. The entire subsequent apparatus of the Mosaic system — the law given through Moses, the Levitical priesthood, the sacrificial system, the tabernacle as God's managed distance from the people — was the accommodation to Israel's fear-driven choice. They had the option of a more intimate relational covenant and chose a managed, mediated,

performance-based one instead. God gave them what they asked for, complete with its blessing/curse enforcement mechanisms.

The Mosaic covenant was therefore not God's highest aspiration for Israel — it was His gracious administration of the relationship Israel was willing to have. Hebrews 8 confirms this explicitly: the New Covenant was needed precisely because the old one was inadequate, its inadequacy being the externalized, law-based, mediated structure that Israel chose at Sinai rather than the direct heart-knowledge of God that He originally intended.

Critically: the Mosaic Law only applied to this life

One of Welton's most clarifying moves is pointing out the *scope* of the Mosaic covenant's blessings and curses. Every consequence in the system was entirely temporal and earthly — rain and drought, military victory and defeat, abundant harvests and famine, health and disease, security in the land or exile from it. The Mosaic covenant was a national and corporate covenant of works for life in the land of Canaan, with physical and temporary blessings and curses. It had nothing to say about eternity. Eternal life and eternal destiny were never Mosaic covenant categories — they belong to the Abrahamic promise and ultimately to the New Covenant. This means the wrath, judgment, and punishment so visible in the Old Testament carry no implication about God's eternal disposition toward humanity. Reading eternal consequences into what were strictly temporal, this-life covenant enforcement mechanisms is the error that produces the portrait of an eternally angry God — a portrait Scripture never actually paints.

What the Law actually produced

The Old Covenant provided laws which, when broken, caused the wrath of God to come upon people. Romans 4:15 is explicit: "the law works wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression." This is not a statement about God's eternal disposition — it is a description of how a specific, temporary, this-life Suzerain-Vassal mechanism functioned. The wrath seen throughout the Old Testament is the covenant consequence system of Sinai operating exactly as designed, within its proper temporal scope.

The cross was not a wrath transaction

This is where Welton makes his most striking move. The crucifixion of Christ did nothing to assuage the wrath of God. Jesus was not the Father's "wrath sponge" soaking up His anger toward sin on the cross. The cross was not the punishment of sin; the cross made a way for the Father to forgive sin. No lamb sacrifice was ever punished for sin — the lamb's death simply enacted covenantal forgiveness. The animal stood between the owner and God, and its shed blood brought covenantal forgiveness. Jesus, the perfect lamb, released perfect forgiveness.

The idea that the Father beat the Son to death violates every Old Testament shadow of the lamb sacrifice leading up to Jesus' death. Isaiah 53:4b is revealing: "We saw his suffering and thought God was punishing him." Isaiah clearly prophesied that we would misunderstand what was happening to Jesus at the cross.

Where the wrath actually went — and when it ended

God's wrath was connected to the Old Covenant system, which continued to exist until its final destruction in AD 70. The first-century Pharisees clung to the law, which built wrath up against them. The wrath built against those who rejected Christ and persecuted the early church was poured out in AD 70. Josephus records that out of the 1.1 million Jews killed in that slaughter, not one Christian died. The destruction of Jerusalem was the final covenant judgment — the last expression of Mosaic-era, this-life wrath — after which the old system was fully and permanently removed.

The distortion this creates — and what corrects it

Covenantless presents a cohesive, Christ-centered framework that reveals the heart of God without fear or contradiction. The distorted God — angry, punitive, demanding performance, threatening eternal consequences — is not the eternal Father. He is what the Suzerain-Vassal covenant looked like from the outside while it was operational, seen by people who had refused the more intimate relationship God originally offered, administered through a mediating system they chose out of fear, producing this-life consequences that were never meant to characterize God's eternal nature. A clear separation from the Mosaic covenant leaves us now in a better covenant of love and forgiveness. Things that were once considered confusing or ambiguous about God are now clear.

Contrast with Your Framework

Welton diagnoses the problem with surgical precision: the Mosaic Suzerain-Vassal structure was a fear-driven accommodation that Israel chose when God was offering something better, and the wrath it produced was temporary, covenantal, and strictly this-life in scope. Projecting that system back onto God's eternal character is the theological error behind centuries of distorted Christianity.

Your framework picks up exactly where Welton's correction ends — and the Israel-at-Sinai story is the hinge. Israel said "don't speak to us directly." The whole Mosaic apparatus was the consequence of that refusal. The New Covenant reverses it entirely: the law is now written on hearts (Jer. 31:33), the Spirit is poured out on sons and daughters (Acts 2:17), and the veil is torn. Direct access is restored — not just in principle, but in practice.

In your language, this is precisely what the Council is. Israel refused to ascend the mountain and hear Father's voice directly. Sons and daughters in the New Covenant do what Israel would not — they come up (Rev. 4:1), sit at the table, and hear Living Words first-hand. The Mosaic system was built around Israel's fear of direct encounter. Your framework is built around the invitation to have what Israel declined: a first-person, unmediated, relational, co-laboring conversation with Father.

Welton's work explains why so many believers still live as if Moses is their mediator — still relating to God through rules, performance metrics, and fear of temporal consequences, as if the Sinai accommodation is still in force. Your work gives those believers the invitation and the practical tools to do what God originally intended at the mountain: come up, hear His voice, and co-labor with a Father whose nature was never the Suzerain demanding tribute, but the Father running toward the prodigal son.

Does Welton's concept that the new covenant is not based on wrath missing something? Does it lead to Christian pacifism regarding contemporary events like Trump's interception of Iran?

- Include the role of sons in Judgment. Jn 5:22 "all judgement given to the firstborn son and
- Jn 20:23 The disciples receiving the Holy Spirit and being given power to forgive, or not

This addition is theologically decisive — it moves the discussion from Romans 13 (civil authority as God's agent) to something even more direct: sons themselves as participants in judgment by virtue of their union with the firstborn Son. Here is the full piece with that section integrated:

What Welton Gets Right — and Where the Framework Has a Seam

Welton's argument that New Covenant believers stand outside the wrath mechanism is biblically sound as far as it goes. The Suzerain-Vassal curse structure ended at AD 70. Those in Christ are not under condemnation (Rom. 8:1). The cross was not a wrath transaction — it was a covenant inauguration. All of that holds.

But Welton's framework creates a seam when it moves from "*there is no condemnation for those in Christ*" to a broader implication that God's wrath has simply expired as a category in the New Covenant era. That move misses something significant, and it shows in at least three places.

Romans 13 — Written in the New Covenant Era

Paul writes Romans after the cross, after Pentecost, in full New Covenant awareness. And he says this about governing authorities: "*the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer*" (Rom. 13:4).

This is New Covenant era language. Paul explicitly calls civil authority an *agent of wrath* against wrongdoing — and he uses the present tense. The wrath that ended at AD 70 was the Old Covenant curse mechanism applied to Israel for rejecting the Messiah. Romans 13 describes something structurally different: an ongoing governmental and judicial expression of God's justice operating through civil authority in every era.

There is a difference between:

Covenant wrath — the curse mechanism of the Suzerain-Vassal treaty, tied to Israel and the Mosaic system, ended at AD 70. ✓

Judicial/governmental justice — God's ongoing governance of the nations through legitimate civil authority, operating in every era, still fully operative. ✓

Welton's framework doesn't give sufficient account of this distinction. Collapsing them is where the system becomes vulnerable to the pacifism charge.

Sons Participate in Judgment — John 5:22 and John 20:23

This is where the gap in Welton's framework becomes most theologically significant — and where your own framework actually goes further than Romans 13 alone.

John 5:22 is unambiguous: "*the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son.*" The Father has delegated the judicial function entirely to the firstborn Son. But the New Testament doesn't stop there. Co-heirs share the inheritance of the firstborn (Rom. 8:17), and what belongs to

the Son is extended to sons. This is not a metaphor — it is the logic of Sonship itself. If the Father gave all judgment to the Son, and sons are in union with the Son, then sons carry a judicial inheritance that Welton's "no wrath" framing leaves completely unaddressed.

John 20:23 makes this explicit at the ground level. After the resurrection, Jesus breathes on the disciples — the same gesture as Genesis 2:7, Father breathing life into Adam — and says: "*Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.*" This is one of the most overlooked and theologically uncomfortable verses in the New Testament precisely because it is so direct. Jesus is not speaking metaphorically or institutionally. He is giving Spirit-filled sons the authority to bind and release in the judicial dimension. The power to *not forgive* — to retain sin — is an act of judgment. It is not wrath in the Mosaic covenant sense. It is something more serious: the firstborn Son's delegated judicial authority operating through sons in the Spirit.

This means the New Covenant does not eliminate judgment — it *relocates* it. Under the Mosaic system, judgment came through the law's curse mechanism, administered impersonally through national consequences. Under the New Covenant, judgment comes through sons operating in the Spirit, in union with the Son to whom all judgment has been given. Far from producing pacifism, this should produce the most discerning, courageous, and prophetically accurate engagement with evil in every mountain of culture — because the stakes are higher, not lower. Sons are not bystanders watching God's governance from a distance. They are participants in it.

What Welton's "no wrath" emphasis does not account for is that the elimination of Old Covenant curse-wrath coincides with the *upgrading* of judicial authority — from an impersonal law mechanism to Spirit-filled sons carrying the judicial inheritance of the firstborn. The courtroom didn't close at AD 70. It changed administration.

Does This Lead to Christian Pacifism?

Applied consistently, a strict "no wrath in the New Covenant" reading *can* produce a quietist posture toward evil — a reluctance to name geopolitical aggression as something God actively opposes, or to see civil restraint of it as a Kingdom-aligned act. If God's wrath is wholly past and the New Covenant is purely relational and restorative, it becomes theologically awkward to affirm that a government intercepting Iranian missiles is doing something God's governance of the nations endorses — let alone that sons in the Courts have a role in the outcome.

But this is not a necessary conclusion from preterism. It is a gap in Welton's particular framing that your framework addresses directly.

What Your Framework Adds

Your Sonship, Ascension, and Reformation model draws on the Divine Council framework (Heiser, Deut. 32 worldview) which Welton largely leaves undeveloped. In that framework nations are not neutral territory. The nations were assigned to spiritual rulers at Babel (Deut. 32:8), and the redemptive mission is their reclamation through the advancing Kingdom — sons in every mountain, including government. This is neither pacifism nor militarism. It is discernment-based co-laboring: what is Father doing in the nations right now, and what are sons called to participate in?

The Courts of Heaven dimension is also critical here. The Courts are not merely personal — they address accusations, decrees, and legal standing that affect nations. When Iran is described as under the influence of a spiritual prince (Daniel 10 pattern), the question isn't simply "is God wrathful

toward Iran?" but "what decree is going forth in the Council regarding this conflict, and what judicial authority are sons exercising in agreement with the firstborn Son?" John 5:22 and John 20:23 together make sons participants in that answer — not observers.

On Trump Intercepting Iran Specifically

Through your framework, the question is not primarily "does God approve of military force?" — it is: *Is this act consistent with what Father is doing in the nations in this season of Reformation, and what is the Courts' decree regarding the spiritual principalities driving this conflict?*

Romans 13 gives theological warrant for civil authority restraining aggression. John 5:22 and 20:23 go further: sons operating in the Spirit, in union with the Son to whom all judgment belongs, have a role in the heavenly-court dimension of that restraint. Praying, decreeing, and co-laboring from the Council regarding Iran is not religious sentiment attached to a political event. It is sons exercising, in the Spirit, the judicial inheritance the firstborn Son was given by the Father — and which He breathed into His disciples the moment He rose from the dead.

Summary of the Gap

Welton correctly identifies and demolishes the Old Covenant punitive God distortion. But in doing so he underweights four ongoing realities that your framework handles more completely:

- **Romans 13 justice** — governing authorities as God's present-tense agents of wrath against evil, which is a New Covenant category Welton's system needs but doesn't fully develop.
- **John 5:22** — all judgment given to the firstborn Son, which means the judicial function didn't disappear at AD 70; it was transferred to the Son and by inheritance to sons in union with Him. The courtroom changed administration, not status.
- **John 20:23** — Spirit-filled sons carry the authority to forgive *or retain* sin, which is a direct, personal participation in the judicial inheritance of the firstborn. The power to "not forgive" is an act of judgment that Welton's no-wrath framework has no category for.
- **Divine Council governance of nations** — the Deut. 32 worldview in which the nations are contested spiritual territory, sons are the reclaiming agents, and geopolitical events like Iran have a heavenly-court dimension that requires sons to engage with discernment and authority, not withdraw in theological quietism.

Welton gives us the clean theology of who Father is and why the angry-judge portrait is a Mosaic misreading. You give sons the Council intelligence to know what Father is *doing* in the nations — and the judicial authority, inherited from the firstborn Son, to co-labor with it in the Courts, in the Spirit, and in every mountain where Reformation is advancing.

The New Testament Passages That Formally Declare the Mosaic Covenant Defunct

Welton draws on several passages that function as explicit legal declarations of the Mosaic covenant's termination:

Hebrews 7:18–19 — *"The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced."* The word translated *set aside* is the Greek *athetesis* — legal annulment.

Hebrews 8:6–13 — The definitive declaration. The New Covenant makes the first one obsolete: *"By calling this covenant 'new,' he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear."* Written before AD 70 — the *will soon disappear* is predictive, pointing to the physical destruction of the temple and its sacrificial system as the covenant's final termination.

Hebrews 9:1–10 — The tabernacle, the sacrificial system, and the priestly regulations are described as *"external regulations applying until the time of the new order."* The covenant was always temporary by design — a placeholder pointing forward, not a permanent architectural statement about how God relates to humanity.

Hebrews 10:1–10 — *"It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."* The entire Levitical sacrifice apparatus is declared permanently superseded. It was a shadow; the substance is Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:7–14 — Paul describes the Mosaic covenant as the *"ministry of death, engraved in letters on stone"* and the *"ministry of condemnation"* — glorious in its time but inherently fading. The veil Moses wore over his face to hide the fading glory is the same veil that remains over those who read Moses without recognizing that the covenant he administered was temporary. This is Welton's core pastoral concern expressed in Pauline language: the veil of the Mosaic covenant produces the distorted-God portrait when left in place.

Galatians 3:19–25 — The Law was a *paidagogos* — a guardian and tutor — to lead Israel to Christ. *"Now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian."* The Mosaic covenant was pedagogical and temporary by divine intention.

Galatians 4:21–31 — The Hagar/Sarah allegory. Hagar represents the Sinai covenant producing children for slavery. Mount Sinai is directly identified and explicitly contrasted with the Jerusalem above, which is free. Paul's language is unambiguous: the covenant made at Sinai is the covenant of the slave woman, and its children are born into bondage.

Ephesians 2:14–15 — Christ *"abolished in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations"* — creating one new humanity rather than the Jew/Gentile distinction the Mosaic covenant maintained. The word *abolished* here is the Greek *katargeo* — rendered inoperative, reduced to nothing.

Colossians 2:13–14 — *"He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross."* The legal document of the Mosaic covenant's demands — its certificate of debt against the vassal — was nailed to the cross with Christ.

What portions of the Bible were written for the Mosaic Covenant and need to be read with that in mind?

The scope of this list explains why the problem is so persistent. When a Christian opens a Bible and reads from Genesis to Revelation, roughly this falls under the Mosaic covenant heading that needs the label attached:

The entire Pentateuch, all of the historical books, the majority of the Psalms, and essentially all of the prophetic books — comfortably more than half the entire Bible — is Mosaic covenant material. Without the label, it all accumulates into a portrait of a God who is fundamentally performance-demanding, consequence-administering, mediator-requiring, and prone to devastating anger toward covenant failure.

The correction Welton is calling for is not to stop reading those texts. They are still *graphe* — God-breathed and profitable for teaching, correction, and training in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16). The correction is to read them the way Paul instructs in 2 Corinthians 3 — with the veil removed, understanding that each passage was the administration of a temporary, bilateral, this-life-only covenant that Israel chose in fear at the mountain, that the shadows pointed to Christ, and that the character they display is not the eternal nature of the Father but His faithful, patient, ultimately redemptive stewardship of a system that was always designed to fail and be replaced.

The Additional Implication for Your Framework

In your framework, this has one more dimension worth naming. The reason sons need to read these passages *with covenant awareness* is not only to correct their theology of God — it is to receive what the Spirit was actually depositing in those texts for New Covenant sons to access.

Every Mosaic covenant text points forward to something the Council is now making available directly. The sacrificial system was a shadow of the Son's self-offering and the son's co-union with that offering. The theophany descriptions of God as warrior were shadows of the Spirit of Might operating through sons in every mountain. The prophets' Living Words — even when delivered as covenant prosecution — were pattern-establishing decrees that sons can now receive first-hand in the Council rather than second-hand through a mediating structure Israel chose out of fear.

The Mosaic covenant was the shadow. The Council is the substance. Reading the former with covenant awareness is precisely how sons move from the managed-distance relationship Israel settled for at Sinai into the direct encounter Father was reaching for when He came down on the mountain in fire in the first place.

Is the Mosaic covenant still in effect for the unsaved to face God's judgment?

This is one of the most important questions Welton's framework raises — and it requires going beyond what he fully develops. The short answer is **no** — but that answer opens up a more important question about what *does* remain as the basis of judgment, which turns out to be more serious, not less.

The Mosaic Covenant Was Never Universal

The first thing to establish is that the Mosaic covenant was never the legal framework for all of humanity in the first place. It was a specific, national covenant with Israel alone — a point Paul makes explicitly in Romans 2:12: *"All who have sinned apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law."* Gentiles were never under the Mosaic covenant. They faced accountability on entirely different grounds even while the Mosaic system was fully operational.

This means the question of whether the Mosaic covenant is still in effect for the unsaved is in one sense the wrong question — it was never their covenant to be under. The more precise question is: what is the actual basis of judgment for humanity in the New Covenant era?

Three Grounds of Accountability That Remain Fully Operative

1. General Revelation and Conscience — Romans 1–2

Paul establishes that God's existence, nature, and moral character are made plain through creation itself — *"so that men are without excuse"* (Rom. 1:20). This is not Mosaic covenant accountability. It predates Moses entirely and applies universally. The wrath Paul describes in Romans 1:18 — *"the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all godlessness and wickedness"* — is not Mosaic covenant enforcement. It is the Creator's response to the suppression of general revelation, which is a pre-Mosaic and post-Mosaic category entirely.

Romans 2:14–16 extends this: Gentiles who do not have the law show the work of the law written on their hearts, their conscience bearing witness. The standard is not the Mosaic code but the moral reality embedded in human nature at creation — accessible to everyone, in every era.

2. Rejection of the Son — John 3:18, 36

This is the distinctively New Covenant ground of judgment, and it is more serious than anything the Mosaic system produced. *"Whoever does not believe is condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of God's only Son"* (Jn. 3:18). *"Whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them"* (Jn. 3:36).

Notice that phrase — *"God's wrath remains."* This is not the Mosaic wrath that ended at AD 70. This is the condition of those who stand outside the New Covenant's covering — outside union with the Son to whom all judgment has been given (Jn. 5:22). The New Covenant doesn't remove accountability for the unsaved. It redefines and concentrates it around the person of the Son. The unsaved are not condemned by the Mosaic law code — they are condemned by their relationship to the Son, which is a higher and more final standard, not a lower one.

3. Works at the Final Judgment — Revelation 20

The Great White Throne judgment in Revelation 20:12 is notably not a Mosaic covenant proceeding. *"The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books."* This is a works-based accounting before the Son to whom all judgment has been given — consistent with

John 5:22 and operating entirely within the New Covenant judicial framework. The Mosaic law is not the measuring rod. The Son is.

Where Welton's Framework Needs Supplementing

Welton is right that the Mosaic covenant curse mechanism ended. But his "no wrath" framing, if applied too broadly, can create the impression that judgment itself has been substantially reduced or made optional in the New Covenant era. The biblical picture is precisely the opposite.

The New Covenant doesn't reduce the grounds of judgment — it *concentrates and elevates* them. Under Moses, the worst outcome was national destruction and exile within this life (the this-life-only limitation you identified earlier). Under the New Covenant, the stakes are eternal, the Judge is the Son himself, and — as John 20:23 makes explicit — Spirit-filled sons participate in that judicial function. The courtroom didn't close. It was upgraded from a temporary national administration to a permanent, eternal, Son-centered jurisdiction.

The Practical Implication for Your Framework

This has direct relevance to how you frame the Courts of Heaven in Kingdom Business. The Courts are not primarily a mechanism for managing Old Covenant guilt — they are the New Covenant judicial administration that operates in every dimension of life, including the nations and the mountains of culture. When sons decree in the Courts, they are participating in the judicial inheritance of the firstborn Son (Jn. 5:22) operating in the new administration — not invoking Mosaic curse mechanisms.

For the unsaved, the most relevant judicial reality is not the defunct Mosaic system but the active New Covenant truth that the Son holds all judgment, that general revelation leaves everyone without excuse, and that what is done in the body — including in business — is recorded and will be accounted for. That is not a lighter burden than the Mosaic system. It is a heavier one, because it is eternal in scope rather than this-life-only — and because the Judge is no longer an impersonal law mechanism but the resurrected Son who sees clearly and judges rightly.

Welton's correction stands: the angry-judge portrait drawn from Mosaic material is a misreading. But the New Covenant God is not therefore a God without judgment — He is a Father who has entrusted all judgment to His Son, who has shared that judicial inheritance with sons in the Spirit, and whose standards of accountability are grounded in creation itself, in the light of Christ now available to all, and in the eternal record of every human life. That is a more complete and more serious picture than Mosaic covenant wrath ever was.

Explain the role of Sons in judgment. There is no judgement from Father and no condemnation for them that are in Christ (Rom 8:1). Yet, there are accusations that must be taken to the Courts of Heaven for legal dismissal and to release the decrees that change us from the heart.

- Include the role of sons in Judgment. Jn 5:22 "all judgement given to the firstborn son and
- Jn 20:23 The disciples receiving the Holy Spirit and being given power to forgive, or not
- 1Pet 4:17 Judgment must begin at God's household

Explain the Holy Spirits role regarding john 16:7-13 in guiding sons into all truth to discern/judge.

The Role of Sons in Judgment

The Starting Point: No Condemnation, But Not No Courts

Romans 8:1 is the foundation: *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* This is not a soft comfort — it is a legal declaration. The Greek word *katakrima* means a judicial sentence of condemnation, the final verdict of a court against the accused. For sons in union with the Son to whom all judgment has been given, that verdict has been permanently and irrevocably vacated. The case is closed. The gavel has fallen in their favor.

But Romans 8:1 answers a specific question — *is there a condemning verdict against me?* — and the answer is no. It does not answer a different question: *are there active accusations, unresolved legal claims, and ongoing judicial processes that affect a son's freedom, fruitfulness, and authority?* To that question the Courts of Heaven give a resounding yes. No condemnation does not mean no courtroom. It means the son enters the courtroom not as a defendant facing execution but as a son with standing, represented by the Advocate (1 Jn. 2:1), co-seated with the firstborn Son to whom all judgment belongs.

The accuser has no power to condemn — but he retains the legal standing to accuse, and those accusations, if not answered, can restrict the release of decrees that change sons from the heart and advance the Kingdom through them. The Courts are not where sons go to fight for their justification. That is settled. The Courts are where sons go to have accusations legally dismissed, to receive decrees that unlock what is written in their book, and to participate in the judicial governance of the Kingdom as sons of the Judge.

Sons are engaged in judgment via the Courts of Heaven for a specific and liberating purpose:

- To set captives legally free (Lk. 4:18) from the accusations and legal claims the enemy holds against them — this is the Isaiah 61 anointing operating in its judicial dimension.
 - Not to sentence people, but to liberate them from enemy sentences and accusations — the son's judicial role is prosecutorial against darkness, not punitive toward people. Sons prosecute the accuser; they do not become accusers themselves.
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John 5:22 — All Judgment Given to the Firstborn Son

"The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son."

This verse is the hinge of the entire judicial framework. The Father has made a complete and permanent transfer of the judicial function to the Son. This is not delegation in the administrative sense — it is inheritance in the covenantal sense. The Son holds all judgment as the firstborn heir of the Father's authority.

The implications cascade immediately into Sonship theology. Romans 8:17 establishes that sons are co-heirs with the firstborn Son — *"heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ."* What belongs to the firstborn by inheritance is extended to sons by adoption and union. This is the logic Paul presses throughout Ephesians 2:6 — sons are *co-seated* with Christ in the heavenly places. The seat they share is not decorative. It is judicial. Sons are seated where the Son sits, and the Son sits in the place of all judgment.

Jesus makes the scope of this judicial co-inheritance explicit in Matthew 19:28: "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The disciples who have followed Jesus — those in union with the firstborn Son — are not merely promised a front-row seat to His judgment. They are given thrones of their own. The judicial inheritance of the firstborn is not hoarded; it is shared with those who have followed Him into the same posture of co-seating and co-laboring. The twelve thrones are the most concrete biblical image of what Ephesians 2:6 describes: sons co-seated in the heavenly places, participating in the judicial administration of the Kingdom. The Courts of Heaven are not a speculative framework — they are the operational expression of a promise Jesus made to His followers on the way to Jerusalem.

This means sonship is not merely an identity category — it carries a judicial weight and function. A son is not a bystander to the Courts. He is a participant in the judicial administration of the firstborn to whom all judgment has been entrusted. The Courts of Heaven are not foreign territory for sons — they are the operational environment of their inheritance.

John 20:23 — The Breath of Judicial Authority

"Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

The setting matters enormously. This is the evening of the resurrection. Jesus enters through locked doors — the physical resurrection body operating outside the laws of the natural order — and He performs a gesture loaded with covenantal weight: He breathes on the disciples. This is the second Genesis 2:7. The first breath made Adam a living soul; this breath imparts the Spirit of the resurrected Son into the sons of the new creation.

And immediately — in the same breath, literally — He gives them judicial authority: the power to forgive or to retain sin. This is not a metaphor, and it is not an institutional privilege restricted to clergy. It is the judicial inheritance of the firstborn being breathed into sons in the Spirit. The power to *not forgive* — to retain sin, to bind, to hold a legal claim in place — is an act of judgment. Jesus is not giving the disciples the power to be gracious. He is giving them the power to function judicially in the Spirit, making binding determinations about legal standing in the Courts.

This maps directly onto the Courts of Heaven practice. When sons bring accusations before the Courts, they are functioning in the judicial authority they received in John 20:23, agreeing with what the firstborn Son has already established, releasing what Heaven has already decreed. The purpose, consistent with Luke 4:18, is always liberation — the legal dismissal of what the enemy is holding against a person so they can walk in the freedom Father always intended. Sons wield this authority as advocates for the accused, not as a second layer of prosecution against them.

The forgiveness or retention of sin is the judicial mechanism by which accusations are dismissed and decrees are released. Sons are not spectators to this process. They are active judicial participants, operating in the breath the resurrected Son placed in them on the evening of the first day of the new creation.

1 Peter 4:17 — Judgment Begins in the Household

"For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?"

This verse is almost always read as a warning — as if judgment beginning in the household of God is an ominous thing to be dreaded. Read within the Courts of Heaven framework, it is precisely the opposite. It is a description of the judicial sequence through which Reformation advances.

Judgment beginning in God's household means that the sons are the first to come under the truth-revealing, purifying, decree-releasing work of the Courts. Before sons can exercise judicial authority in the mountains of culture, the principalities and powers operating there, and the nations, they must first submit to the judicial process themselves — bringing their own accusations before the Courts, receiving the Holy Spirit's conviction of what needs to be addressed, having the legal ground of the accuser removed from their own lives, and receiving the decrees that align them with what Father wrote in their books.

This is not punitive. It is procedural. And it is consistent with the Luke 4:18 pattern: the son who has been set free is the son who can set others free. The household process is the son receiving his own liberation before he can effectively prosecute the accusations against those he is called to serve.

The son who has not dealt with the accusations against himself has compromised judicial standing in the Courts when he attempts to bring cases on behalf of others, his business, his city, or his nation. The sequence Peter describes — household first, then outward — is the same sequence the Courts of Heaven model follows in practice. Clean hands and a pure heart (Ps. 24:4) are the prerequisites for ascending the hill of the Lord and functioning with judicial authority in the heavenly places.

The household judgment is therefore not something sons fear — it is something sons *invite*. It is the purification of their judicial standing that precedes the release of the decrees to change cultures. The son who welcomes 1 Peter 4:17 is the son who will have something to release when he turns toward the seven mountains.

John 16:7–13 — The Holy Spirit as the Son's Judicial Advocate in Sons

"But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment... But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth... He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you."

This passage is the operational foundation for how sons function judicially. Jesus calls the Spirit the *Paraclete* — a legal term meaning one called alongside to assist in judicial proceedings. An advocate, a counselor, a legal representative. The Spirit is not primarily a warm feeling accompanying devotional life. He is the firstborn Son's judicial presence operating within sons, enabling them to function in the Courts with the accuracy, discernment, and authority that the Son Himself would exercise. The implication of the Holy Spirit includes the 7 Spirits and conversations in the Council.

The Spirit's three judicial functions in this passage are precise and sequential:

#1). He convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. The Spirit operates as prosecuting counsel in relation to the world — not to condemn sons but to make the judicial realities of the Kingdom visible and actionable.

- Sin is defined now not by Mosaic code violation but by rejection of the Son. Sin is *missing the mark* in the Greek. We have all missed the mark and continue to do so. But now we have access to God writing His Words in the desires of our hearts (Jer 33, Heb 8:10, 10:16).
- Righteousness is defined not by legal performance but by the Son's position at the Father's right hand. The real definition of righteousness is simply being on the same page with Father because we have been present for Nine Conversations in the Council.
- Judgment is established not by the Mosaic curse schedule but by the defeat of the ruler of this world at the cross. The Spirit gives sons the judicial intelligence to see these realities clearly — to know what the legal standing of a situation actually is rather than what it appears to be naturally.

#2). He guides sons into all truth. The Greek word *hodegeo* means to lead along a road, to guide a journey. This is not a passive impartation of information — it is active, real-time, conversational guidance into the truth that is relevant for the judicial decisions at hand. In the Courts of Heaven framework this is the Living Words dimension — the Spirit speaking into the present moment, revealing the specific truth that needs to be declared, the specific accusation that needs to be addressed, the specific decree that needs to be received. The son who is led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14) is the son who has access to the judicial intelligence that makes his participation in the Courts more than religious activity. He is functioning in the same discernment the firstborn Son exercises, mediated through the Advocate the Son sent.

#3). He takes from what belongs to the Son and makes it known to sons. This is the judicial inheritance mechanism in action. What belongs to the Son — including all judgment (Jn. 5:22) — is continuously transmitted to sons through the Spirit. The Courts of Heaven are not a technique sons have developed. They are the operational expression of what the Spirit is doing in sons who have learned to follow His guidance into the judicial realities of the Kingdom. Every time the Spirit reveals an accusation, identifies its legal ground, and releases a decree through a son's agreement, He is making known to that son what belongs to the Son — and the son is receiving his inheritance in real time.

Jn 15:15 – *No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master does. But I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

When the Courts Move in the Other Direction: The Binding Side of Judicial Authority

The Courts of Heaven operate in two directions, and sons must understand both with equal clarity. The positive and liberating side is the more familiar face of Kingdom justice:

- Opening doors no man can shut (Isa. 22:22) — the Eliakim anointing, the key of the house of David placed on a son's shoulder, releasing access and opportunity that no opposing power can close.
- Loosing what is loosed in Heaven (Mt. 16:19) — the legal release of what the Father has already decreed, brought from Heaven to earth through sons who carry the keys of the Kingdom.
- Forgiving those who are forgiven in Heaven (Jn. 20:23) — sons agreeing with Heaven's verdict, dismissing accusations, and releasing people into the freedom the cross already purchased for them.

But Matthew 16:19 does not only speak of loosing — it speaks equally of binding. John 20:23 does not only give sons authority to forgive — it gives sons authority to **not** forgive. Isaiah 22:22 does not only describe doors that open — it describes doors that are shut and cannot be opened. The same judicial authority that liberates can, under the Spirit's direction, close, bind, and withhold. This is not a lesser or more dangerous category of

sonship. It is the same authority operating in the same Courts, under the same Spirit, toward the same ultimate purpose — but moving in the opposite direction when the situation requires it.

The critical governing principle is this: sons never exercise binding authority from their own judgment, offense, or self-interest. The negative side of the Courts is not available to the wounded, the reactive, or the self-promoting. It is available only to sons who are moving in step with what is already bound in Heaven — agreeing with the Father’s judicial determination rather than initiating their own. The Spirit’s guidance (Jn. 16:13) is not optional here — it is the safeguard that distinguishes apostolic authority from spiritual abuse.

Peter and Ananias and Sapphira — Acts 5:1–11

The most dramatic New Testament example of sons exercising binding judicial authority is Peter’s confrontation of Ananias and Sapphira. The early Ecclesia was operating in an unprecedented atmosphere of covenant community — resources shared, needs met, the manifest presence of God tangible and active. Into that atmosphere, Ananias and his wife brought a deliberate deception: they sold property, secretly kept a portion, and presented the remainder as the full proceeds — performing generosity while practicing duplicity.

Peter’s response is not anger, accusation, or judicial initiative. He operates entirely as a son reading what the Spirit has already discerned: *“Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit...? You have not lied just to human beings but to God.”* (Acts 5:3–4). Peter identifies the source (Satan), the mechanism (a heart given over to deception), and the covenantal gravity (lying to the Holy Spirit). He does not pronounce a sentence. He names what is already true in the Courts. Ananias falls dead.

Three hours later the same sequence unfolds with Sapphira. Peter gives her an explicit opportunity to tell the truth. She repeats the lie. Peter speaks: *“How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.”* (Acts 5:9). She falls dead immediately.

Several things about this account are essential for understanding the binding side of sons’ judicial authority:

- **Peter does not seek this outcome.** He neither prays for their deaths nor invokes a curse. He speaks what the Spirit has revealed — the judicial reality already determined in the Courts — and the natural order conforms to it. Binding authority in sons is declaration of what Heaven has adjudicated, not personal initiative.
 - **The ground of judgment is covenantal integrity within the household.** This maps precisely onto 1 Peter 4:17 — judgment beginning in God’s household. Ananias and Sapphira were members of the covenant community who had introduced deception into the corporate body. The binding dimension of the Courts operates with particular seriousness within the household, precisely because the household is the judicial starting point.
 - **The result is corporate fear and corporate health.** Acts 5:11 records that *“great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.”* The awe of a community encountering the judicial weight of a living covenant preserved the atmosphere in which signs and wonders continued to multiply (Acts 5:12).
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Paul Handing People Over to Satan — 1 Cor. 5:5, 1 Tim. 1:20, 2 Cor. 13:10

Paul provides three distinct instances of the binding dimension of apostolic judicial authority, and together they build a theology of what it means to exercise the negative side of the Courts with precision and purpose.

In 1 Corinthians 5:5, Paul addresses a man who is sexually involved with his father’s wife. The community has not acted; Paul, writing from a distance but present in spirit, issues a judicial determination: *“handling such a one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.”* The judicial structure is clear: Paul withdraws the covenantal protection of the community from someone who has

placed himself outside its covenantal terms, returning him to the domain of the accuser so that the consequence of his choice may produce repentance and restoration. The goal is explicitly salvific — *“so that his spirit may be saved.”* Binding authority here is not retributive. It is a severe mercy — the judicial removal of a covering the man has forfeited, intended to bring him to the end of himself so that restoration becomes possible.

In 1 Timothy 1:20, Hymenaeus and Alexander are *“handled over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.”* The context is doctrinal corruption and the protection of the community’s covenantal truth. Paul is agreeing with a judicial determination already made in the Courts — that those who shipwreck the faith of others have removed themselves from the covering they once stood under. The purpose remains remedial: to be *taught*, not destroyed.

In 2 Corinthians 13:10, the same authority is described prospectively. Paul warns the Corinthians that he would rather not have to exercise *“the authority the Lord gave me for building up and not tearing down”* in its binding dimension when he arrives. The phrase is instructive: the authority is the same in both directions. Building up and tearing down are not two different powers — they are two directions of the same apostolic judicial inheritance. The binding side is always the secondary, reluctant application of authority whose primary orientation is construction and liberation.

Taken together, Paul’s three instances establish governing principles for the negative side of sons’ judicial authority:

- **Binding authority is always remedial in intention, never retributive.** Every Pauline instance carries a stated or implied restorative purpose. The goal is never punishment for its own sake but the creation of conditions in which repentance and restoration become possible.
- **It is exercised under apostolic weight, not personal grievance.** Paul does not hand people over to Satan because they have offended him. He acts from the judicial standing of a son accountable to the Courts for the covenantal integrity of the communities he oversees. This is not a power available to a son acting from hurt, rejection, or personal interest.
- **It operates at the covenantal boundary.** In every case the individuals have made choices that place them outside the covenantal terms of the community. Paul’s action acknowledges a boundary the individuals themselves have crossed — agreeing with what the Courts have already adjudicated, not initiating a new prosecution.
- **The purpose is always the health of the body and the glory of the Son.** In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul is as concerned with the leaven of tolerated sin corrupting the whole community (5:6–7) as with the individual. The binding side of judicial authority is one of the means by which the household is kept in the covenantal integrity that makes it a safe place for the Lord’s presence to dwell and for Reformation to proceed.

The negative side of the Courts is not a contradiction of the liberating mandate of Luke 4:18 — it is its judicial complement. Sons open doors and close them, loose and bind, forgive and retain — always under the Spirit’s direction, always in agreement with what Heaven has already determined, always with the ultimate purpose of covenantal integrity and the advancing Kingdom. The Courts do not operate as a court of condemnation for sons — Romans 8:1 remains the bedrock. But they operate as a fully functioning judicial system in which sons, seated with the firstborn on the thrones He promised (Mt. 19:28), carry real judicial authority in both directions: releasing what is released and binding what is bound, in step with the Spirit who leads them into all the truth of what the Father has already decreed.

The Integrated Picture

These passages together describe a single, coherent judicial architecture:

The Father has given all judgment to the Son (Jn. 5:22). The Son has promised co-thrones to those who follow Him (Mt. 19:28). The Son has breathed His Spirit into sons, conferring judicial authority to forgive or retain (Jn. 20:23). The Spirit operates within sons as the Son's judicial Advocate, guiding them into the truth they need to function accurately in the Courts (Jn. 16:7–13). The judicial process begins in the household — sons submitting first to the purifying, decree-releasing work of the Courts in their own lives (1 Pet. 4:17) — before extending outward to businesses, cities, and nations.

The animating purpose throughout is Luke 4:18 — the anointing to proclaim freedom for prisoners and release the oppressed. Sons do not enter the Courts to condemn. They enter as freed sons who prosecute the accuser's claims on behalf of others, dismissing the sentences the enemy has imposed and releasing the decrees that set captives free. The judicial authority of the firstborn Son, shared with sons through the Spirit and confirmed by the promise of twelve thrones, is never wielded as a weapon against people. It is the legal mechanism by which the Kingdom advances and the Father's heart — that none should be held in bondage to a sentence that was nailed to the cross — is carried to earth by sons who know who they are, where they sit, and what has been given to them.