



The chart below depicts the principal commonalities and differences between the two *main* branches of Dispensationalism Theology: Classic Dispensationalism and Progressive Dispensationalism. Although certainly **not** exhaustive, this chart highlights the principal commonalities and differences between these two *main* branches of Dispensational Theology.

(√) indicates general agreement with NCT

(⊖) indicates partial agreement with NCT

(⊗) indicates a significant difference with NCT

DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY (DT)

CLASSIC DISPENSATIONALISM

- √ I. **Sola Scriptura** ("by the Scriptures alone")
 - √ A. The Bible is the Word and words of God.
 - √ B. All Scripture is inspired by God and thus **wholly** inerrant, infallible, sufficient and authoritative.
 - ⊗ C. Normal / plain (i.e. literal) historical-grammatical interpretation of Scripture (especially OT Scriptures).
 - ⊗ D. New Testament (NT) does **not** have interpretive priority over the Old Testament (OT).
 - ⊗ E. Rejects 'Now-Not-Yet' understanding of NT Prophecy & redemptive history
 - ⊗ F. Literal understanding of apocalyptic prophecy (i.e. Revelation, etc.).
 - ⊗ G. "Sequential" understanding of Revelation & Olivet Discourse.
- √ II. **Trinitarian Theology**
- ⊗ III. **Arminian Soteriology (OR varying degrees of Calvinism)**
 - ⊗ A. Five Points of Arminianism (although *most* hold to Perseverance of Saints)
 - ⊗ B. Regeneration follows faith.
 - ⊗ C. God limits His sovereignty to give man free will.
 - √ D. Dual Imputation of Righteousness **indispensable** to biblical Gospel.
 - √ E. Good works will **always** result from genuine faith.
- ⊗ IV. **"Classic" Dispensational Theology**
 - ⊗ A. Redemptive history divided into 7 distinct *dispensations*: Innocence, Conscience, Civil Government, Promise, Law, Grace (i.e. Church Age), Kingdom (i.e. Millennium)
 - ⊗ B. **Two** New Covenant (NC) *dispensations*: Grace & Millennium
 - ⊗ C. **Two** redemptive plans: Israel & the Church (each with a *distinctly different* purpose & destiny)
 - √ D. OT & NT saints **all** saved by grace through faith in Christ.
 - ⊗ E. Israel = Israel (**always**)
 - ⊗ F. Israel ≠ type of Church; Church ≠ eschatological Israel
 - ⊗ G. Church has **not** replaced, fulfilled, or superseded Israel.
 - ⊗ H. Church Age = parenthesis in redemptive history, as the OT promises (Abrahamic, Davidic) are neither inaugurated nor fulfilled. Fulfillment reserved for future, literal millennium.
 - ⊗ I. Christ's *current* heavenly reign at the Father's Right Hand is **not** in fulfillment of Davidic Covenant. (Only Millennium).
 - √ J. Body of Christ = the Church
 - ⊗ K. Church **not** revealed in the Old Testament.
 - ⊗ L. New Covenant made **with** Israel, but inaugurated for Church.
 - √ M. **Only** select OT saints had Spirit prior to Pentecost.
 - ⊖ N. Church = the Body of Christ **first** constituted at Pentecost via Spirit Baptism. Spirit Baptism ends at Rapture of the Church. Consists of believing Jews & Gentiles during the Church Age.
 - ⊖ O. Specific commandments from the Ten Commandments **only** apply to NC believer if repeated in the New Testament.
 - √ P. OT Scriptures are *profitable & authoritative* for NC believer as they reveal Christ but are **no** longer covenantally binding since Old Covenant has been fulfilled by Christ & thereby abrogated.
 - ⊖ Q. Some may hold to pre-fall "Edenic" / post-fall "Adamic" Covenants

NEW COVENANT THEOLOGY (NCT)

(as held by Providence Theological Institute)

- √ I. **Sola Scriptura** ("by the Scriptures alone")
 - √ A. The Bible is the Word and words of God.
 - √ B. All Scripture is inspired by God and thus **wholly** inerrant, infallible, sufficient and authoritative.
 - √ C. Christocentric Hermeneutic that interprets **all** Scripture in light of Christ (directly, typologically, or prepares way for Him)
 - √ D. New Testament (NT) has interpretive priority over the Old Testament (OT) due to NT being the **final** revelation of God.
 - √ E. *Now-Not-Yet* understanding of NT Prophecy & redemptive history
 - √ F. Non-literal interpretation of apocalyptic prophecy, where *clearer* passages of Scripture interpret of *less clear* passages.
 - √ G. *Recapitulation* necessary to understand NT Prophecy
- √ II. **Trinitarian Theology**
- √ III. **Calvinistic Soteriology**
 - √ A. Five Points of Calvinism (i.e. Doctrines of Grace)
 - √ B. Regeneration precedes faith.
 - √ C. God's **absolute** sovereignty in **all** things.
 - √ D. Dual Imputation of Righteousness **indispensable** to biblical Gospel.
 - √ E. Good works will **always** result from genuine faith.
- √ IV. **New Covenant Theology** (Theology of the New Covenant (NC))
 - √ A. Redemptive history divided into 3 *ages*: *world that was* (pre-Flood; 2 Pet. 3:6), *world that now is* (2 Pet. 3:7), *world to come* (2 Pet. 3:13); **also** 2 primary *covenant eras*: Old & New.
 - √ B. New Covenant Age = interadvent period
 - √ C. **One** redemptive plan to secure salvation of the elect, i.e., *the one people of God*.
 - √ D. OT & NT saints **all** saved by grace through faith in Christ.
 - √ E. Israel ≠ Israel (**always**); interpretation depends on context.
 - √ F. Israel = type of Church; Church = eschatological Israel
 - √ G. Church has typologically fulfilled Israel (as the eschatological Israel)
 - √ H. Church Age is **not** a parenthesis. NC Age inaugurated at Christ's First Coming & consummated at His Second Coming. Likewise, Fulfillment of OT promises inaugurated at Christ's First Coming, awaiting total fulfillment at His Second Coming.
 - √ I. Christ's *current* heavenly reign at the Father's Right Hand **is** the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant which stands **totally** fulfilled at Christ's Second Coming (**not** after).
 - √ J. Church = the Body of Christ
 - √ K. Church **typified** in OT as the eschatological Israel.
 - √ L. New Covenant made **with** the Church via the Resurrected Christ.
 - √ M. **Only** select OT saints had Spirit prior to Pentecost.
 - √ N. Church = the Body of Christ **first** constituted at Pentecost via Spirit Baptism. Spirit baptism was **accomplished** at Pentecost with its Apostolic extensions (Acts 8, 11, & 19; its **application** continues. Consists of elect of all time.
 - √ O. The Ten Commandments apply to the NC believer who is under the Law of Christ, **not** under the Law of Moses.
 - √ P. OT Scriptures are *profitable & authoritative* for NC believer as they reveal Christ but are **no** longer covenantally binding since Old Covenant has been fulfilled by Christ & thereby abrogated.
 - √ Q. Hold to pre-fall / post-fall covenants given to Adam (but **not** like CT)

(√) indicates virtual agreement with NCT

(○) indicates partial agreement with NCT

(⊗) indicates a significant difference with NCT

DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY (DT)

CLASSIC DISPENSATIONALISM

V. Church Issues

- √ A. Two Ordinances: Baptism & Lord's Supper
- ⊗ B. Sign of New Covenant: Baptism
- √ C. Baptism for Believers *Only* (*credobaptism*)
- √ D. Baptism by Immersion
- √ E. Baptism = Symbol of salvation; important as act of obedience
- ⊗ F. Lord's Supper = Mere Remembrance
- G. Mixture of cessation / non-cessation of *miraculous* spiritual gifts

VI. Church Government

- A. (Typically) Plurality of Elders *or* Single Elder / Rule by Deacons
- √ B. Local Autonomy of Congregations

VII. Christian Liberty & Total Liberty of Conscience

VIII. Government Relations

- √ A. Separation of Church and State
- √ B. Voluntarily involvement of Church members in political activities

IX. Eschatology

- ⊗ A. Visible, Bodily, *Two*-Stage Return of Christ: **(1)** Rapture of Church; **(2)** Second Coming (i.e. glorious appearing); timing of Rapture varies: *pre-tribulation*, *mid-tribulation*, *pre-wrath*, or *post-tribulation*, etc.
- ⊗ B. Daniel's 70th Week = *literal*, 7-year period between Rapture & Second Coming; also, referred to as Tribulation Period
- C. Antichrist = future *individual* who is Christ's chief human enemy
- ⊗ D. Rebuilt Jewish Temple (as the Temple of God) in the Tribulation Period and the Millennium with reconstituted sacrificial system (for some, memorial sacrifices; for others, semi-efficacious ones)
- ⊗ E. Future salvation of "all Israel" & total reconstitution/restoration of Israel *as a national entity* at/just before Christ's Return.
- ⊗ F. Bodily Resurrection of Just & Unjust for Day of Judgment after 1,000 year period.
- ⊗ G. Millennium = future, *literal*, thousand-year reign of Christ from Jerusalem on David's Throne in fulfillment of OT promises of the Abrahamic & Davidic covenants
- √ H. *Eternal* New Heavens & Earth for Elect; *eternal* Hell for Non-Elect.

NEW COVENANT THEOLOGY (NCT)

(as held by Providence Theological Institute)

V. Church Issues

- √ A. Two Ordinances: Baptism & Lord's Supper
- √ B. Sign of New Covenant: Cup of Lord's Supper (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25)
- √ C. Baptism for Believers *Only*
- √ D. Baptism by Immersion
- √ E. Baptism = Symbol of salvation; important as act of obedience
- √ F. Lord's Supper = Remembrance + Spiritual Communion with God
- √ G. Cessation of *miraculous* spiritual gifts

VI. Church Government

- √ A. Plurality of Elders
- √ B. Local Autonomy of Congregations

VII. Christian Liberty & Total Liberty of Conscience

VIII. Government Relations

- √ A. Separation of Church and State
- √ B. Voluntarily involvement of Church members in political activities

IX. Eschatology

- √ A. Visible, Bodily, *One-Stage* Return of Christ at End of NC Age.
- √ B. Daniel's 70th Week = *either* **(1)** *already* fulfilled in 1st century at Christ's First Coming (& after), *or* **(2)** *symbolic* of entire NC age between Christ's First & Second Comings (i.e., *Ultimate Jubilee*).
- √ C. Varying positions on identity of the Antichrist - *all* which identify the Antichrist with an end-time apostate one-world government.
- √ D. Temple = type of Christ (i.e., the Ultimate Temple of God), the Church, and the individual NC believer. Even if Jewish Temple is rebuilt before End of Age, *not* a temple of God.
- √ E. Massive, future end-time ingathering of *elect*, ethnic Israel into the Church. Israel has *no* future *apart* from the Church.
- √ F. Bodily Resurrection of Just & Unjust for the Day of Judgment at End of NC Age.
- √ G. No Future Millennium; Millennium = Inter-Advent period (specifically between the Christ's Ascension & Second Coming) during which Christ is reigning in heaven with His saints.
- √ H. *Eternal* New Heavens & Earth for Elect; *eternal* Hell for Non-Elect.

WHAT IS THE SINE QUA NON OF NEW COVENANT THEOLOGY?

The *consistent Christocentric* interpretation of the OT in light of the NT (Luke 24:27, 44; Rom. 10:4; 2 Cor. 1:20) which results in the following theological distinctives: **(1) the plan of God** : one plan of redemption, centered in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:10; 2 Cor. 1:20; Col. 1:18), implemented according to the God's eternal purpose (Eph. 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9), and securing the salvation of God's elect (Rom. 8:28-32); **(2) the biblical covenants** : the covenants of Scripture progressively unfold God's kingdom purpose (Matt. 6:10) in history, culminating in the New Covenant; **(3) the Old Covenant** : the *conditional* (Exod. 19:5-6) treaty which God established with the ethnic descendants of Jacob at Mount Sinai – a covenant which formed *the nation* of Israel as a geopolitical entity, the sign of which was the Sabbath (Exod. 31:15-17), which was *temporary* in terms of its purpose and duration (Heb. 8:7-13), and which was superseded by the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-33); **(4) the New Covenant** : the promised everlasting covenant (Heb. 13:20) established by Christ Jesus (Luke 22:20; Dan. 9:26-27) that fulfills all preceding *biblical covenants* – a covenant in which all believers have full forgiveness of sins (Jer. 31:34), are *permanently* indwelt by the Spirit (Ezek. 36:25-27; Eph. 1:13-14), and are empowered by the Spirit to please God (Jer. 31:31-33; Phil. 2:12-13); **(5) the people of God** : all God's elect, comprised of believing Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:15), first formed as the body of Christ, which is the Church, at Pentecost (Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-41), not before (John 7:39; 17:21; Col. 1:26-27; Heb. 11:39-40), as one corporate spiritual body in New Covenant union with Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 2:19-21; Col. 1:18, 24); **(6) the nation of Israel** : the ethnic descendants of Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15) formed into a geopolitical entity at Sinai via the Old Covenant (Exod. 19:5-6), comprised of *both* believers and unbelievers (1 Cor. 10:1-5; Heb. 3:16-4:2), typological of Christ (Hos. 11:1; Matt. 2:15) and His Church (Exod. 19:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:9), the believing remnant (Rom. 9:27; 11:5) of which was transformed into the Church at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-10, 41), and which awaits consummation at a future *spiritual* restoration (Amos 9:8) in the form of a massive, end-time ingathering of *elect* Jews into the Church at Christ's Parousia (Rom. 11:12, 15, 25-27); **(7) the law of God** : the two greatest commandments – love of God and neighbor (Matt. 22:36-40) – constitute God's *absolute* or *innate* law, which is righteous, unchanging, and instinctively known by man (Rom. 2:14-15) created in God's image (Gen. 1:27), and of which each system of *covenantal law* is a temporary, historical outworking (Heb. 7:12) in accordance with God's eternal purpose (Eph. 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9); **(8) the Law of Moses** : the *covenantal* outworking of God's absolute law under the Old Covenant – the exhaustive, *indivisible* (Jas. 2:10; Gal. 5:3) legal code, summed up in the Ten Commandments (Exod. 34:28), covenantally binding upon *the nation of Israel* (Exod. 19:5-6; 24:3), temporary in its duration (Heb. 7:11-12; Col. 2:14), and fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:4; Matt. 5:17-18; Col. 2:16-17); **(9) the Law of Christ** : the *covenantal* outworking of God's *absolute* law under the New Covenant – the gracious law of the New Covenant (Rom. 6:14), which is covenantally binding upon the *Church* (1 Cor. 9:20-21) and consists of the *law of love* (Matt. 5:44; Gal. 6:2; Jas. 2:8; Rom. 13:8-10), *the example of the Lord Jesus Christ* (John 13:34; Phil. 2:4-12), *Christ's commands and teaching* (Matt. 28:20; 2 Pet. 3:2), *the commands and teachings of the New Testament* (2 Pet. 3:2; Eph. 2:20; Jude 1:17; 1 John 5:3), and *all Scripture interpreted in light of Jesus Christ* (Matt. 5:17-18; Luke 24:27, 44; 2 Tim. 3:16-17); **(10) the Kingdom of God** : the everlasting reign of God over the universe and His people, progressively unfolded via the biblical covenants – ultimately realized in the messianic reign of Jesus Christ in heaven with His saints (Heb. 1:1-4; Rev. 20:4; Eph. 2:6), that was eschatologically inaugurated at His ascension (Dan. 7:13-14) in fulfillment of the biblical covenants (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Acts 2:25-36), is advanced through the Spirit-empowered preaching of the Gospel (Acts 1:7-8), and will be consummated in the new heavens and new earth at the Second Coming when Christ subdues all His enemies (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

*Providence Theological Institute used the "Theological Positions" (<http://www.dsff.org/positions.pdf>) document of Dayspring Fellowship in Austin, TX as the foundational base (i.e., format, some wording, certain areas) for this chart.