

COVENANT THEOLOGY COMPARED TO NEW COVENANT THEOLOGY



The chart below depicts the principal commonalities and differences between Covenant Theology (as defined by its two *major* branches - WCF Federalism and 1689 Federalism) and New Covenant Theology (as defined by Providence Theological Institute). Although certainly not exhaustive, this chart highlights the general commonalities and differences between these two theological systems.

(√) indicates that New Covenant Theology <i>generally</i> agrees with Covenant Theology regarding this distinctive.	(⊙) indicates that New Covenant Theology <i>partially</i> agrees with Covenant Theology regarding this distinctive. [Explanation given.]	(⊗) indicates that New Covenant Theology <i>disagrees</i> with Covenant Theology regarding this distinctive.
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COVENANT THEOLOGY (CT)		NEW COVENANT THEOLOGY (NCT) (as held by Providence Theological Institute)
WCF FEDERALISM	1689 FEDERALISM	
√ 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. New Testament (NT) has interpretive priority over the Old Testament (OT) due to NT being the final revelation of God. [not consistent].	√ 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. New Testament (NT) has interpretive priority over the Old Testament (OT) due to NT being the final revelation of God. [not consistent].	√ 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. New Testament (NT) has interpretive priority over the Old Testament (OT) due to NT being the final revelation of God (i.e., consistent Christocentric Hermeneutics).
√ II. Trinitarian Theology √ III. Protestant Principia of the Reformation √ A. <i>Sola Scriptura</i> ("by the Scriptures alone ") √ B. <i>Sola Fide</i> ("by Faith alone ") √ C. <i>Sola Gratia</i> ("by Grace alone ") √ D. <i>Solo Christo</i> ("through Christ alone ") √ E. <i>Soli Deo Gloria</i> ("to God alone be the Glory") √ F. <i>Semper Reformanda</i> (" always reforming")	√ II. Trinitarian Theology √ III. Protestant Principia of the Reformation √ A. <i>Sola Scriptura</i> ("by the Scriptures alone ") √ B. <i>Sola Fide</i> ("by Faith alone ") √ C. <i>Sola Gratia</i> ("by Grace alone ") √ D. <i>Solo Christo</i> ("through Christ alone ") √ E. <i>Soli Deo Gloria</i> ("to God alone be the Glory") √ F. <i>Semper Reformanda</i> (" always reforming")	√ II. Trinitarian Theology √ III. Protestant Principia of the Reformation √ A. <i>Sola Scriptura</i> ("by the Scriptures alone ") √ B. <i>Sola Fide</i> ("by Faith alone ") √ C. <i>Sola Gratia</i> ("by Grace alone ") √ D. <i>Solo Christo</i> ("through Christ alone ") √ E. <i>Soli Deo Gloria</i> ("to God alone be the Glory") √ F. <i>Semper Reformanda</i> (" always reforming")
√ IV. 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 the biblical Gospel. √ E. Good works will always result from genuine faith.	√ IV. 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 the biblical Gospel. √ E. Good works will always result from genuine faith.	√ IV. 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 the biblical Gospel. √ E. Good works will always result from genuine faith.
⊗ V. "Classic" Covenant Theology (i.e. <i>paedobaptistic</i> CT) ⊗ A. Eternal Covenant of Redemption (<i>pactum salutis</i>) ⊗ B. Covenant of Works (CW) = pre-fall covenant whereby Adam could have merited eternal life by perfect obedience ⊗ C. Covenant of Grace (CG) = one over-arching covenant with multiple administrations (i.e. the biblical covenants); CG unites redemptive history ⊗ D. Members of Covenant of Grace = believers & unbelievers √ E. OT & NT saints all saved by grace through faith in Christ √ F. No one saved apart from covenant relationship with God. √ G. Israel = the Church in the Old Testament √ H. One redemptive plan to secure salvation of the elect. ⊗ I. All OT saints had the Holy Spirit prior to Pentecost ⊗ J. Tripartite Division of Law (i.e. moral, civil, ceremonial) ⊗ K. Moral (i.e. <i>transcovenantal</i>) Law = Ten Commandments ⊗ L. Ten Commandments as "moral law" cannot be abrogated and must apply to the NC believer. ⊗ M. Sunday = Christian Sabbath (creation ordinance) ⊗ N. Church = mixed multitude (i.e. believers & unbelievers) in that children of believers viewed as members of Covenant of Grace. ⊗ O. OT commands still in force unless canceled in NT. ⊗ P. All biblical covenants are outworkings of the Covenant of Grace. ⊗ Q. Law of Christ = Moral Law (i.e. Ten Commandments)	⊗ V. "Progressive" Covenant Theology (i.e. <i>baptistic</i> CT) ⊗ A. Eternal Covenant of Redemption (<i>pactum salutis</i>) ⊗ B. Covenant of Works (CW) = pre-fall covenant whereby Adam could have merited eternal life by perfect obedience ⊗ C. Covenant of Grace (CG) is promised in Gen. 3:15 & established in the ratification of the New Covenant; in short, the CG is held to be the New Covenant; CG unites redemptive history (i.e. one covenant, single administration) ⊗ D. Members of Covenant of Grace = the elect √ E. OT & NT saints all saved by grace through faith in Christ √ F. No one saved apart from covenant relationship with God. √ G. Israel = typological of Church (the eschatological Israel) √ H. One redemptive plan to secure salvation of the elect. ⊗ I. All OT saints had the Holy Spirit prior to Pentecost ⊗ J. Tripartite Division of Law (i.e. moral, civil, ceremonial) or can be as dual (i.e. moral - "unchanging," positive - "changing") ⊗ K. Moral (i.e. <i>transcovenantal</i>) Law = Ten Commandments ⊗ L. Ten Commandments as "moral law" cannot be abrogated and must apply to the NC believer. ⊗ M. Sunday = Christian Sabbath (creation ordinance) ⊙ N. Church = the elect of all time; only believers are truly members of the Covenant of Grace (promised in Gen. 3:15 & established in NC) ⊗ O. The whole law of Moses, as it functioned under the Old Covenant, has been abolished, including the Decalogue. However, insofar as the Decalogue transcend the Old Covenant, they abide. ⊙ P. All biblical covenants advance the Covenant of Grace, but they do not constitute administrations of that covenant. ⊗ Q. Law of Christ = Moral Law (i.e. Ten Commandments) as correctly interpreted by Christ.	√ V. New Covenant Theology (Theology of the New Covenant (NC)) √ A. God's eternal Purpose of redemption not a covenant √ B. Pre-fall covenant (no probationary period; eternal life not promised to Adam for obedience; not Covenant of Works) √ C. NCT rejects Covenant of Grace (CG). All versions of CG (in CT) flatten redemptive history; NCT holds to post-fall covenant of promise, that (1) is summed up in Gen. 3:15; (2) proleptically has NC in view, and (3) was instituted with Adam. √ D. New Covenant Members = elect (retroactive following Cross) √ E. OT & NT saints all saved by grace through faith in Christ √ F. No one saved apart from a covenant relationship with God. √ G. Israel = type of the Church (i.e. eschatological Israel) as God's people √ H. One redemptive plan to secure salvation of the elect. √ I. Only select OT saints had the Spirit prior to Pentecost √ J. Tripartite Distinction helpful but Tripartite Division/Separation not supported by Scripture √ K. Absolute (<i>transcovenantal</i>) Law = 2 Greatest Commandments L. Ten Commandments as "summary statement" of Law of Moses was abrogated along with Old Covenant & Law of Moses. √ M. Jesus Christ, not Sunday, fulfills Sabbath (Sign of OC). √ N. Church = elect of all time first constituted in history as the spiritual body of Christ at Pentecost via Spirit Baptism √ O. 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. √ P. All the biblical covenants are fulfilled by Christ in the NC. √ Q. Law of Christ = Law of Love, Christ's Example & Teaching, NT commands/teachings, All Scripture interpreted in light of Christ.

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COVENANT THEOLOGY		NEW COVENANT THEOLOGY (as held by Providence Theological Institute)
WCF FEDERALISM	1689 FEDERALISM	
VI. Church Issues	VI. Church Issues	VI. Church Issues
√ A. Two Ordinances: Baptism & Lord's Supper	√ A. Two Ordinances: Baptism & Lord's Supper	√ A. Two Ordinances: Baptism & Lord's Supper
⊗ B. Sign of New Covenant: Baptism	⊗ B. Sign of New Covenant: Baptism	√ B. Sign of New Covenant: Cup of Lord's Supper (Luke 22:20)
⊗ C. Baptism for Infants (<i>paedobaptism</i>)	√ C. Baptism for Believers <i>Only</i> (<i>credobaptism</i>)	√ C. Baptism for Believers <i>Only</i>
⊗ D. Baptism by Sprinkling	√ D. Baptism by Immersion	√ D. Baptism by Immersion
√ E. Baptism = Symbol of salvation; important as act of obedience admission to privileges of visible Church membership	√ E. Baptism = Symbol of salvation; important as act of obedience admission to privileges of visible Church membership	√ E. Baptism = Symbol of salvation; important as act of obedience admission to privileges of visible Church membership
√ F. Lord's Supper = Remembrance + Spiritual Communion with God	√ F. Lord's Supper = Remembrance + Spiritual Communion with God	√ F. Lord's Supper = Remembrance + Spiritual Communion with God
√ G. Church Discipline	√ G. Church Discipline	√ G. Church Discipline
√ H. Centrality of Preaching	√ H. Centrality of Preaching	√ H. Centrality of Preaching
√ I. Cessation of <i>miraculous</i> spiritual gifts	√ I. Cessation of <i>miraculous</i> spiritual gifts	√ I. Cessation of <i>miraculous</i> spiritual gifts
⊗ VII. Defined in Westminster Confession (WCF) (1647-49 A.D.)	⊗ VII. Defined in 2nd London Baptist Confession (1689 A.D.) ⊗ A. Modern 1689 proponents assert that the 1st & 2nd London Baptist Confessions are doctrinally <i>uniform</i> (as far as substance)	√ VII. Agrees with 1st London Baptist Confession (1644/46 A.D.) √ A. NCT asserts there are <i>substantial</i> differences between the 1st & 2nd London Baptist Confessions (i.e. covenants, law of God)
VIII. Church Government	VIII. Church Government	VIII. Church Government
√ A. Plurality of Elders (teaching / ruling elder distinction)	√ A. Plurality of Elders (all elders viewed as pastors)	√ A. Plurality of Elders
⊗ B. Session, Presbytery, General Assembly (or <i>Consistory, Classis, Synod</i>)	√ B. Local Autonomy of Congregations	√ B. Local Autonomy of Congregations
IX. Christian Liberty	IX. Total Liberty of Conscience	IX. Christian Liberty & Total Liberty of Conscience
X. Government Relations	X. Government Relations	X. Government Relations
⊗ A. Magistrate (State) enforces correct theology	√ A. Separation of Church and State	√ A. Separation of Church and State
	√ B. Voluntarily involvement of Church members in political activities	√ B. Voluntarily involvement of Church members in political activities
XI. Eschatology	XI. Eschatology	XI. Eschatology
√ A. Visible, Bodily, One-Stage Return of Christ at End of Age.	√ A. Visible, Bodily, One-Stage Return of Christ at End of Age.	√ A. Visible, Bodily, One-Stage Return of Christ at End of Age.
√ B. 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.	√ B. 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.	√ B. 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.
√ C. Bodily Resurrection of Just & Unjust for Day of Judgment at End of Age.	√ C. Bodily Resurrection of Just & Unjust for Day of Judgment at End of Age.	√ C. Bodily Resurrection of Just & Unjust for Day of Judgment at End of Age.
√ D. Eternal Hell for Reprobate.	√ D. Eternal Hell for Reprobate.	√ D. Eternal Hell for Reprobate.
√ E. Eternal New Heavens/New Earth for Elect.	√ E. Eternal New Heavens/New Earth for Elect.	√ E. Eternal New Heavens/New Earth for Elect.
○ F. Antichrist = Papal Dynasty of Catholicism (<i>papa Antichristus</i>)	○ F. Antichrist = Papal Dynasty of Catholicism (<i>papa Antichristus</i>)	√ F. Varying positions on identity of the Antichrist - <i>all</i> which identify the Antichrist with an end-time apostate one-world government.
	√ G. <i>Now-Not-Yet</i> understanding of NT Prophecy	√ G. <i>Now-Not-Yet</i> understanding of NT Prophecy
	√ H. <i>Recapitulation</i> necessary to understand NT Prophecy	√ H. <i>Recapitulation</i> necessary to understand NT Prophecy
		√ I. Future end-time ingathering of <i>elect</i> , ethnic Israel into Church.

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.dsfi.org/positions.pdf>) document of Dayspring Fellowship in Austin, TX as the foundational base (i.e., format, some wording, certain areas) for this chart.