

DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY COMPARED TO NEW COVENANT THEOLOGY



The chart below depicts the principal commonalities and differences between Dispensational Theology (as defined by its two *major* branches - Classic Dispensationalism & Progressive Dispensationalism) and New Covenant Theology (as defined by Providence Theological Seminary). Although certainly **not** exhaustive, this chart highlights the principal commonalities and differences between these two theological systems.

(√) indicates that New Covenant Theology completely agrees with Dispensational Theology regarding this distinctive.	(◊) indicates that New Covenant Theology partially agrees with Dispensational Theology regarding this distinctive.	(⊗) indicates that New Covenant Theology disagrees with Dispensational Theology regarding this distinctive.
DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY (DT)		NEW COVENANT THEOLOGY (NCT) (as defined by Providence Theological Seminary)
CLASSIC DISPENSATIONALISM	PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ I. Sola Scriptura ("by the Scriptures alone") √ A. The Bible <u>is</u> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ I. Sola Scriptura ("by the Scriptures alone") √ A. The Bible <u>is</u> the Word and words of God. √ B. All Scripture is inspired by God and thus wholly inerrant, infallible, sufficient and authoritative. ⊗ C. Revised "literal" hermeneutic that allows for a more consistent historical-literary interpretation of Scripture. ⊗ D. New Testament (NT) does not have interpretive priority over the Old Testament (OT). ◊ E. <i>Now-Not-Yet</i> understanding of NT Prophecy & redemptive history [not consistent] ⊗ F. Literal understanding of apocalyptic prophecy (i.e. Revelation, etc.). ⊗ G. "Sequential" understanding of Revelation & Olivet Discourse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ I. Sola Scriptura ("by the Scriptures alone") √ A. The Bible <u>is</u> 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. <i>Now-Not-Yet</i> understanding of NT Prophecy & redemptive history √ F. Non-literal interpretation of apocalyptic prophecy, where <i>clearer</i> passages of Scripture interpret of <i>less clear</i> passages. √ G. <i>Recapitulation</i> necessary to understand NT Prophecy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ II. Trinitarian Theology ⊗ III. Arminian Soteriology (OR varying degrees of Calvinism) ⊗ A. Five Points of Arminianism (although <i>most</i> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ II. Trinitarian Theology ⊗ III. Arminian Soteriology (OR varying degrees of Calvinism) ⊗ A. Five Points of Arminianism (although <i>most</i> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ 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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊗ IV. "Classic" Dispensational Theology ⊗ A. Redemptive history divided into 7 distinct <i>dispensations</i>: Innocence, Conscience, Civil Government, Promise Law, Grace (i.e. Church Age), Kingdom (i.e. Millennium) ⊗ B. Two New Covenant (NC) <i>dispensations</i>: Grace & Millennium ⊗ C. Two redemptive plans: Israel & the Church (each with a <i>distinctly different</i> 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 <i>current</i> 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 the Spirit prior to Pentecost. ◊ N. Church = the Body of Christ first constituted at Pentecost via Spirit Baptism. Spirit Baptism ends at the 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 <i>profitable</i> & <i>authoritative</i> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊗ IV. "Progressive" Dispensational Theology ⊗ A. Redemptive history divided into 4 primary <i>dispensations</i>: Patriarchal, Mosaic, Ecclesial (i.e. Church Age), and Zion (i.e. earthly, future millennium + eternal state) ⊗ B. Two successive New Covenant <i>dispensations</i>: Ecclesial & Zion ⊗ C. One <i>people of God</i> with dual application to Church & future redeemed Israel (i.e. distinction <i>less</i> pronounced, but still intact) √ 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 ≠ (merely) parenthesis in redemptive history. Fulfillment of OT promises inaugurated at Christ's First Coming (for Church), yet await total fulfillment in Millennium. ◊ I. Christ's <i>current</i> heavenly reign at the Father's Right Hand inaugurates fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (i.e. throne, kingdom) but awaits total fulfillment in earthly Millennium. ⊗ J. Body of Christ = Church + future redeemed national Israel + millennial saints ⊗ K. Church not revealed in the Old Testament. ⊗ L. New Covenant made with Israel, but inaugurated for Church. √ M. Only select OT saints had the Spirit prior to Pentecost. ◊ N. Church = the Body of Christ first constituted at Pentecost via Spirit Baptism. Spirit Baptism ends at the 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 <i>profitable</i> & <i>authoritative</i> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ IV. New Covenant Theology (Theology of the New Covenant (NC)) √ A. Redemptive history divided into 3 <i>ages</i>: <i>world that was</i> (pre-Flood; 2 Pet. 3:6), <i>world that now is</i> (2 Pet. 3:7), <i>world to come</i> (2 Pet. 3:13); also 2 primary <i>covenant eras</i>: Old & New. √ B. New Covenant Age = interadvent period √ C. One redemptive plan to secure salvation of the elect, i.e., the one <i>people of God</i>. √ 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 <i>current</i> 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 the 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 <i>profitable</i> & <i>authoritative</i> 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)

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DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY (DT)		NEW COVENANT THEOLOGY (NCT) <small>(as defined by Providence Theological Seminary)</small>
CLASSIC DISPENSATIONALISM	PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM	
V. Church Issues ✓ A. Two Ordinances: Baptism & Lord's Supper ⊗ B. Sign of New Covenant: Baptism ✓ C. Baptism for Believers Only (<i>credobaptism</i>) ✓ 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 <i>miraculous</i> spiritual gifts	V. Church Issues ✓ A. Two Ordinances: Baptism & Lord's Supper ⊗ B. Sign of New Covenant: Baptism ✓ C. Baptism for Believers Only (<i>credobaptism</i>) ✓ 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 <i>miraculous</i> spiritual gifts	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 <i>miraculous</i> spiritual gifts
VI. Church Government ○ A. (Typically) Plurality of Elders or Single Elder / Rule by Deacons ✓ B. Local Autonomy of Congregations	VI. Church Government ○ A. (Typically) Plurality of Elders or Single Elder / Rule by Deacons ✓ B. Local Autonomy of Congregations	VI. Church Government ✓ A. Plurality of Elders ✓ B. Local Autonomy of Congregations
✓ VII. Christian Liberty & Total Liberty of Conscience	✓ VII. Christian Liberty & Total Liberty of Conscience	✓ 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	VIII. Government Relations ✓ A. Separation of Church and State ✓ B. Voluntarily involvement of Church members in political activities	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: <i>pre-tribulation</i> , <i>mid-tribulation</i> , <i>pre-wrath</i> , or <i>post-tribulation</i> , etc. ⊗ B. Daniel's 70th Week = <i>literal</i> , seven-year period between Rapture & Second Coming; also, referred to as Tribulation Period ○ C. Antichrist = future <i>individual</i> 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 <i>national entity</i> at/just before Christ's Return. ⊗ F. Bodily Resurrection of Just & Unjust for Day of Judgment after 1,000 year period. ⊗ G. Millennium = future, <i>literal</i> , thousand-year reign of Christ from Jerusalem on David's Throne in fulfillment of OT promises of the Abrahamic & Davidic covenants ✓ H. <i>Eternal</i> New Heavens & Earth for Elect; <i>eternal</i> Hell for Non-Elect.	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: <i>pre-tribulation</i> , <i>mid-tribulation</i> , <i>pre-wrath</i> , or <i>post-tribulation</i> , etc. ⊗ B. Daniel's 70th Week = <i>literal</i> , seven-year period between Rapture & Second Coming; also, referred to as Tribulation Period ○ C. Antichrist = future <i>individual</i> 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 <i>national entity</i> at/just before Christ's Return. ⊗ F. Bodily Resurrection of Just & Unjust for Day of Judgment after 1,000 year period. ⊗ G. Millennium = future, <i>literal</i> , thousand-year reign of Christ from Jerusalem on David's Throne in fulfillment of OT promises of the Abrahamic & Davidic covenants (though already inaugurated) ✓ H. <i>Eternal</i> New Heavens & Earth for Elect; <i>eternal</i> Hell for Non-Elect.	IX. Eschatology ✓ A. Visible, Bodily, One-Stage Return of Christ at End of NC Age. ✓ B. Daniel's 70th Week = <i>either</i> (1) <i>already</i> fulfilled in 1st century at Christ's First Coming (& after), or (2) <i>symbolic</i> of entire NC age between Christ's First & Second Comings (i.e., <i>Ultimate Jubilee</i>). ✓ 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 <i>elect</i> , ethnic Israel into the Church. Israel has no future <i>apart</i> 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. <i>Eternal</i> New Heavens & Earth for Elect; <i>eternal</i> 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 the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven with His saints (Heb. 1:1-4; Rev. 20:4; Eph. 2:6), which was inaugurated at His ascension (Dan. 7:13-14) in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Acts 2:25-36) and will be consummated at His Second Coming when He subdues all His enemies (1 Cor. 15:24-28).