

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 Seminary). Although certainly **not** exhaustive, this chart highlights the principal commonalities and differences between these two theological systems.

COVENANT THEOLOGY (CT)		NEW COVENANT THEOLOGY (NCT) (as defined by Providence Theological Seminary)
WCF FEDERALISM	1689 FEDERALISM	
(✓) indicates that New Covenant Theology completely agrees with Covenant Theology regarding this distinctive.	(○) indicates that New Covenant Theology partially agrees with Covenant Theology regarding this distinctive. [Explanation given.]	(⊗) indicates that New Covenant Theology disagrees with Covenant Theology regarding this distinctive.
✓ 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	✓ II. Trinitarian Theology	✓ 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")	✓ 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")	✓ 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		
WCF FEDERALISM	1689 FEDERALISM	NEW COVENANT THEOLOGY (as defined by Providence Theological Seminary)
VI. Church Issues ✓ A. Two Ordinances: Baptism & Lord's Supper ⊗ B. Sign of New Covenant: Baptism ⊗ C. Baptism for Infants (<i>paedobaptism</i>) ⊗ D. Baptism by Sprinkling ✓ 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 ✓ G. Church Discipline ✓ H. Centrality of Preaching ✓ I. Cessation of <i>miraculous</i> spiritual gifts ⊗ VII. Defined in Westminster Confession (WCF) (1647-49 A.D.)	VI. Church Issues ✓ A. Two Ordinances: Baptism & Lord's Supper ⊗ B. Sign of New Covenant: Baptism ✓ C. Baptism for Believers <i>Only</i> (<i>credobaptism</i>) ✓ D. Baptism by Immersion ✓ 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 ✓ G. Church Discipline ✓ H. Centrality of Preaching ✓ I. Cessation of <i>miraculous</i> spiritual gifts ⊗ 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)	VI. Church Issues ✓ A. Two Ordinances: Baptism & Lord's Supper ✓ B. Sign of New Covenant: Cup of Lord's Supper (Luke 22:20) ✓ C. Baptism for Believers <i>Only</i> ✓ D. Baptism by Immersion ✓ 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 ✓ G. Church Discipline ✓ H. Centrality of Preaching ✓ I. Cessation of <i>miraculous</i> spiritual gifts ✓ 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 ✓ A. Plurality of Elders (teaching / ruling elder distinction) ⊗ B. Session, Presbytery, General Assembly (or <i>Consistory, Classis, Synod</i>)	VIII. Church Government ✓ A. Plurality of Elders (all elders viewed as pastors) ✓ B. Local Autonomy of Congregations	VIII. Church Government ✓ A. Plurality of Elders ✓ B. Local Autonomy of Congregations
✓ IX. <u>Christian Liberty</u> X. <u>Government Relations</u> ⊗ A. Magistrate (State) enforces correct theology	✓ IX. <u>Total Liberty of Conscience</u> X. <u>Government Relations</u> ✓ A. Separation of Church and State ✓ B. Voluntarily involvement of Church members in political activities	✓ IX. <u>Christian Liberty & Total Liberty of Conscience</u> X. <u>Government Relations</u> ✓ A. Separation of Church and State ✓ B. Voluntarily involvement of Church members in political activities
XI. Eschatology ✓ 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. ✓ C. Bodily Resurrection of Just & Unjust for Day of Judgment at End of Age. ✓ D. Eternal Hell for Reprobate. ✓ E. Eternal New Heavens/New Earth for Elect. ◊ F. Antichrist = Papal Dynasty of Catholicism (<i>papa Antichristus</i>)	XI. Eschatology ✓ 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. ✓ C. Bodily Resurrection of Just & Unjust for Day of Judgment at End of Age. ✓ D. Eternal Hell for Reprobate. ✓ E. Eternal New Heavens/New Earth for Elect. ◊ F. Antichrist = Papal Dynasty of Catholicism (<i>papa Antichristus</i>) ✓ G. <i>Now-Not-Yet</i> understanding of NT Prophecy ✓ H. <i>Recapitulation</i> necessary to understand NT Prophecy	XI. Eschatology ✓ 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. ✓ C. Bodily Resurrection of Just & Unjust for Day of Judgment at End of Age. ✓ D. Eternal Hell for Reprobate. ✓ E. Eternal New Heavens/New Earth for Elect. ✓ 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 ✓ 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).