

Differences Between Dispensational, Covenant, and New Covenant Theology

<u>Dispensational</u>	<u>Covenant Theology</u>	<u>New Covenant Theology</u>
May be Arminian or modified Calvinist. Almost never five-point Calvinist	Usually those from a Reformed perspective, though there are exceptions.	Same as CT
Stresses 'literal' interpretation of the Bible	Accepts both literal and figurative (spiritual) interpretation of the Bible	Same as CT
Usually does not accept the idea of the 'Analogy of Faith.'	Almost always accept the idea of the 'Analogy of Faith.' (<i>Scriptures should interpret scriptures</i>).	Same as CT
'Israel' always means only the literal, physical descendants of Jacob.	'Israel' may mean either literal, physical descendants of Jacob or the figurative, spiritual Israel, depending on context.	Same as CT
'Israel of God' in Gal. 6:16 means physical Israel alone.	'Israel of God' in Gal. 6:16 means spiritual Israel, parallel to Gal. 3:29; Rom. 2:28-29; 9:6; Phil. 3:3.	Same as CT
God has 2 peoples with 2 separate destinies: Israel (earthly) and the Church (heavenly).	God always had only one people, the Church gradually developed through the ages, in accordance with an Covenant worked out in eternity past between the "Three Persons of the Godhead."	In OT, believers are called simply "the elect of Israel", not the Church. NCT doesn't recognize a Church in the OT, such as in the NT. They use Matt 16:18 where Jesus said that he will build His Church. " <i>There is but one people of God of whom natural Israel was the typical foreshadowing. So, the Church is the "New Israel."</i>
The Church was born at Pentecost	The Church* began in the OT (Acts 7:38) and reached fulfillment in the NT. <i>There is an unfortunate tendency to translated the word "ecclesia" with the word church, when it can very well be translated "assembly", which would make more sense in the OT version of it.</i>	Same as Dispensationalism.
The Church was not prophesied as such in the OT but was a "mystery", hidden until the NT	There are many OT prophecies of the NT Church.	Same as CT
All OT prophecies for 'Israel' are for the physical nation of Israel, not the Church.	Some OT prophecies are for national Israel, others for spiritual Israel.	Same as CT
God's main purpose in history is national physical Israel.	God's main purpose* in history is Christ and secondarily the Church. <i>God's main purpose is His own glory, Christ included because He is the glory of God, and then the church</i>	Same as Covenant Theology with one exception. NCT sees the saints of the OT as being added to the church after it's built.

The Church is a parenthesis in God's program for the ages.	The Church is the culmination of God's saving purpose for the ages.	Same as CT
The main heir to Abraham's covenant was Isaac and literal Israel.	The main heir to Abraham's covenant was Christ, the Seed, and spiritual Israel which is "in Christ".	Same as CT
There was no eternal Covenant of Redemption within the Trinity, to effect election.	The eternal Covenant of Redemption was within the Trinity to effect election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as Dispensationalism but there was an eternal Decree or Purpose of Redemption within the Trinity to effect election.
Most believe there was no Covenant of Works with Adam in the Garden of Eden.	God made a conditional Covenant of Works with Adam as representative for all his posterity.	Same as Dispensationalism. But agree with CT on Adam as representative for all his posterity.
Most believe there was no Covenant of Grace concerning Adam.	God made a Covenant of Grace with Christ and His people, including Adam.	Does not believe in a "Covenant of Grace." NCT believes that only when the Bible stipulates that a Covenant has been "cut" between God and man, is there a Biblical reason for believing that one has been made.
Israel was rash to accept the Covenant at Mt. Sinai.	Israel was right to accept the Covenant at Mt. Sinai.	NCT say that Israel was so frightened that they would have accepted anything.
The 'New Covenant' of Jer. 31:31-34 is only for literal Israel and is not the New Covenant of Luke 22:20; although there is some disagreement among Dispensationalists about this.	The 'New Covenant' of Jer. 31 is the same as in Luke 22:20; both are for spiritual Israel according to Heb. 8	Same as CT.
God's program in history is mainly through separate dispensations.	God's program in history is mainly through related covenants, but all those covenants were derived from the eternal covenant that the Trinity made in eternity.	God's program in history is through related covenants, but culminating in the new covenant that eliminates the others because they were all realized in Christ.
Some have said that OT sinners were saved* by works. <i>This is one of the areas where we believe that Dispensationalism, when carried to its logical conclusion, alters the gospel of Christ, and so is a dangerous departure from authentic Biblical Christianity.</i>	No man has ever been saved by works, but only by grace. (Eph 2:8-10)	Same as CT.
Most teach that men in the OT were saved by faith in a revelation peculiar to their Dispensation, but this did not include their faith in the Messiah as their sin-bearer.	All men who have ever been saved have been saved by faith in Christ as their sin-bearer, which has been progressively revealed in every age.	Same as CT, although *some* would say that in the OT many would not have known about the sin-bearing part, just that they were sinners that needed the grace of God to be forgiven, and that they waited for the promise of God for He would crush the head of the serpent.

The OT sacrifices were not recognized as the Gospel or types of the Messiah as sin-bearer, but only seen as such in retrospect	OT believers believed in the Gospel of Messiah as sin-bearer mainly by the sacrifices as types and prophecies	Same as CT
The Holy Spirit indwells only believers in the Dispensation of Grace, not OT and not after the "Secret Rapture."	The Holy Spirit has indwelt believers in all ages, especially in the present NT era, and will not be withdrawn.	They believe that the indwelling wasn't the same as in the Church time (as Jesus would send the comforter).
Jesus made an offer of the literal Kingdom to Israel; since Israel rejected it, it is postponed. Fred Miller writes, <i>"Dispensationalism believes that the purpose of the first advent of Jesus Christ was to offer an earthly Kingdom to the Jews. This Kingdom would reinstate the Old Testament legal system and it's expansion to the entire world under the Messiah. When the Jews rejected Jesus Christ and His Kingdom offer, plan B went into effect and Christ went to the cross to initiate the dispensation of Grace and the "mystery church". Had Israel received her King there would have been no cross - and no Gospel!"</i> This is why it is seen as an unbiblical view.	Jesus made only an offer of the Spiritual Kingdom, which was rejected by literal Israel but has gradually been accepted by spiritual Israel	Same as CT
OT believers were not 'in Christ,' nor part of the Body or Bride of Christ.	Believers in all ages are all 'in Christ' and part of the Body and Bride of Christ	Same as CT, but realized in the NT
The OT Law has been abolished. For the Church, but not Israel, who will be under that Law when the Church is taken away, and God returns to His original people... Physical Israel	The Law has 3 uses: to restrain sin in society, to lead to Christ, and to instruct Christians in godliness. The ceremonial laws have been abolished; the civil laws have been abolished except for their general equity; the moral laws continue	Same as Dispensationalism, without believing that physical Israel has a future. NCT says that only the laws of the NT apply to the Christian. The OT Law is there to instruct us in the way God dealt with His people in the OT. Christ is affirmed as being "The New Law-Giver", as opposed to Moses who was "The Old Law-Giver"
OT laws are no longer in effect unless repeated in the NT	OT laws are still in effect unless abrogated in the NT	Same as Dispensationalism
Teaches that the Millennium is the Kingdom of God. They are always Premil, usually Pre-tribulation	The Church is the Kingdom of God. They are usually Amil or Postmil; although a few are Premil or Preterist	Same as CT
The OT animal sacrifices will be restored in the Millennium, as a memorial only	The OT sacrifices were fulfilled and forever abolished in Christ.	Same as CT.

The Millennium will fulfill the Covenant made with Abraham. Israel as a nation has a future.	Christ fulfilled the Covenant to Abraham. Some believe in a future for literal Israel, most don't	Same as CT
David or Jesus will sit on the Millennial throne in Jerusalem	Christ alone sits on the throne in heaven. Saints rule under Him in Spirit	Same as CT
Most do not embrace infant baptism. Usually believer's baptism is the norm, although those Dispensationalists that are Presbyterian are paedobaptists.	Most embrace infant baptism, but the Baptist among them don't.	Does not embrace infant baptism, only believer's baptism

* found at <http://www.ourelement.org/about/what-we-believe/faqs/289-dispensationalism-covenant-theology-and-new-covenant-theology>