



Introduction

Those who hold to New Covenant Theology and those who hold to Covenant Theology are typically reformed.

New Covenant Theology

God's Kingdom through God's Covenants and *Kingdom through Covenant* by Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum provide the most recent and most thorough explanation of New Covenant Theology.

Covenants are Foundational

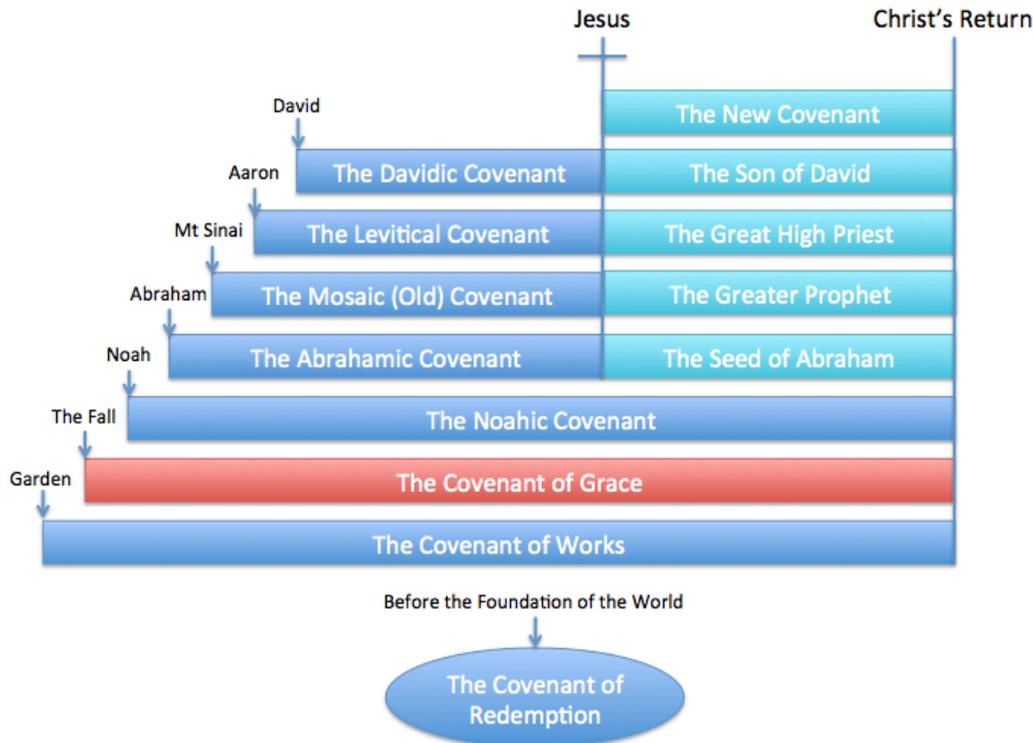
- New Covenant Theology is a form of Covenant Theology.
- New Covenant Theology affirms that the covenants of Scripture are foundational to the narrative of the Bible.
- We have much agreement with New Covenant Theology's understanding of the covenants and how they work together.

Biblical Covenants

- The Covenant with Creation (The Covenant of Works)
 - The Covenant with Noah
 - The Covenant with Abraham
 - The Covenant at Sinai
 - The Covenant with David
 - The New Covenant
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- New Covenant Theology does not recognize a Covenant of Grace.
 - New Covenant Theology differs in its understanding of the moral law.



New Covenant Theology and The Covenant of Grace



The covenant of grace is God's solemn pledge to accomplish redemption by Jesus Christ and to apply redemption to all his elect in Christ.¹

- All the covenants that follow the Covenant of Grace implement the Covenant of Grace with the fulfillment found in Jesus in the New Covenant.
- New Covenant Theology skips over the Covenant of Grace because of the traditional way Covenant Theology thinks of the Covenant of Grace.
- There is not a single covenant after the Fall which all the other covenants administer.
- The difference is where as Gentry and Wellum speak of the “progressive revelation of the *one* plan of God” that the other covenants implement, we speak of the Covenant of Grace that the other covenants implement.
- Gentry and Wellum begin with the promise of Genesis 3:15 and show God is the faithful covenant partner.
- God, by his sovereign grace, made a promise to save through a covenant head, the last Adam, Jesus himself. That sounds like a Covenant of Grace.

¹ Greg Nichols, *Covenant Theology* (Vestavia Hill, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2011), 128.



- Gentry and Wellum admit that Genesis 3:15 is “crucial in establishing God’s initial promise of redemption – a promise that drive the entire storyline of Scripture, including the biblical covenants, leading us to Christ.”²
- Gentry and Wellum describe the Covenant of Grace.

New Covenant Theology and the Law

Old Covenant law can be broken down into three categories: moral, civil, and ceremonial. The civil and ceremonial laws are obsolete but the moral law of God endures.

Moral, Civil, and Ceremonial Laws

New Covenant Theology completely rejects the Old Testament law categories of moral, civil, and ceremonial.

Mosaic Covenant Laws

- The Ten Commandments are the foundation and the specific laws (ordinances) that follow are applications of the Ten Commandments in day-to-day living.³
- The Ten Commandments and the ordinances go together since they are all part of the same covenant, the Old Covenant, which is done away with by the New Covenant.
- The Ten Commandments and the specific applications of the Ten Commandments found in Exodus are bound by the setting of the time in which they were given. The law is not eternal.
- Once the New Covenant supersedes the Old Covenant, all the laws of the Old Covenant are gone, including the Ten Commandments, because they are fulfilled in Christ.
- All we need to know about righteousness and how to live is found in the New Testament.

Love and The Law

- To the New Covenant theologian we violate the New Covenant when we do not act in love. Romans 13:8-10
- The Ten Commandments do not bind us, but we are bound by love.
- How do we know what constitutes acting in love? Who decides what is wrong or right? Do my neighbor or I determine what is right or wrong?
- We can’t rely on our good hearts or our neighbor’s good heart.
- If we want to love our neighbors we need to speak and act in accordance with a higher law, a law that is unchangeable.

The Eternal Moral Law

- Gentry and Wellum say, “The righteousness of God has not changed.”
- They are appealing to the immutability of God. Malachi 3:6
- The Ten Commandments came from the righteousness and holiness of God, which are eternal.

² Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *God’s Kingdom through God’s Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 262.

³ *Ibid.*, 167.



- The law written on the hearts of unbelieving Gentiles is another evidence of the eternity of the moral law. Romans 2:14-16, Romans 5:12-14
- What brought death to men before the giving of the law at Sinai, and what brings death to any person who does not have God's special revelation in the Scriptures is the transgressing of God's moral law written on the heart.
- We do not keep the moral law, especially the Ten Commandments, in order to maintain covenant with God. We obey the Ten Commandments because we are in covenant with God through Jesus.

Three Uses of the Law

- The law reveals our need of Christ (pedagogical use); the law restrains evil (civil use); and the law provides guidelines for living (didactic use).
- As believers we point to God's law as an objective standard that gives a morality that does not change based on the whims of the people.
- God's moral law restrains evil and points us to Jesus, but for those of us under the New Covenant, it also shows us how to live. Matthew 22:24-40, John 14:15

Conclusion

- We hold much in common with New Covenant Theology.
 - The covenants of the Bible are foundational to the narrative of Scripture
 - All of the covenants find their fulfillment in Christ.
- The promise given in Genesis 3:15 is more than just a promise. It is a Covenant of Grace.
- The moral law of God found in the Old Covenant still has value today.