

1 Covenant Theology

Topical Studies

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2 Covenant Theology

- Covenant Theology is a system of Bible interpretation that presents the plan of God under two headings: The Covenant of Works (CW), and the Covenant of Grace (CG).
- It became popular at the time of the Reformation (early 16th Century) and is popular among the Reformed churches and Calvinists. These were preceded by what they call the covenant of redemption (CR). According to Covenant Theology, the CR is a covenant made among the three Persons of the Trinity to elect, atone for, and save a select group of individuals unto salvation and eternal life.
- They teach that the CW was in place with Adam and that CW ended with the CG which began in Genesis 3:15, with the prophesies of God's Son's birth and works.
- Many Reformed Baptists, Bible Presbyterians, and Lutherans, practice Covenant Theology as their method of Bible interpretation and practice.

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So, what is a Covenant?

- COVENANT, n. *L*, *to come; a coming together; a meeting or agreement of minds*.
- 1. A mutual consent or agreement of two or more persons, to do or to forbear some act or thing; a contract; stipulation. A covenant is created by deed in writing, sealed and executed; or it may be implied in the contract.
- 2. A writing containing the terms of agreement or contract between parties; or the clause of agreement in a deed containing the covenant.
- 3. In theology, the covenant of works, is that implied in the commands, prohibitions, and promises of God; the promise of God to man, that mans perfect obedience should entitle him to happiness. This do, and live; that do, and die.
- The covenant of redemption, is the mutual agreement between the Father and Son, respecting the redemption of sinners by Christ.
- The covenant of grace, is that by which God engages to bestow salvation on man, upon the condition that man shall believe in Christ and yield obedience to the terms of the gospel.

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The covenant of works is the first covenant:

Genesis 2:15 "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

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- "When Adam failed in keeping the covenant of works, God instituted the third covenant, called the covenant of grace. In the CG, God freely offers to sinners (those who fail to live up to the CW) eternal life and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. We see the provision for the CG right after the fall when God prophesies the "seed of the woman" in Genesis 3:15.
- One can argue that faith is a condition of the covenant of grace. There are many exhortations in

the Bible for the recipients of God's unconditional grace to remain faithful to the end, so, in a very real sense, maintaining faith is a condition of the CG. But the Bible clearly teaches that even saving faith is a gracious gift from God (Ephesians 2:8-9)."

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Conclusion

- We decided to look at Covenant Theology as one of the outputs of Replacement Theology in the previous topical study
- Covenant theologians do teach what is called "Replacement Theology" (i.e., the Church replaces Israel). Covenant Theology teaches that the Church is Israel and Israel is the Church and its denial of any future plan for Israel.
- By default then, Covenant Theology rejects the literal, one-thousand-year reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is at odds with Dispensational theology.
- They are A-millennial (when you ask about the literal reign of Christ they respond with "Ah")!

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So, what is a Testament?

Hebrews 9:16 "For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.17 For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."

That is another lesson for another day!