

What is New Covenant Theology?

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Interpretation of the Bible

1. New Covenant Theology insists on the priority of Jesus Christ over all things, including history, revelation, and redemption. New Covenant Theology presumes a Christocentricity to the understanding and meaning of all reality.
2. Christ in heaven has not only reached the goal of history and its reality, he Himself is the goal of history and reality, giving meaning to all that has occurred in human history and will occur in human history. Since it is Christ who gives meaning to human history, he is the One who interprets all of the deeds and acts of God in history.
3. Special revelation, comprised of the 66 books that we call the Sacred Scriptures, not only informs us about God, but redeems us and makes God present to us, focusing on the person and work of Jesus.
4. New Covenant Theology interprets Scripture after the manner of Christ's and the New Testament writers' use of the Old Testament. Jesus and the inspired New Testament writers, by their use of the Old Testament Scriptures, have left us a pattern by which to interpret not only the Old Testament prophecies, but its history and poetry.
5. The way that Jesus, the Apostles, and the prophets used the Old Testament is normative for this age.
6. The entire Old Testament, the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, point forward to and anticipate the WORD Incarnate, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2). New Covenant Theology presumes that Jesus Christ, in his person and his saving acts, is the hermeneutic center of the Bible.
7. A careful study of the way Jesus and the New Testament writers understand and write about the Old Testament shows that the Old Testament's anticipated Messiah (and His work) is revealed in the types and shadows of the revelation of the Old Testament, both in God's speech-revelation and God's acts. The Old Testament provides the salvation context for the person and work of Jesus.
8. The Old Covenant scriptures, what we call The Old Testament, are to be interpreted in the light of their new covenant fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Jesus is not only the interpretive key to understanding the Old Testament, the terminology of the Old Testament must be understood through and defined in light of Christ's fulfillment.
9. New Covenant Theology is based upon a redemptive-historical approach to interpreting the Bible, understanding the fulfillment of all of God's promises in Jesus Christ as they are progressively unfolding from Genesis to Revelation.
10. New Covenant Theology presumes that the "now-not yet" principle of interpretation is essential to understand the teaching of the NT.
11. The organic historical connection, and the Christocentric unity that exists between the Old and New Covenants, guarantees the usefulness of the Old Testament for the church.
12. In the term *New Covenant Theology* we declare that God, for his own delight, has revealed himself and manifested his glory ultimately in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and his complete and perfect work on the Cross through which he has established a New Covenant in his blood. (Heb. 7:22; 8:6; 9:11; 10:14)
13. The pinnacle of God's unfolding revelation comes to us in the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ himself, by the New Testament Scriptures.
14. The two testaments proclaim the same Christocentric message, but from differing standpoints.
15. The New Covenant documents, interpretive of and informed by the Old Covenant documents, are binding for The new people of God until the end of this age.

Covenants

16. God's redemption of his people is revealed and administered through the unfolding of biblical covenants in the flow of redemptive history.
17. God's promise of the New Covenant was that the Messiah would be Himself the embodiment of an everlasting covenant with His people. This promise, typified in the covenants, is fulfilled in Christ. (Is. 42:6-9; 43:19; 45:21-25; 46:9-13).
18. The Old and New Covenants are two different covenants in terms of both form and function. The one is an administration of death, and the other is an administration of life (2 Cor. 3:6-8).
19. The New Covenant is distinct from, while typified by, previous covenants in the Old Testament. The New Covenant, personified by and incarnated in Christ, fulfills all previous covenants making them obsolete, including the Abrahamic and Sinaitic Covenants.
20. Christ has fulfilled the Adamic, Noaic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants in his life, death, resurrection, and exaltation. While he has completely fulfilled them, they yet will be consummated in him in the New Heavens and New Earth.
21. The New Covenant is a new covenant in its own right. The New Covenant is not the Abrahamic Covenant or a recapitulation of the Abrahamic Covenant. The New Covenant is not a new administration of the Mosaic Covenant.
22. The New Covenant is not like the covenant made with the people through Moses. Embodied and personified in Christ, the New Covenant brought into existence through the life and cross work of Christ is made with his redeemed people through grace. God's people do not enter the New Covenant by works, but by grace through faith; it is radically internal, not external; everlasting, not temporary.
23. The tearing in two of the veil in the temple was a decisive, supernatural act that visibly demonstrated the end of the Old Covenant and the establishment of the New. This end of the Old Covenant was consummated in the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple.
24. As the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises of a New Covenant, Jesus Christ personifies, embodies, and incarnates the New Covenant. Thus, he Himself is the New Covenant (Isaiah 42:6, 49:8, Luke 22:20).
25. All of Scripture is to be read, understood, and interpreted in light of the New Covenant, established in Jesus Christ (Matt. 5:17; Luke 10:23-24; 24:27, 44; John 5:46; 8:56; Heb. 10:7). The New Covenant has become the interpretive paradigm for understanding the church's existence in temporal and redemptive history.
26. True biblical theology of the New Covenant is the recognition of God's purpose, unfolding and weaving its way from Genesis to Revelation on the timeline of redemptive history, culminating in Jesus Christ.
27. Christ's inauguration of the New Covenant brings in things that are both qualitatively and quantitatively "newer," expressed in developing the theological significance of such basic concepts as new wineskins, new teaching, new commandment, new creation, new man, new name, new song, new Jerusalem and all things new (Rev. 21:5).

The Law

28. The Law of Moses (as a totality) was connected to a particular covenant people. It was codified after a specific act of redemption, the Exodus.
29. In the ultimate purpose of God, this Mosaic economy was *temporary*, destined to exist "until the time of reformation" (Heb.9:10) when God would speak in a final way in His Son in the last days (Heb.1:1-2).
30. Everything going on in Israel, including the covenants and the law, was of a *typical* nature, and was fulfilled in the person and work of Christ (Heb.3:5; 8:5; 9:8-9) who is the New Israel of God (Matthew 2:15).
31. The Ten Commandments are not eternal moral law first written in the heart of man at creation and forever binding upon all mankind.
32. The Decalogue is not "transcovenantal".
33. The church no longer has to do with the law in any other way than in Christ, being *onnomos Christou* (in-lawed to Christ). The Old Covenant law, including the

Decalogue, has been completely fulfilled in Jesus Christ which it typified in shadow and stone.

34. New Covenant believers are in-lawed to Christ through their union with Christ, and in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; they are not under the OC law of Moses.
35. Because the Old Covenant law, including the Decalogue, has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, New Covenant Theology denies that the Old Covenant law, including the Decalogue, is binding on New Covenant believers today. Yet, as the special revelation of God as fulfilled in Christ, the Old Covenant law, including the Decalogue, continues to inform behavior in the New Covenant.
36. All behavioral norms, including those detailed in the Decalogue, are ultimately defined by and expressed in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
37. Just as the law cannot justify, the law cannot sanctify. Just as it is impossible to be justified by the law, one cannot be sanctified by the law. The background problem being addressed by Paul in 2 Corinthians 3, Galatians 3-5, and Romans 7 (albeit in 3 different church situations) is the attempt to be sanctified by the law.
38. Regeneration does not change the inability of the law to transform. "Walking" in or by the law is the antithesis of "walking" in or by the Spirit (Galatians 5).
39. The New Covenant law is called the law of Christ which is distinguished -- both in substance and in form -- from the Mosaic law.
40. God's Old Covenant law is fulfilled in Christ Himself and obeyed by those in Christ who love God and their neighbor.
41. New Covenant Theology insists that the law of Christ is not to be equated with the Decalogue, nor is it to be equated with that work of the law which was on the heart of Adam and all natural men.
42. The OC Sabbath commandment is typologically fulfilled by Christ for the people of God who rest in Him by faith (Romans 14:5; Colossians 2:16,17; Heb. 4:9-10). New Covenant Theology denies that Sunday is a Christian Sabbath after the manner of the Old Covenant.
43. Christ is the Law of the New Covenant, incarnating the new standard of judgment as to what "has had its day" in the law and what has abiding validity (Col. 2:17). The Holy Spirit is the indwelling Law of Christ, causing New Covenant members to obey Christ the Law in conformity to His image.
44. God also promised that each New Covenant member would have His law written on their hearts. This promise, typified by circumcision, is fulfilled by the Holy Spirit who dwells in believers to guide their steps and conform them to Christ.
45. Just as the Old Covenant community was structured by written revelation which centered in Moses, so the New Covenant community is ordered by the "law of Christ" as personified and incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ, applied by the Holy Spirit, and given in the writing of the Apostles and prophets (Eph.2:20).
46. The indwelling Holy Spirit, the law written on the heart, is the norm for Christian living.
47. New Covenant Theology emphasizes that it is the Spirit, the indwelling "law", who both causes (Ezekiel 36:27) and enables the Christian to be conformed to and transformed into Christ's image, Who is the Imago Dei, the perfect image of God.
48. Because Christ has obeyed the law on behalf of his people and has become a law for his people, unlike the external Mosaic law, the Law of Christ as the Spirit applied to the redeemed is able to effect and enable the obedience and love that is in accord with Christ's obedience and love.
49. For the New Covenant church, the law of God is no longer an external standard that demands compliance with the will of God. The Law of Christ as the indwelling Spirit is now an internal person who causes and inclines us to obey God from the heart.
50. The New Commandment of the New Covenant, the Law of Christ, expresses the indwelling of the Spirit through belief in Christ and love for one another (John 13:34, Galatians 6:2, 1 John 3:23) .
51. NCT does not teach that the Ten Commandments are the objective standard for evaluating the Christian life. Christ is now the objective standard by which all holiness in the Christian life is measured.
52. The progression of history to a final New Covenant guarantees the "law of Christ", as

personified and incarnated by Jesus Christ, and applied by the Spirit who is written on the heart, to be sufficient for the church.

The church

53. The dominion of Christ over His Kingdom (the church, Matt. 16:19, 18:17,18), typified and foreshadowed in Israel's Old Testament theocracy, has been inaugurated in the New Covenant, is expressed in the New Testament, and is effectively carried out in the life of the local assembly, the visible New Covenant church.
54. The visible and local New Covenant church is the primary means by which the invisible church is expressed and manifested in the New Covenant.
55. The church on earth is located in the local church. New Covenant Theology recognizes that Christ exercises his Lordship in and through the local church.
56. The New Covenant church is a local, visible colony of the universal gathering in heaven. The universal gathering of God's redeemed people has begun on earth in the form and expression of the local church. Thus by intent and design, the local church as a gathering of New Covenant people who participate in faith, mirrors the universal gathering of the redeemed.
57. It is through the New Covenant church that God's wisdom for the ages and his purposes throughout revelation and history -- having been fulfilled in Jesus -- are most visibly expressed.
58. New Covenant Theology posits that the Church, which is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18), first came into visible existence in history when the Spirit descended and was poured out at Pentecost, not in past history under the Old Covenant. There is only one redemptive purpose for the people of God, which is the Church, the good olive tree (Rom. 11), the body of Christ (Eph. 2:13-22; 3:1-12), the visible expression of which is the local church.

Israel

59. The new covenant is now in force and finds its fulfillment in Jesus, the antitypical Israel.
60. New Covenant Theology sees, in the church, a fulfillment of promises that, in their Old Testament context, seem to be addressed to Israel as a nation.
61. New Covenant Theology denies that there is a one to one correlation between Israel and the New Covenant church. Israel was not the church in the Old Covenant, which consisted of an admixture of those who participated in faith and those who did not.
62. Under the Old Covenant, Israel was the people of God. Under the New Covenant, the church is the people of God.
63. In the Old Covenant, Israel, the second Adam, was a demonstration and proclamation of Jesus as a type. Israel typified the New Israel and His redeemed new covenant people of God. That which was true of Israel, in type, is now true of Jesus as the Federal Head of his people and God's new covenant people in fulfillment. Thus, the supreme covenantal formula promised to Israel is now true of the church: Jehovah is our God, and we are His people.