

The Basics of Covenant Theology

Dispensational vs. Covenant Theology

History of Covenant Theology

- Covenant Theology maintains that its system is as old as the Bible: “In fact, covenant theology is nothing more or less than the theology of the Bible.” R. Scott Clark, *The History of Covenant Theology*. Ligonier Ministries; Ligonier.org
- But it was certainly systematized during the days of the Reformers

- Johannes Oecolampadius (1482-1531)
- Taught the forerunner of the “Covenant of Redemption”
- Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575) taught the “Covenant of Grace”
- Calvin (1509-1564) taught Federal Theology (God deals with man through representatives—Romans 5.12-17), and outlined the Covenant of Redemption, the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace

Covenant Theology is built upon 3
Covenants

The Covenant of Redemption

- It is a covenant, because it is an agreement between two parties
- The parties to this agreement are the members of the Trinity. It is, in fact, a corollary to the Trinity. Neither expression occurs in the Bible, but both expressions are taught or implied
- John 17.1-5

Covenant of Works

- This is the covenant that God made with Adam.
- In Genesis 1.31, God declared His creation “good”
- “While this means that Adam was pleasing to God, it does not mean that Adam was as pleasing or as perfect as he could be. He could have become more delightful to His Creator through his obedience. By obedience to the command he was given — to avoid the forbidden fruit — he could have garnered for himself positive righteousness.” Ligonier.org

Covenant of Grace

- Again from Ligonier, “The essence of the covenant of grace is the same throughout the Old and New Testaments—God saves sinners by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.”
- In this statement, they have put their finger—rightly so—on the heresy perpetuated in the name of Dispensationalism, taught by C.I. Scofield.
- He taught that OT people got saved by keeping the Law. False!!!

- Covenant Theology recognizes that the “historical administration” of grace has varied: Noah, Abraham, Israel, the Church
- Covenant Theology is concerned to maintain continuity concerning salvation by grace
- Therefore, they see no separation between Israel and the Church. Cf. Acts 7.38

