

## HISTORICAL DIVISIONS

## PRINCIPLES OF HERMENEUTICS

## ESSENTIAL THEOLOGICAL BELIEFS

## BIBLICAL STORYLINE

# COVENANT THEOLOGY

Covenant of  
**REDEMPTION**

Covenant of  
**WORKS**

Covenant of  
**GRACE**

**Note:** Not all covenant theologians agree with the number and names of these theological covenants.

1. NT Priority over the OT (NT as lens for interpreting the OT; NT transcends/reinterprets the OT)
2. Non-literal fulfillments of OT texts
3. Typological Interpretation (OT as a whole viewed as types and shadows of greater NT realities)
4. OT promises are ultimately about Jesus not national Israel
5. Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel means that there is no reason to expect a literal fulfillment of promises with the nation Israel

1. Covenant is the overarching theme through which God's purposes should be understood.

2. Covenant of Redemption: The members of the Trinity covenant together before time to save the elect with each member of the Trinity having a role in their salvation.

3. Covenant of Works: With Adam salvation was based on works/merit. Adam failed this covenant. Jesus comes and fulfills the covenant of works on behalf of the elect.

4. Covenant of Grace: After Adam salvation is still based on works but people can no longer be saved on their own efforts. The elect need to be saved by grace by believing in Jesus who fulfills the covenant of works on behalf of those who believe.

5. Davidic/Messianic/Millennial Kingdom is in full operation in this age between the two comings of Jesus.

6. The church is the new/true Israel that supersedes national Israel's place as the people of God.

7. The Mosaic Law or aspects of the Mosaic Law are still in effect today. The moral aspects of the ML continue on or the ML merges into the Law of Christ.

8. Belief in infant baptism in which non-saved children of believers are part of God's covenant community (although there are some who hold to covenant theology who believe in believers' baptism)

**Note:** There is some variance among covenant theologians on some of these points.

### ISRAEL and the CHURCH:

There is no need for a restoration of national Israel since Jesus is "true Israel" and the church in Jesus is now Israel. "Israel" expands to include the gentile church.

### KINGDOM of the MESSIAH:

There is no need of a future earthly reign of Jesus since this age is the era of fulfillment and Jesus' reign.

# DISPENSATIONALISM

1.  
Innocence

2.  
Conscience

3.  
Human  
Government

4.  
Promise

5.  
Law

6.  
Church

7.  
Millenium

**Note:** Not all dispensationalists agree with the number and names of the dispensations. Progressives say there are 4, Dr. Vlach says there is 8 or 9, adding tribulation and eternal state.

1. The starting point for understanding any Bible passage is the authorial intent of the author of that passage. (No passage has priority over any other passage)
2. Progressive revelation (including the NT) builds upon the literal and contextual meaning of earlier passages (no non-literal fulfillments of OT texts)
3. Historical-grammatical interpretation applied to all passages of Scripture.
4. Types and their implications should be understood on a case-by-case basis.
5. Jesus is linked with Israel as Israel's Corporate Head who restores the nation Israel.

1. Progressive revelation from the New Testament does not nullify, transfer, or reinterpret Old Testament passages in a way that violates or cancels the original authorial intent of the Old Testament writers as determined by historical-grammatical hermeneutics.

2. Types exist but national Israel is not a type that is superseded by the church.

3. Israel and the church are distinct, thus, the church cannot be identified as the new or true Israel.

4. There is both spiritual unity in salvation between Jews and Gentiles and a future role for Israel as a nation.

5. The nation Israel will be both saved and restored with a unique identity and function in a future millennial kingdom upon the earth.

6. There are multiple senses of "seed of Abraham," thus, the church's identification as "seed of Abraham" does not cancel God's promises to the believing Jewish "seed of Abraham."

**SUMMARY OF UNIQUENESS:** Passage priority and future national restoration of Israel.

**Note:** The rapture is an important issue but it is not at the heart of Dispensationalism. There are also post-trib dispensationalists, even though most are pre-trib.

### ISRAEL and the CHURCH:

There will be a future restoration of national Israel to fulfill God's covenant promises given in the OT. Even though both Israel and the church are part of the people of God, they still remain distinct.

### KINGDOM of the MESSIAH:

There will be a future earthly reign of Jesus, to fulfill the promise of the messiah ruling the nations from the throne of David.