

Terminology & History (CT02)

Objectives

1. Discuss language (terminology) that is helpful for understanding Covenant Theology.
2. Show that covenantal thinking permeates Church history, and how it has matured.
3. Look at the roots / origin of “covenant.”

Terminology Common to Covenant Theology

1. “Federal” Theology

2. Covenant between God & Adam:

- a. Westminster Standards: “Covenant of _____,” “Covenant of _____,” and “Covenant of _____”
- b. Others: “Covenant of Creation”

3. Covenant between God & Christ:

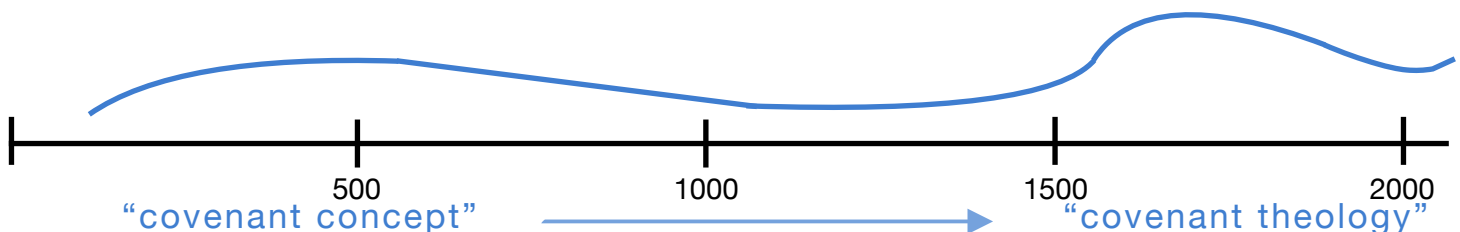
- a. In time: “Covenant of _____”
- b. Pre-fall: “Covenant of _____”

4. Issues with the term “Testament”

Progression of Covenantal Understanding

Why look at the history of Covenant Theology?

Historical use of the covenant idea as an “interpretive framework” for Scripture:



1. Early Church Fathers (use of Covenant concept):

- a. Gentiles included in God's promises to Abraham
- b. Denied that Israel was only recipient of Abrahamic promises
- c. Demonstrated continuity between OT & NT
- d. Augustine speaks of Adam/God relationship as covenant

2. Medieval Period:

- a. Eclipse of covenant concept (Hebrew language issue)
- b. Covenant terminology reclaimed by William of Ockham (1287-1347) & Gabriel Biel (1420-1495)

3. Reformation & Post-Reformation:

- a. Martin Luther disliked this kind of theology. Reasons why:
 - i.
 - ii.
- b. Reformers after Luther used doctrine of the Covenants:
 - i. to explain redemptive history
 - ii. the imputation of Adam's sin
 - iii. Did so quoting from the early church Fathers
- c. Zwingley (1484-1531) - Leader of the Reformation in Switzerland
- d. John Calvin (1509-1564) -
- e. Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575) - first to fully show the way of salvation in a complete covenantal framework
- f. Heidelberg Catechism (1563) - written by Olevianus & Ursinus, based upon covenantal framework
- g. Coccejus (1603-1669) - Dutch theologian who was one of the leading proponents of covenant theology.
- h. Herman Witsius (1636-1708) - Dutch theologian who wrote "The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man"
- i. Westminster Standards (1648)

"Covenant" and the Ancient Near East (ANE)

1. In the ANE, treaties were common between kings

2. Some treaties were between a superior and inferior

- a. Superior (king) = "Suzerain"
- b. Inferior (servant) = "Vassel"
- c. The treaties are called "Suzerain/Vassel Treaties"
- d. Purpose: to formalize the relationship between the two parties

3. Suzerain/Vassel Treaty Make-up (all set by the Suzerain)

- a. identification & titles
- b. history of the relationship
- c. stipulations (requirements/law)
- d. blessings & curses of the Suzerain

4. Enactment of the Treaty

- a. ratifying ceremonies used to put treaty into place
- b. most widely used:
 - i. Cut animals in half and lay in two rows
 - ii. Walk between the pieces, making vows
 - iii. Call curse on each other: *"May what has happened to these animals, happen to me if I break this covenant with you."*

5. Biblical covenant documents were patterned after ANE Suzerain/Vassel Treaties