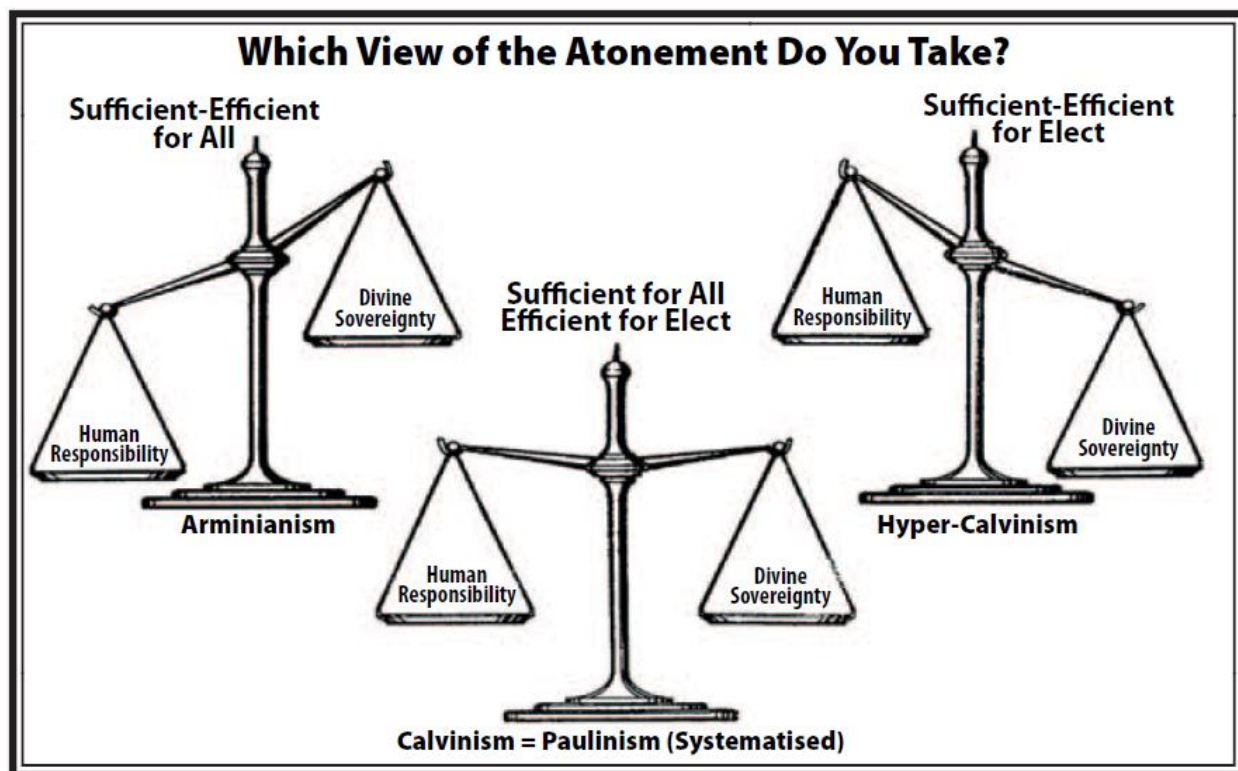




Covenantalism and Dispensationalism

Summary Depiction of Arminianism, Calvinism, and Hyper-Calvinism



Jeffrey Khoo, *Fundamentals of the Christian Faith* (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 2005), 91

Comparison of the Systems

Hyper (above and beyond) Calvinism 	Calvinism 
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God loves only the elect and hates the non-elect (Mal 1:2-3, Rom 9:13) 2. John 3:16 – refers only to elect ie it denies the free offer of the gospel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World = elect only 3. Atonement is sufficient and efficient <u>only</u> for the elect 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God loves all genuinely (John 3:16) 2. John 3:16 – God’s saving grace is extended to the whole world <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God invites all indiscriminately to salvation through the gospel 3. Atonement is sufficient for all, efficient for the elect (Augustine, Calvin) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question to all is not whether you are elect or non elect • But if you only trust Him, love Him, you are elect and you will be saved (Rom 8:28-30)

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<p>4. Denies common grace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• God hates all unbelievers• Works all things towards their destruction <p>5. Gospel offer is limited, not universal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One cannot say “God loves you”• God does not desire the repentance of reprobates• TULLIP – God deliberately chose some to damnation• Confuses decretive and desiderative will of God• “Rev. John Ryland, Sr., who William Carey, “Sit down, young man. If God wants to convert the heathen, he will do it without consulting with you, or me!”	<p>4. Affirms common grace and special grace in Scripture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Common grace must be distinguished from special saving grace• Common grace is God’s favourable bestowal upon all of mankind things necessary for creaturely existence on earth. These non-soteric blessings include gift of (1) time for man to repent (Rom 2:4, 2Pet 3:9) (2) conscience for sin’s restraint (Gen 20:6, Rom 2:14-15) (3) intelligence and talent for the arts and sciences (Ex 31:2-11, 35:30-35), and (4) rain, sunshine etc for all to enjoy (Mtt5:44-45, Acts 14:16-17)• Saving grace is the Holy Spirit’s regenerative work in reconciliation to God (Rom 3:24, Eph 2:8-9)• Scripturally distinguishes between common grace and special grace in Mal 1:2-3; Rom 9:13 <p>5. Gospel offer to be preached to every one</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• God loves all indiscriminatory (Mk 10:21)• God invites sincerely and without exception all elect and non elect, to repentance and salvation (1Tim 2:3-4, 2Pet 3:9)• God does not elect men to damnation. He has no pleasure in any dying (Eze 18:32, 33:11). Man are responsible for their own damnation because of his own sin.• Distinguishes between desiderative and decretive will• Election is key motivation of evangelism (Eph 3:13)
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Summary of Errors in Hyper Calvinism

- Rejects genuine offer of salvation to everyone ie both elect and non elect
- Atonement sufficient & efficient only for elect
- Rejects common grace
- TULLIP ie God elected certain to damnation

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Biblical Theology

- Teaches genuine offer of salvation to everyone ie both elect and non elect
- Atonement sufficient for all and efficient for elect
- Teaches common grace
- TULIP

Comparison of Theologies

	Covenant Theology	Dispensational Theology	New Covenant Theology	Progressive Dispensational	Bible Presbyterian
Israel not replaced by NT Church	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
Continuity by Covenants	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
Relevance of 10 commandments	✓	✗	✗	?	✓
Future reign of Christ	Amill & Premill	✓	?	✓	✓

Current Trends

New Covenant Theology

1. Foundational Covenants – Covenant of Works and Covenant of Grace
 - Salvation plan was not a covenant, nor was there a Covenant of Works¹
 - Believes in a unity of God’s purpose through the ages, but no Covenant of Grace², though they believe in salvation by grace
 - Covenants are theological, rather than biblical³
 - “Infant baptism . . . and New Covenant Theology are incompatible because they are based on fundamentally different views of how the Old Covenant relates to the New Covenant.”⁴

¹ Steve Lehrer, *New Covenant Theology: Questions Answered* (n.p.: Steve Lehrer, 2006), 37-40.

² Tom Wells and Fred G. Zaspel, *New Covenant Theology: Description, Definition, Defense* (Frederick, Md.: New Covenant Media, 2002), 45.

³ John Reisinger, *Abraham’s Four Seeds* (Frederick, Md.; New Covenant Media, 1998), 129.

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New Covenant Theology (Cont.)

2. Mosaic Law
 - No functional distinction between the moral, civil and ceremonial aspects of the Mosaic Law.
 - “Old Covenant has passed away and none of the commands of the Mosaic Law are binding on believers today, including the command to keep the Sabbath holy.”⁵
 - “Embraces the law of Christ, which is the law that is applicable to believers today. The law of Christ includes the commands given by Christ and His Apostles.”⁶
3. Church
 - Does not view Old Covenant Israel as the church. We make a distinction between Old Covenant Israel and the church.⁷
 - NT church is the only true people of God
4. Biblical Hermeneutics
 - Priority of NT over OT
 - Typological interpretation of the two testaments

Conclusion:

- New Covenant Theology has more in common with Dispensationalism than Covenant Theology

Adherents:

- John Piper
- John G. Reisinger (often called the father of New Covenant Theology) of Sound of Grace Ministries
- D.A. Carson

⁴ Lehrer, *New Covenant Theology*, 211.

⁵ Ibid., 81.

⁶ Ibid., 112.

⁷ Ibid., 147.

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Progressive Dispensationalism

1. Dispensations
 - Believes in distinct phased of dispensations in God’s plan but it is the covenants that relate these dispensations to each other.
 - Four dispensations in Biblical history (Patriarchal, Mosaical, Ecclesial, and Zioniac) instead of seven in traditional Dispensationalism
 - All the covenants of promise—the Abrahamic, the Davidic, and the New, especially the Davidic—are initially realized in the church.⁸
 - “The Mosaic covenant was an administrative compact setting forth, for a limited period of history, the terms of obedience for receiving the blessings of the promise... While the new covenant stands as a replacement for the Mosaic covenant, it bears an entirely different relationship to the covenants of promise, that is, the covenants made with Abraham and David... The new covenant is the means through which these covenants attain final fulfillment.”⁹
2. Salvation
 - Increased emphasis on continuity
 - “In both the Old and New Testaments it is the provisions of the new covenant that ultimately provide the solution to the human problem of sin and bring those in the covenant into a final perfect fellowship with God as his sons and daughters... Unquestionably the salvation of the new covenant provides for the ultimate unity of all God’s people.”¹⁰
3. Church
 - Believes in a future Israel
 - “The identity of Israel ... retains its basic Old Testament meaning as the national ethnic people.... Only a remnant “Israel” within the historic people of Israel is truly the Israel of promise. No clear teaching of the New Testament ever goes beyond this understanding to include Gentiles in the true “Israel” by name. The church in Christ shares in the promises of God with Israel as the people of God. Moreover, with Israel’s salvation still in the future, the church performs in a partial way the function originally given to Israel as God’s witness to the world. Yet, similarities do not require equating one with the other.”¹¹
4. Biblical Hermeneutics
 - Believes in earthly millennium and pre-tribulation rapture.
 - Reject historical-grammatical method (a literal form) of Bible interpretation
 - “Complementary hermeneutic” - New Testament makes complementary changes to Old Testament promises, without setting aside those original promises. Hence, they would assign a double meaning to OT prophecies such as Is 42:6.

⁸ Darrell Bock, *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 171.

⁹ Robert Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), 120, 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 111-2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 207.

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Progressive Dispensationalism (cont.)

Conclusion:

- Progressive Dispensationalism has more in common with Covenantalism than its historic counterpart

Adherents:

- Professor Darrell L. Bock (Dallas Theological Seminary)
- Craig A. Blaising (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary)
- Robert Saucy (Talbot Theological Seminary)

Conclusion

Reformed Theology

- Upholds a consistent interpretation of Scriptures
- Upholds the unity of the Scripture
- Magnifies God
- Is consistent with the historic beliefs of the Christian Church fathers

TULIP

- TULIP exalts God and abases man in salvation
- TULIP gives God all the glory in man's salvation
- TULIP acknowledges God's absolute Sovereignty
- TULIP promotes the highest view of God and humbles man

The B-P Reformed Pre-mill faith

- It is the Reformed faith with the following distinctives
 - Distinguishes between Church and Israel and that church has not replaced Israel
 - It is pre-millennial (Christ will return before His 1000 year earthly reign)
- Upholds the consistency of Biblical interpretation

“The Bible-Presbyterian Faith is based on the Westminster Confession including the Premillennial Doctrine of a Restored Israel in Christ's earthly kingdom. . . Bible-Presbyterians also take the Separatist Stand . . . against the Ecumenical movement of the World Council of Churches. As we enter the 21st century, we will continue to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints in the Battle for the Bible. . . . Reformation is an ever on-going business, Reformation into the 21st Century is our watchword. Amen.”

(from the back cover of *The Story of My Bible-Presbyterian Faith* by Rev Timothy Tow)

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