

# New Covenant Theology



# **Why a Series on New Covenant Theology (NCT)?**

- **The Bible explicitly refers to the “New Covenant” in a number of passages and builds theology and application on it.**
- **NCT helps us rightly understand and apply the Word of God.**
- **NCT helps us appreciate and make sense of the unfolding of God’s sovereign plan of redemption as it was progressively revealed in the scriptures.**

# The Bible Explicitly Refers to the New Covenant in a Number of Passages

- The *first* explicit reference in the Bible to the New Covenant is in Jeremiah where it is prophesied as a future event:
  - *Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*  
(Jeremiah 31:31-33)

# The Bible Explicitly Refers to the New Covenant in a Number of Passages

- The prophecy of the new covenant in Jeremiah is *referenced* and *explained* by the writer of the book of Hebrews:
  - *Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. For he finds fault with them when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers...” In speaking of a **new covenant**, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. (Hebrews 8:6-13)*

# The Bible Explicitly Refers to the New Covenant in a Number of Passages

- The writer of Hebrews continues discussing things related to this new covenant for the next four chapters where he then concludes with this *contrast* between the old covenant given by Moses and the new covenant that we have in Christ:
  - *For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them... Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering... and to Jesus, the mediator of a **new covenant**... (Hebrews 12:18-24)*

# The Bible Explicitly Refers to the New Covenant in a Number of Passages

- Jesus mentioned the New Covenant on the evening that he instituted the Lord's Supper, referring to it as the “new covenant in my blood”:
  - *And [Jesus] took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the **new covenant** in my blood.”*  
(Luke 22:19-20 cf. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

# The Bible Explicitly Refers to the New Covenant in a Number of Passages

- In his second letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul refers to himself and those ministering with him as “ministers of a new covenant” and then goes on to spend almost the entire chapter contrasting the new covenant with the Mosaic covenant:
  - *Our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a **new covenant**, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory?*  
(2Corinthians 3:5-8)

# NCT Helps Us Rightly Understand and Apply the Word of God

- **All scripture is God breathed:**
  - *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*
- **Many of the commands given in scripture are given as requirements for people of every era to obey:**
  - *Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Romans 13:8-9)*

# NCT Helps Us Rightly Understand and Apply the Word of God

- However, there are also many commands found in scripture that were given to God's people in the past, but are *not* directly applicable to us today:
  - *These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain sheep... Yet... you shall not eat these: the camel, the hare, and the rock badger... and the pig... is unclean for you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch.*  
(Deuteronomy 14:4-8)

# NCT Helps Us Rightly Understand and Apply the Word of God

- **There are many commands found in scripture that were given to God's people in the past, but are not directly applicable to us today:**
  - *If anyone sins... when he realizes his guilt... and confesses the sin he has committed, he shall bring to the LORD as his compensation for the sin that he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat, for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin. (Leviticus 5:1,5-6)*

# NCT Helps Us Rightly Understand and Apply the Word of God

- There are some commands given in scripture that many believers have trouble figuring out whether or not are directly applicable to us today. NCT will be of great help in determining what does and does not apply to us today:
  - *For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death. (Exodus 31:15 NIV)*
  - *Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard. (Leviticus 19:27 NIV)*
  - *Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD. (Leviticus 19:28 NIV)*
  - *You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk. (Exodus 23:19b)*

# Questions

- **Have you heard of New Covenant Theology prior to my mention of it, and if so, what are your impressions of it?**
- **Based on what I've talked about today, and perhaps prior impressions that you've had of NCT, how do you feel about our embarking on this study?**

# Overview

## What We're Going to Cover

- **The Major Covenants in the Bible**
- **How the New Testament Compares and Contrasts the Major Covenants**
- **Questions Raised by New Covenant Theology**