

be noted that it is quite possible to affirm literal, normal, or plain interpretation and at the same time be an adherent of Covenant Theology! Once again let us assert that there is nothing in Covenant Theology's distinction between the covenant of works between God and our first parents in Eden before the Fall, and the covenant of grace between God and believing sinners throughout all ages since the Fall, that inherently and necessarily leads to a figurative-spiritualization interpretation of predictive prophecy. The adoption of such a hermeneutic is a free, conscious choice, not a necessary implication arising from a Covenant orientation. Dispensationalism is inherently premillennial and pretribulational; Covenant Theology does not inherently imply a particular eschatology.

6. With regard to Dispensationalism's claim that it emphasizes the various historical covenants of Scripture, whereas Covenant Theology emphasizes the covenants of work and grace, it would appear that this is a relative difference rather than an absolute one. It is true that in Covenant Theology there are only two arrangements or covenants between God and man that condition salvation (works and grace), but it is also true that Covenant Theology refers frequently to other covenants mentioned in Scripture -- covenants that pertain to various aspects of the outworking of God's purposes.

By way of comparison, Dispensationalism discerns eight great covenants in Scripture:

1. The Edenic Covenant (Genesis 2:16)
2. The Manic Covenant (Genesis 3:15)
3. The Noahic Covenant (Genesis 9:16)
4. The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:2)
5. The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19:5)
6. The Palestinian Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:3)
7. The Davidic Covenant (II Samuel 7:16)
8. The New Covenant (Hebrews 6:6)

From a Covenant Theology point of view, the covenants of Scripture may be schematized as follows (i.e., according to proposal, and by no means the only possible one):

1. The Edenic Covenant (Genesis 2:15-17)
2. The Adamic Covenant (Genesis 3:15 -- the Protoevangelium)
3. The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 17:1-8) -- The Palestinian Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:3) appears to be an amplification of one aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant.
4. The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19:5)
5. The Davidic Covenant (II Samuel 7:16)
6. The New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15)
7. The Heavenly Covenant (Revelation 21:3-5)

In this schema, the first (the Edenic) is a covenant of works; the others are all grace covenants (including the Mosaic). That is, in this schema no covenant given after the Fall, including the Mosaic, was ever given as a covenant of works by which the unregenerate man or Israelite might merit the reward of righteousness and life; rather they all envisioned fallen man as a sinner in need of God's grace (albeit responsible for his sin and unbelief). Even the Mosaic Covenant was given as a grace covenant, by which Israelites were given the Mosaic Law to reveal more clearly and definitely their sins, to restrain their outward expressions of depravity in a civic context, and to instruct them how to conduct their lives spiritually and morally and socially,