

Dispensationalism Explained

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WHAT IS DISPENSATIONALISM?

1. We are told about an alliance between Jews and Christians.

“Militant Jewish leaders and Christian dispensationalists have formed an alliance that embraces the same dogma... It is a dogma centered entirely on a small political entity—Israel. Both Jewish leaders and dispensationalists make ownership of land the highest priority in their lives, creating a cult religion...” **Grace Halsell, Forcing God’s Hands, pg. 86.**

2. What is dispensationalism? And where did it originate? Concerning these questions we are told.

“Dispensationalism. A method of biblical interpretation first systematically formulated in the 19th. Century by John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), dynamic leader of the Plymouth Brethren... Darby developed an elaborate philosophy of history based on biblical prophecy. He divided all history into separate eras or dispensations,... each of which contained a different order by which God worked out his redemptive plan.” **J. D. Douglas, editor, New 20th.—Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, pg. 266.**

“According to Darby, Christians must interpret history in light of seven epochs or “dispensations,” each of which reflects a particular manner in which God deals with humanity. For example, we currently live under the dispensation of “Grace,” whereby people are judged according to their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This hermeneutical method is called dispensationalism.” **Donald Wagner, Evangelicals and Israel: Theological Roots of a Political Alliance, pg. 2.**

3. We are further told that Darby’s dispensationalism further influenced American Protestant fundamentalism.

“Over many years Darby worked out the elaborate theory of premillennial dispensationalism, which influences American Protestant fundamentalist belief today.” **Michael Lind, Made in Texas, pg. 146.**

4. Furthermore we are told.

“The premillennialist dispensationalism of John Nelson Darby has led American Protestant fundamentalists to view the foundation of the state of Israel as a sign that the end of history was approaching.” **Ibid, pg. 147.**

5. The various texts where the word translated dispensationalism is found. 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25.

6. We are told that the Greek word for “dispensation” is oikonomia. Here is the real meaning of

the word; it simply means “administration.”

“... to be a manager of a household. The position, work, responsibility or arrangement of an administration, as of a house or a property, either one’s own or another’s...” **Dr. Spiros Zodhiates, The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament, pg. 3622.**

7. Therefore the dispensation that was given to Paul is certainly not an epoch or period of a type of ministration to save people different to other epochs, Paul is simply given an administration (oikonomia) to preach the Gospel, in other words, he is to administer the Gospel to people. 1 Cor. 9:16-18.
8. Likewise, the following scripture does not tell us of any epoch in which God administers salvation in a particular way, rather, it tells us that God’s administration in the fullness of time gathers together all in Christ. Eph. 1:10.
9. Here we see that Paul is made a minister of God according to God’s administration. This means that it is God’s administration that makes Paul a minister. Col. 1:25.
10. Here we see that God’s administration is Grace. Eph. 3:2.
11. Did Grace only come into vogue as an epoch at the first advent of Christ? No, we are all saved by Grace which is through Faith. (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 4:16).
12. Ancient people before the cross had Faith, thus had grace. Heb. 11:1,2,4-6.
13. Grace was existent in the First Witness. Gen. 6:8; Ex. 34:5-7; Ex. 33:12; 2 Kin. 13:23; Job. 33:26; Pr. 4:7-9; Pr. 3:13, 17,18,21,22.
14. However, the administration of Grace spoken of by Paul in Eph. 3:2, is not God’s active administration that is spoken of, it is rather Paul’s active administration of Grace which is given to him by God as in evidently seen. Eph. 3:1,2,7-9; Eph. 6:19,20.
15. This administration or dispensation was given Paul by revelation of the Gospel, this is how he came to have it. Eph. 3:3.
16. So the idea of seven dispensations as epochs in which God deals with humanity in different ways to save them is certainly not biblical, true or even implied in the scriptures. They are an invention of one man’s imagination.

“Darbyism (dispensationalism) is an unproved inference, which will not stand up under a close scrutiny of the Scriptures.” **William E. Cox, An Examination of Dispensationalism, pg. 51.**

DISPENSATIONALISM ANSWERED

1. There is at present an alarming coalition of far right Zionist Jews and so-called Christians who call themselves Christian Zionists.

“From this we see that the engine driving the U. S. and Israel into an all out world conflagration is—along with the money from the Jewish political action committees which control the U. S. Congress—the Christian Zionists, as they are now calling themselves. Judeo-Christian wasn’t quite ‘Jewish’ enough. Now they are Christian Zionists or Zionist Christians.” **BBC transcript: Christian Zionists, pg. 1.**

2. Why are Christians (as Called) supporting the Israelis in everything they do? Observe their support.

“Joining well-established Jewish lobby groups in America is a new and powerful phenomenon — Christian Zionism. There are an estimated 40 million Christian Conservatives in America and they may be in a position to wield unprecedented influence in support of Israel.” **Ibid, pg. 2.**

“Some of the most outspoken support for Israel today is coming from Christian Conservatives. From the Podium Janet Parschall a leading voice on the Religious Right, made one thing clear — support for Israel is now a litmus test for those who claim to America’s Moral Majority... Today it’s not the Jewish lobby which counts. It’s the pro-Israel lobby. And the difference is crucial. Two of the most formidable organizational networks in America — the Jewish Establishment and the Christian Right — have joined forces. Together, they can penetrate deep into the body politic.” **Ibid, pg. 3.**

3. The message of Christian Zionists is simply to support the state of Israel no matter what they do, because they are directed by God in everything.”

“What is the message of the Christian Zionists? Simply stated it is this: Every act taken by Israel is orchestrated by God, and should be condoned, supported, and even praised by the rest of us. “Never mind what Israel does,” say the Christian Zionists. “God wants this to happen.” This includes the invasion of Lebanon, which killed or injured an estimated 100,000 Lebanese and Palestinians, most of them civilians; the bombing of sovereign nations such as Iraq; the deliberate, methodical brutalizing of the Palestinians—breaking bones, shooting children, and demolishing homes; and the expulsion of Palestinian Christians and Muslims from a land they have occupied for over 2,000 years.” **Grace Halsell, Israeli Extremists and Christian Fundamentalists: The Alliance, pg. 1-2.**

“The answer, unfortunately, lies in the belief system of Christian Zionists: The believe that what Israel wants is what God wants. Therefore, it is perfectly acceptable to give the green light to whatever it is Israel wants and then conceal this from the American people.

Anything, including lies, theft, even murder, is justified as long as Israel wants it.” **Ibid, pg. 3.**

4. Jews Zionists have been embolden in their evil deeds by so-called Christian support for Israel.

“... we are seeing how the Christian Zionists, motivated by religious beliefs, are working han in glove with politically motivated, militant Jewish Zionists around the world. It is the Christian support of Zionists that emboldens Zionists to believe they can dictate to relatively weak and dependent countries such as Austria, whom they may choose as their president... It is Christian support of Zionism that enables the militant Israelis to take over Palestinian homes surrounding the AL-Aqsa mosque in pursuit of their well-documented plan to destroy Jerusalem’s most holy Islamic site, sacred to a billion Muslims around the world-one-fifth of humanity.” **Ibid, pg. 2.**

5. We are told that it is the teaching of dispensationalism that has created what is known as “Christian Zionism”.

“This quote from the New Testament encapsulates the fascination with Israel and its key role in the “end times” that characterizes the Protestant tendency known as “dispensationalism”, which came to such prominence in the late nineteenth century and is now enjoying a revival... This variant of Protestant fundamentalist doctrine is the root of what is known as “Christian Zionism,” a movement that preceded the formal establishment of the Jewish variety by some years.” **Justin Raimondo, Israel’s Amen Corner, pg. 7.**

“The political alliance of Zionism and dispensationalist Christianity set down roots early in the century...” **Ibid, pg. 7.**

6. This comes to the point of what is dispensationalist. Of this we are told.

“Although the word “dispensational” literally means a stewardship or type of economy, they [dispensationalists] take it to designate a given period of time during which God works in a distinct manner with mankind. The Scofield Bible (page 5, notes 4,5) deals with seven dispensations of their system. They are innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, grace, and kingdom. According to Scofield, each of these dispensations begins a new and distinct method of testing mankind and each ends in man’s failure and judgment. One of the main emphases of dispensational thought is that they insist that each of these seven dispensations has its peculiar system of testing; and obedience to the existing method brings the approval of God upon the individual or nation being tested. Although dispensationalists deny the charge, it has been said that these alleged seven distinct manners of testing create seven different plans of salvation.” **William E. Cox, An Examination of Dispensationalism, pg. 17.**

7. Dispensationalism has several real foundations that makes it what it really is. Here are they.

a. It separates Israel from the Church of God making them two distinct entities.

“According to dispensationalists, God has two distinct bodies of people with whom he is working: Israel and the church. There is a separate plan for each of these two peoples. Israel is said to be an earthly people, while the church represents a heavenly body. National Israel’s expectation is an earthly kingdom; the church’s hope is eternal bliss in heaven. While the church realized her goal through belief in the finished work of Christ on the cross, Israel’s goal will finally be realized through legal obedience.” **Ibid, pg. 30.**

“We need to keep before the reader the dispensational belief that Israel and the church are two distinct bodies, that each has its separate plan in God’s program, and that each has a different destination. Israel is said to be an earthly covenant people while the church is said to be a heavenly body.” **Ibid, pg. 38.**

“Their cardinal teachings could be grouped into two main areas: the area of prophecy and the area of the church. Their major interest in prophetic teachings has to do with the prophecies concerning national Israel; most of these they hold to be yet future. With reference to the church, they make it a separate entity from national Israel and believe there are two separate plans for the two groups.” **Ibid, pg. 51.**

- b. It gives a different reason as to why Christ was born and came to the earth the first time. He did not come to die, but to help national Israel become an earthly kingdom over which He was to rule.

“Whereas historic Christianity has held that the purpose of our Lord’s first advent was to die on the cross for the sins of the whole world, the dispensationalist teaches that his real purpose was to establish an earthly kingdom. This, they say, was to have been an earthly, political kingdom over which Christ would have ruled from the literal throne of David, and in which all Old Testament prophecies were to be literally fulfilled.” **Ibid, pg. 30.**

“Clarence Larkin (Rightly Dividing the Word, pg. 51), in describing the ministry of John the Baptist as a forerunner to Christ, said “Prepare the way of the Lord for what? Not the Cross but for the Kingdom”.” **Ibid, pg. 31.**

- c. It teaches that there are different ways of salvation in different epochs which are dispensations.

“Noting again that dispensationalists teach the kingdom to have been offered, rejected, and postponed until a later age, we pose the question: What if the Jews had accepted Jesus’ offer to establish an earthly Davidic kingdom at his first advent? According to dispensationalist teaching people would then have been saved by legal obedience.” **Ibid, pg. 33.**

“We have already shown that, according to dispensational teachings, people were offered salvation through the establishment of a millennial kingdom. Had this kingdom been established, the Jewish remnant would have carried out the Great Commission and most of the world’s population would have been converted through obedience to the law. The cross then would not have been necessary, according to this teaching. However, the

kingdom was not accepted, and so, teach the dispensationalists, it was postponed until the millennium can be set up at the second coming. That postponement has already lasted nearly two thousand years! Now when the kingdom was postponed, its mode of salvation was of course also postponed. It was necessary for God to institute a temporary mode of salvation to be in effect during this temporary period.” **Ibid, pg. 39-40.**

“On page 1011, note 2, of the Scofield Bible the author labels the heading: The new message of Jesus.” He has said that our Lord began his ministry with a message of the kingdom, at which time he made an offer to Israel of an earthly kingdom along with salvation by legal obedience. This having been rejected, says Scofield, Jesus began to preach a completely different gospel which now for the first time included a reference to the cross of Calvary. Scofield went on to say, concerning “the new message of Jesus,” that our Lord offers “not the kingdom, but rest and service” in his new message.” **Ibid, pg. 40.**

“Darby says plainly here that the difference between the kingdom and the church is that the church needs the cross while the kingdom does not!” **Ibid, pg. 41.**

8. So denigrating is this teaching to the Church of God, that the dispensationalist scheme makes the Church not of much importance to God, it is the Jews that are His first love and concern

“Another fact of dispensational teaching concerning the church is that is parenthetical, and is not the main project at hand. Rather, they say, the church was established by God in order to fill in the parenthesis between the time the kingdom was rejected and the time when it will be reinstated. After the “parenthetical church age” then God will return to his first love, the Jewish program.” **Ibid, pg. 42.**

“The church is a parenthesis, i.e., a temporary thing lying between God’s two dealings with national Israel.” **Ibid, pg. 44.**

“The church is not even mentioned in the Old Testament.” **Ibid, pg. 44.**

9. So influential is Dispensationalism that it has now infiltrated the Roman Catholic Church in the teaching that the Jews legitimately await the coming of the Messiah.

“According to a new Vatican document, recently released in English, Jews should continue to anticipate the coming of Messiah... ‘The Jewish Messianic wait is not in vain,’ the statement says. “It can become for us Christians a strong stimulus to maintain alive the eschatological dimension of our faith. We like them live in expectation.” **Vatican: Jews do not wait in vain for Messiah, pg. 1.**

10. The dispensationalist teaching that Jews are saved by a different plan of salvation in contrast to Christians, which implies a different dispensation to that of the Church is now taught by the Roman Catholic Church.

“For example, several scholars said Dominus Iesus, a 2000 document that reaffirms that

salvation comes through Christ and the church, does not apply to the Jews the way it does to members of other non-Christian religions.” Ibid, pg. 1.

“The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement Monday saying that Catholics should evangelize non-Christians— but not Jews... However, this evangelizing task no longer includes the wish to absorb the Jewish faith into Christianity and so end the distinctive witness of Jews to God in human history. Thus, while the Catholic Church regards the saving act of Christ as central to the process of human salvation for all, it also acknowledges that Jews already dwell in a saving covenant with God.” **Jews Are Already Saved, Say U.S. Catholic Bishops, pg. 1.**

11. A sum total of all the things we have discussed so far leads us to investigate the following points.

1. Are Israel and the Church separate in the Bible? Or is the Church the Israel of God.
2. Did Christ come the first time to set up and rule over a Jewish kingdom? Or, did He come to die to save all races of men from sin?
3. Are there different ways of salvation? Or is there only one way of salvation?
4. Are Jews saved a different way to gentiles and to the Church?
5. Is there a Church in the Old Testament and did the Old Testament prophesy about the Church.

Are Israel and the Church different:

12. First of all, we see in the First Witness (O.T.) the concept of Israel being more than fleshly, for Israel is presented as one with a pure or clean heart. Ps. 73:1.

13. Next, we see that even the population in the Persian Empire that accepted the Gospel because Jews. This is not physical Jews, but obviously spiritual Jews. Esther 8:17.

14. In the First Witness (O.T.) we can see that the “stranger” or gentile that is joined to YHWH is not separated from His people; this means that he is God’s own, because it is God’s intention that His house becomes a house of prayer for all people. Isa. 56:3-7.

15. In the very out set of the early church God by a vision instructed Peter not to call any man common or unclean whom God had cleansed. This specifically referred to the gentiles who received the Holy Spirit as the apostles after they accepted the Gospel. This illustrates that both Jews and Gentiles were seen as one Church of God making no division between Jews and Gentiles. Acts. 10:9-16,21,22, 26-28,44-48.

16. Thus Peter reported the conversions of the gentiles to the first general conference of the

Church held in Jerusalem. So as gentiles are saved as Jews, the two were thus belonging to one Church. No separation of the two peoples according to dispensationalism. Acts. 15:7-11.

17. Paul gives a beautiful exposition showing that before conversion gentiles were one separated from the citizenship of Israel, but once converted God has joined the two together as one Church removing all the ceremonial laws that caused the social divisions. Now there is one house hold of God. Eph. 2:11-22.
18. This echoes Jesus words when He promised to bring the “other sheep” (the Gentiles) to one fold having one shepherd. Thus God does not see two separate entities—Israel and the Church, He sees ONE sheepfold. Jn. 10:16,17.
19. Thus Paul could say that converted gentiles are in fact spiritual Jews who are spiritually circumcised. Rom. 2:28,29.
20. God does not see Jews and gentiles in the Church as separate entities, all are one in Christ Jesus. Abraham sees is recognized to those who have Christ whether they be Jews or gentiles. Gal. 3:16,26-29.
21. Even the converted “new creature” of the Gentiles is called the Israel of God. Gal. 6:15.
22. Paul also tells us that spiritual Israel are not only made up of physical Israelites; this means that other races make up spiritual Israel. But what makes both physical Israelites and other races all make up spiritual Israel? He tells us that the fleshly Israelites are not counted for the seed of Abraham, but the children of the promise are. Rom. 9:6-8.
23. And what is the promise? Justification through Faith by the gift of the Holy Spirit within. (Gal. 3:7-9,14; Gal. 4:6).
24. Thus as the Church, God has called thus made it up of Jews and gentiles. This debunks the dispensationalist claim that Israel and the church are separate. The Church is spiritual Israel made up of converted Jews and gentiles. Rom. 9:24-26.
25. Unconverted Jews do not have God and are therefore not the children of God, they reject Christ and are thus children of the devil. (1 Jn. 3:10; 2 Jn. 9,10; Jn. 8:39-44).

Why did Jesus come the first time?

26. No Scripture tells us that Jesus came to set up an earthly Jewish kingdom over which He would rule, and as it failed He switched to dying on a cross to save men. Even before He was actually born, rather, it was told that He was born to save men from their sins. Matt. 1:21.
27. Even John the Baptist presented Jesus as the one who will baptize man with the Holy Spirit. Matt. 3:11.

28. Christ showed that He came to give His life to ransom men from the bondage of sin. (Matt. 20:28; Jn. 8:34,36).
29. The very Neo-Pasach symbolisms given by Jesus to the Church shows that the purpose of His first coming was to save men from their sins by His sacrifice. Matt. 26:26-28.
30. At the very beginning of His ministry Jesus came preaching the gospel of the kingdom which is a spiritual kingdom requiring repentance and believing, not a physical Jewish kingdom that is of this world. (Mk. 1:14,15; Rom. 14:17, Jn. 18:35-37).
31. Jesus is presented as being born for salvation purposes not to set up a literal Jewish kingdom. Lk. 1:68,69,76-79.
32. Jesus is born as Saviour of the world, not as a political king ruling a literal kingdom or for that purpose. Lk. 2:11;28-32; Lk. 3:3-6.
33. When Jesus began His mission He announced Himself not as a king setting up a physical. Political Jewish kingdom but as a gospel preacher who came to spiritually heal men. Lk. 4:14-19.
34. He came to take away the sins of the world as the lamb of God, He came to save people from sin. Jn. 1:10,11,16,17, 29; Jn. 3:14-18,36; Jn. 5:39; Jn. 6:32-35,40,51-58; Jn. 10: 10,11,15.

One way of salvation for Jews and Gentiles?

35. Despite what Dispensationalist teach, there is one way of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles, both were saved the same way. Abraham was justified by Faith, and so was David, none was saved by Law-obedience or works obedience all are save by justification through Faith as the church today. (Gen. 15:5,6; Acts. 13:38,39; Rom. 4:1-16; Gal. 2:16); Jn. 14:6.
36. The grace of God has appeared unto all men, and what does it teach both Jews and gentiles in all ages? One way of salvation. Tit. 2:11-14; Tit. 3:4-7; Rev. 13:8; Heb. 16-19; Heb. 4:1-3.
37. He that has the Son has life, and he that does not have the Son does not have life, thus all are saved by eternal life from the Son, whether Jew or gentile, and in all history. 1 Jn. 5:9-13; 2 Jn. 9,10.
38. This shows us that gentiles and Jews are all saved one way, by Righteousness through Faith; it was an attempt at Law-obedience for salvation that damned the Jews. Rom. 9:30, 31; Rom. 10:1-4,9-13.

The Church in the Old Testament

39. Any who believed and was justified in the Old Testament having Faith was the Church of God just as the New Testament, Heb. 12:22-23; (Eph. 3:21; Isa. 45:17).

40. Finally, the New Testament church was certainly prophesied of in the Old Testament. (Acts. 15:13-17; Am. 9:11, 12).

Fin