Dispensationalism

Taught by
Pastor Vincent Sawyer

I. Dispensationalism (Introduction):

The word "Dispensationalism" is a Biblical Term:

- *1Co 9:17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a <u>dispensation</u> of the gospel is committed unto me.*
- *Eph 1:10 That in the <u>dispensation</u> of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*
- *Eph 3:2 If ye have heard of the <u>dispensation</u> of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:*
- *Col 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the <u>dispensation</u> of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;*

Definition of the term:

οικονομια (oikonomia oy-kon-om-ee'-ah)

The term is made up of two words:

Oikos – House
Nomos – Rules or Laws

Oikonomia speaks of the management of a household or of household affairs

1a) specifically, the management, oversight, administration, of other's property
1b) the office of a manager or overseer, stewardship
1c) administration, dispensation (Strong)

The word refers to the management of the household or the exercise of a responsibility or <u>stewardship</u>.

See: Luke 16:1-13 – where we find Jesus' parable of a rich man and his stewards. Ryrie enumerates four basic aspects of any "stewardship" (or "dispensation") which are apparent from this passage:

1. There are two parties involved, an owner of the property to be entrusted, and a steward to whom it is entrusted (16:1).
2. There is carefully defined responsibility on the part of the steward (16:1).
3. There is accountability at any time; it is the prerogative of the owner to demand a reckoning (16:20.
4. There can be a change at any time, according to the discretion of the owner (16:2). (Ryrie, cited by Doug Bookman: Pillsbury Baptist Bible College and A Definition of Dispensationalism)

Various Definitions of a "Dispensation"

Scofield Reference Bible:

"A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God."

Clarence E. Mason, Jr.:

"…in its Biblical usage, a dispensation is a divinely established stewardship of a particular revelation of God's mind and will which brings added responsibility to the whole race of men or that portion of the race to whom the revelation is particularly given by God."

George D. Beckwith:

"A dispensation is a period of time during which God tests man in regard to man's relationship to Himself. In each period of time there is some revelation of the will of God, and a new test of man. Each dispensation begins in fresh divine light and inspiration, and ends in darkness, gloom, and judgment."

Charles Ryrie:

"A dispensation is a distinguishable economy (stewardship) in the outworking of God's purposes."

Essential Features of each dispensation:

- A New Revelation given by God

- A New Responsibility expected from Man (obedience is expected to that New Revelation)

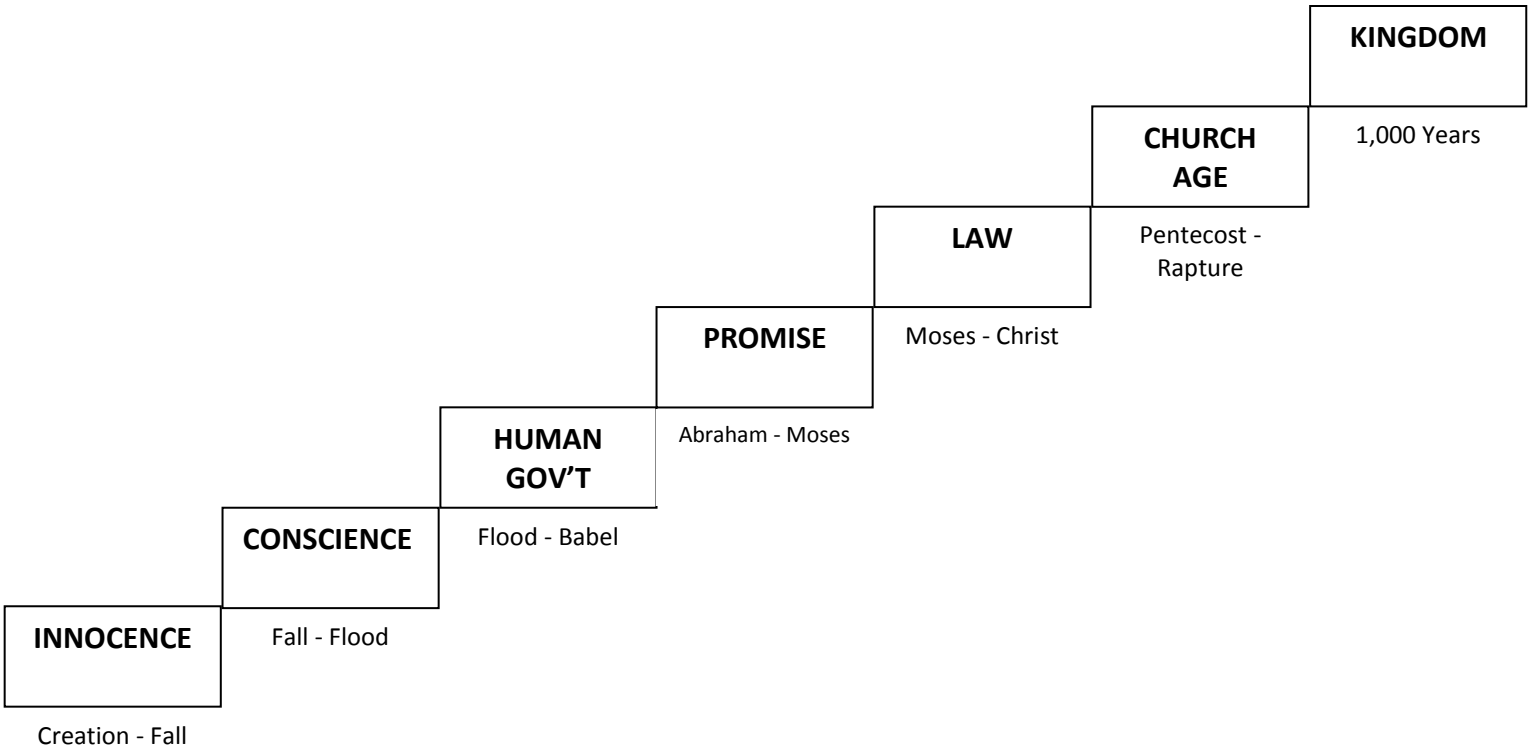
The essentials of Dispensationalism:

1. A dispensationalist recognizes and maintains the **distinction** between God's dealings with **O.T. Israel** and the **N.T. Church**.

2. A dispensationalist will consistently employ a **normal (literal) hermeneutic** in his interpretation of Scripture; This applies to prophesy as well as all Scripture.

3. A dispensationalist regards the underlying purpose of God to be **His own glory**, rather than the redemption of men; the dispensationalist's approach to Scripture is decidedly God-centered (theocentric), not man-centered (anthropocentric). A Doxological perspective.

Illustration of the seven dispensations position:



Characteristics of each Dispensation:

1. God pours out **new revelation** during the transition period between each dispensation.

2. Each dispensation is **built upon the former** dispensation

3. Each dispensation has **more improvement** than the previous one.

4. Each is **not a trial and error** dispensation (God is unfolding His One Plan progressively)

II. Essentials to a proper understanding of Dispensationalism:

The Bible teaches that God **progressively revealed His Word** to mankind.
This is called "**progressive revelation**"

Hebrews 1:1-2
"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, …"

"Sundry times" - God gave His Old Testament revelation at various time periods.
Each bit of revelation would build on the former.

"Divers manners" - God revealed Himself in different ways.

a. Miracles - the mighty acts of God in history. When God spoke by "event revelation," He always had a messenger to interpret it with "word revelation."
EXAMPLE: the Exodus - Ex. 5:1-2, cp. 7:4-5; Ps. 106:7-9.

b. Theophanies - physical appearance of God to man.

1) Natural theophany (appearances in nature) - Ex. 3 (burning bush)
Ex. 13:21-22 (pillar of cloud and fire)
2) Auditory theophany (God's voice could be heard) - Ex. 19:1-3; Lk. 3:22.
3) Bodily theophany (The Angel [Messenger] of the Lord) - a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ - Gen. 16:10; Judges 2:1ff.

c. Urim & Thumim - two precious stones, used like lots, to determine God's will for Israel - Ex. 28:30; Num. 27:21; Dt. 33:8).

d. His Word
1) Direct words (Ex. 33:11)
2) Direct writing (Ex. 31:18)
3) Dreams (Dan. 7:1)
4) Visions (Ez. 1:1)
5) Scriptures - the written Word (Ex. 17:14, 24:4, 7; Dt. 31:24; II Tim. 3:16)

"The fathers" - The Jewish patriarchs (Hebrew forefathers)

God had to reveal Himself, because man by nature is unable to discover God (can't see Him or know Him); also because man by the fall is uninterested in discovering God. Because of sin, man hides from God and is dead spiritually.

v. 2
"These last days" - The entire New Testament era is called the Last Days.
The time period between Christ's first coming and His second coming is noted as a period of the "Last Days." With God, a thousand years are as one day.
In accordance with the theme of the superiority of Christ, the writer of Hebrews shows His superiority over the prophets by revealing Christ as the last and final spokesman for God (SEE: Hebrews 2:2-3)
Mohammed was not "the seal of the prophets." Jesus is the final authority.

III. A Detailed Look at the 7 Dispensations

The following outline regarding the seven dispensations is taken from Dr. Doug Bookman, "Studies in Dispensationalism," Spring Bible Conference at Pillsbury Baptist Bible College, March, 1981.

A. The Dispensation of Innocence

1. Explanation of the term

   a. Negatively, the term does not imply "moral neutrality".

   b. Rather, the term includes the idea of positive righteousness. Adam was created with a holy nature; his only tendency was to obey.

      Note: Adam's moral state was that of creaturely righteousness; it was only descriptive and could become experiential only through a moral dilemma which involved a choice.

   c. A workable definition of "innocence": unconfirmed, creaturely holiness

2. The extent of this dispensation: from creation to the fall

3. The original revelation which initiated this dispensation

   Note: There are six mandates laid before Adam and Eve in Genesis 1 and 2 –

   a. Replenish the earth (1:28)

   b. Subdue the earth (1:28)

   c. Exercise dominion over the animals (1;28) (Psalm 8:6-8; Isaiah 11:6)

   d. Dress and keep the garden (2:16)

   e. Restrict himself to a vegetable diet (1:29, 30)

   f. Abstain from partaking of the fruit of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (2:16, 17)

4. Man's responsibility during this dispensation:

   a. To obey God

   b. To recognize God's rule in his life and thus develop a holy character

5. Man's failure in this dispensation: He knowingly partook of the fruit of the tree (3:1-7)

6. The judgment of this dispensation
   Note: There is a three-fold judgment at this time:

   a. A curse was placed upon men, upon animals, and upon the earth (2:17; 3:14-19)

   b. Sin and death entered the created order (Rom. 5:12)

   c. Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden (3:22-24)

7. The continuing principles of this dispensation:

   a. The mandate to "fill the earth," to people this world with creatures made in the image of God

   b. The mandate to "subdue the earth," to unlock the mysteries of the created order, to make the earth serve man's needs

B. The Dispensation of Conscience

1. Explanation of the term
   God was ruling internally; He had provided no external restraints upon the wickedness of society. He restricted Himself to ruling His household-world through the internal faculty of the individual conscience.
   Scripture: Genesis 6:3 – "My Spirit shall not always strive with (rule in) man."

2. The extent of this dispensation: from the fall to the flood

3. The new revelation which initiated this dispensation

   a. The promise of Genesis 3:15 – the first glimpse of redeeming grace
   b. The demand for blood sacrifice as a covering for sin

4. Man's responsibility during this dispensation:

   a. To obey God's promptings in the conscience
   b. To bring an animal sacrifice, believing in the promise of Gen. 3:15

5. Man's failure in this dispensation

   Note: There is a rather full record of man's failure in this dispensation, both individually and corporately. The factors mentioned in Scripture include:

   a. Cain's refusal to bring an acceptable offering (Gen. 4:1-7)

   b. Cain's murder of Abel (Gen. 4:8)

   c. The rise of a Godless civilization (Gen. 4:17f)

   d. Intermarriage of the godly ("sons of God") and the ungodly ("daughters of men") (Gen. 6:4-6)

   e. The earth was filled with wickedness and violence (Gen. 6:5-6)

6. The judgment on this dispensation: the Genesis flood

7. The continuing principles of this dispensation

   a. The principle of blood sacrifice continues on; God always demand blood to cover sin and guilt (1 Peter 1:18)

   b. God still operates through the conscience, though He has also established external restrains to check man's bent toward sin

C. The Dispensation of Human Government

1. Explanation of the term

   At this time, God established judicial, external restraints upon sin, through which He would rule His house-world. God is now demanding that man – in the collective sense – govern himself, that through governmental agencies he could restrain the violence and wickedness which had overspread the earth when God's rule was only internal.

2. The extent of this dispensation: from the flood to the call of Abram

3. The new revelation which initiated this dispensation: the Noahic Covenant of Genesis 9

   Notice the four-fold division of the Noahic Covenant:

   a. Fear of man placed upon the animals (9:2)

   b. Permission given to man to eat meat (9:3)

   c. Capital punishment mandated for murder (9:6)

   d. The promise that God would never again destroy the world by means of a flood (9:8-17)

4. Man's responsibility during this dispensation:

   a. To rule for God

   b. To cause righteousness to prevail in the earth by means of orderly rule

5. Man's failure in this dispensation

   a. Noah's drunkenness (Gen. 9:21)

   b. Mankind's refusal to overspread the earth, and the attempt to maintain a civilization around the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9)

6. The judgment on this dispensation: confusion of tongues (Gen. 11:6-9)

7. The continuing principles of this dispensation

   a. Mankind continues to be responsible for orderly government; the provision of capital punishment is yet intact

      "A law without penalty is simply good advice" (Daniel Webster)

D. The Dispensation of Promise

1. Explanation of the term

   During this dispensation, men became stewards of the Covenant promises which Jehovah made with Abram. God had graciously selected Abram and his descendents as the special bearers of divine truth and testimony in the world, and it was the responsibility of all men to acknowledge and properly respond to that divine choice and those divine promises.

2. The extent of this dispensation: from the call of Abram to the giving of the Mosaic Law at Mt. Sinai

3. The new revelation which initiated this dispensation: the Abrahamic Covenant of Genesis 12:1-3

   Notice the three distinct aspects of this covenant:

   a. A seed – Abraham would father a great nation
   b. A land – with carefully specified borders
   c. Divine blessing – which would in time encompass all the children of the earth

4. Man's responsibility during this dispensation

   a. All men were to believe and obey the promises of the Covenant

   b. Abraham's family was to remain separate from all other nations; other nations were to honor Israel's distinctiveness

   c. Abraham's family was to abide in the land; other nations were to respect the legitimacy of Abraham's claim to the land

5. The failure of this dispensation: Israel fled to and settled in the land of Egypt

6. The judgment on Israel in this dispensation: the Egyptian bondage

7. The continuing principles of this dispensation

   a. The promise made to Abraham was not nullified by the introduction of a new dispensation (Gal. 3:17); they await fulfillment even today.

   Note: This is an important concept, because it strengthens the confidence of the Bible student that God will yet fulfill His promises to Abraham.

E. The dispensation of the Mosaic Law

1. Explanation of the term

   It was during this dispensation that God demanded obedience to the Law code established for Israel through Moses (at Mt. Sinai, the family of Israel became a nation, governed by a theocratic system, with the Mosaic Law code as their legal constitution.

2. The extent of this dispensation: from the giving of the Mosaic Law to the Day of Pentecost in Acts 1-2

3. The new revelation which initiated this dispensation: the Mosaic Law system given at Mt. Sinai

   This system involves 3 aspects:

   a. The civil aspect – dealing with the social and legal relationships of Israel

   b. The ceremonial aspect – dealing with the ritual and dress and demands of the levitical religious system

   c. The moral aspect – the Ten Commandments of Exod. 20

   Note: Though there are three aspects of the Mosaic Law, it is one law system; it cannot be divided or dismembered.

4. Man's responsibility during this dispensation: to keep the whole Law

   Note: In order to understand what is involved in this demand – to see what God had in mind when He required such absolute obedience to the entire Law system -- it is important to consider the purpose of God in giving the Law.

   a. With regard to Israel's spiritual life

      1) Ideally – the Mosaic Law was a means by which a man might prove himself holy

      2) Experientially – the Law was a means by which men were proven sinners

      3) Ultimately – the Law established the requisites for and means by which anyone could approach Jehovah

b. With regard to Israel's national or social life, the Mosaic Law was a way of life for the covenant community.

5. Man's failure in this dispensation

a. They failed to keep the Law

b. They refused to accept the One who came to fulfill the Law, choosing rather to put Him to an open shame (Rom. 10:1-3)

6. The judgment on this dispensation

a. The (temporary) rejection of Israel (Mt. 21:43)

b. The postponement of the Kingdom (Mt. 13)

c. The terrible destruction of 70 AD (Lk. 21:20-24)

7. The continuing principles of this dispensation

a. The principles of the moral law are binding upon men even today

F. The dispensation of the Church Age (Grace)

1. Explanation of the term:

   a. This dispensation is called the "dispensation of grace" simply because the grace of God is displayed to mankind today in a way more marvelous and more manifest than ever before. (John 1:17; Ephes. 3:2)

   b. This is not to say that God's grace was never manifested to men before this dispensation. The distinction is only one of degree; believers today know and experience God's grace in a special way, not in any exclusive sense.

   c. This is not to say that salvation was not by grace through faith in former dispensations. Concerning the salvation of lost men:

      --The BASIS at all times: the death of Christ
      --The REQUIREMENT in every dispensation: personal faith
      --The OBJECT of that faith in every dispensation: God and HIs Word
      --The KNOWLEDGE-CONTENT of that faith: differs from one dispensation to the next

2. The extent of this dispensation: from the Day of Pentecost to the Second coming of Christ in glory

3. The new revelation which initiated this dispensation: all that was communicated to mankind through the ministry (life, death, resurrection and continuing ministry) of our Lord Jesus Christ

4. The responsibility of men during this dispensation

   a. To receive by faith the gift of righteousness made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ

   b. To unite with a Bible-believing local assembly of believers

   c. To fulfill the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20

5. The failure of this dispensation: rejection of the truth of Scripture (1 Tim. 4:1-3), culminating in the great apostasy of the Tribulation Period (2 Thes. 2:1-12)

6. The judgment upon this dispensation: The Day of the Lord

7. The continuing principles of this dispensation

   a. Christ's complete payment for sin

   b. Submission to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior

G. The Dispensation of the Kingdom of God

1. Explanation of the term: This dispensation will prove to be the climax of the plan of God for this earth (Eph. 1:10). It will be at this time that the Messiah sits on a throne in the City of David and rules personally over mankind n a Kingdom of absolute righteousness and blessedness.

2. The extent of this dispensation

   a. As to the dispensation itself, it will endure for 1,000 years, from the Second coming in glory to the final rebellion of Satan in Revelation 20:7-11.

   b. As to the Kingdom itself, it will endure for eternity (1 Cor. 15:20-24)

3. The new revelation which shall initiate this dispensation: the personal, immediate rule and reign of Jesus Christ, with all the revelatory activity connected with that reign.

4. The responsibilities of men in this dispensation: to believe the Gospel and obey the Messiah-King

   Note: To better understand what will be demanded of the citizens of this Kingdom, it is helpful to consider in some detail the NATURE of that Kingdom as described in Scripture.

   a. It is a spiritual Kingdom (Jn. 3:3)

   b. The Kingdom will have a moral dimension (Isa. 32:5)

   c. The Kingdom will have a social dimension (Isa. 2:4)

   d. The Kingdom will have a political dimension (Isa. 32:1)

   e. The Kingdom will have a physical dimension (Isa. 35)

   f. The Kingdom will have a religious aspect (Ezek. 40:48

5. The failure in this dispensation: Satan is loosed and an unnumbered multitude follow him in rebellion (Rev. 20:7-8).

6. The judgment on this dispensation: Fire from heaven (Rev. 20:9-10)

7. The continuing principles of this dispensation

   a. As to the dispensational scheme, there are no continuing principles; the stewardship arrangement is dissolved here and God rules over a new heaven and a new earth throughout eternity.
   b. It seems, however, that the basic structure of the Millennial Kingdom will endure throughout eternity in the eternal state.

IV. Dispensationalism as it relates to God's Covenants

"Covenant" - A binding promise. Heb. *"berith"*; Greek *"diatheke."* A blood-bought "cutting" of a sacrifice which guaranteed the fulfillment of the terms of the agreement.

A. The Noahic Covenant

God makes a covenant to never again destroy the world by a flood; He promises to preserve human life.

1. God's covenant would be unconditional (8:21-22)

The fulfillment of this covenant would not be determined by man's faithfulness to God, but by God's faithfulness to man.

v. 21
"I will not again curse the ground" –
Initially this sounds like God may be referring to the curse of Gen. 3:17, which may have been somewhat alleviated after the flood, due to the post flood conditions (including the seasons, the water cycle [rain, evaporation, etc.]). However, the earth is still cursed with thorns, thistles, weeds, etc. and is waiting for freedom from its present bondage (Rom. 8:19-22).

A better view is that God is referring to the flood, that He will never again curse the earth with a world-wide deluge. This is the emphasis of the context in 8:21-9:17.

"Neither will I again smite . . . as I have done" – God will again smite man for his sin (in "the day of the Lord"), but never again "as" He did in Noah's day. Never again will the world perish by water; the next time will be by fire! (II Pet. 3:10-13).

v. 22
God promises an uninterrupted continuity of seasons with consistent times for:
--planting and harvesting – "seedtime and harvest"
--winter coats and short-sleeved shirts – "cold and heat"
--sunny, warm days and cold, blustery days – "summer and winter"
--sunrise and sunset – "day and night"
This regularity is limited to "while the earth remaineth."

2. God's covenant would be <u>universal</u> (9:8-11)

This covenant would extend from Noah to the entire human race throughout history.

v. 9
"I establish my covenant" – Everytime God enacted a new covenant (a new set of promises), He began a <u>new dispensation</u>.

3. God's covenant would be <u>visible</u> (9:12-17)

Through a beautiful cosmic display of colorful light, God would give a reminder of His covenant.

B. The <u>Abrahamic</u> Covenant

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:
And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:
And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.
Genesis 12:1-3 (KJV)

1. God promises Abraham a LAND (v.1)

2. God promises Abraham a SEED (v.2)

3. God promises Abraham a BLESSING (v.3)

"In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" – Every nation on earth would be blessed by the Jewish nation. How?
It is through the Hebrew people that we received . . .

1) The <u>Bible</u> ("the oracles of God") (Rom. 3:1-2 - *What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*)

2) The <u>Messiah</u> (Rom. 9:4-5 - *Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*)

C. The Davidic Covenant

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.
I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:
But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.
2 Samuel 7:12-15 (KJV)

Immediately - Solomon (would establish his kingdom and build the Temple)

Ultimately - The Lord Jesus Christ (The Lord Jesus will rule on David's Throne forever)

D. The Mosaic Covenant

Blessing for Obedience; Cursing for Disobedience (Deut. 28-29)

The Old Covenant was a conditional covenant which promised blessing if Israel obeyed and cursing if they did not obey.

E. The New Covenant

New Covenant Predicted through Jeremiah the Prophet

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:
Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:
But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.
And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.
Jeremiah 31:31-34

New Covenant Provided by Christ at the Cross:

1Co 11:25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

The Old Covenant	The New Covenant
Salvation Predicted	Salvation Paid For (Hebrews)
Types & Forshadows	Fulfillment (Hebrews)
Law	Spirit (Romans 7 & 8)
Servants	Friends (John 15:15)
Holy Spirit WITH believers	Holy Spirit IN believers (John 14:17)
Civil, Ceremonial, & Moral Laws	The Royal Law of Love (Mt. 22:40; Ja. 2:8; Ro.13:9)
Priesthood of many (Mediators)	High Priest (Christ) (One Mediator - 1 Tim. 2:5)
Indirect Access to God	Direct Access to God (Heb.10:19-20)
Mystery of Jew & Gentile in "one Body" Concealed	Mystery of Jew & Gentile in "one body" Revealed (Eph. 3:5; Col.1:25-26)

The Superiority of Christ's High-Priesthood
See: Hebrews 8:1-13

*** What Jesus Christ has to offer is better!** *(Better than what any other person, religion, or promise can offer!)*

1. Our High Priest is elevated to...
   A BETTER <u>POSITION</u> (v.1)

2. Our High Priest is ministering at...
   A BETTER <u>TABERNACLE</u> (v.2, 5)

3. Our High Priest has offered...
   A BETTER <u>SACRIFICE</u> (v.3-4)

4. Our High Priest is mediator of...
   A BETTER <u>COVENANT</u> (v.6-13)

   The "New Covenant" comes with better <u>promises</u> (Heb. 8:6b)

   a. Promise # 1 - The New Covenant promised REPLACEMENT OF THE OLD COVENANT (v.7-8; v.13)

   b. Promise # 2 - The New Covenant promised to be DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT THAN THE MOSAIC COVENANT (v.9)

   c. Promise # 3 - The New Covenant promised a TRANSFORMATION OF THE INNER-MAN (v.10)

   d. Promise # 4 - The New Covenant promised to establish an ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (v.10b)

   e. Promise # 5 - The New Covenant promised to usher in a UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (v.11)

   f. Promise # 6 - The New Covenant promised a PERMANENT REMOVAL OF SIN (v.12)

The New Covenant

God through the prophet Jeremiah said that the days would come that He would make "a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah" (Jer. 31:31). This new covenant was to be a different one than the Mosaic covenant (the Law) which "they[the Jews] broke." Different in that it would be:

1) Unconditional (dependent exclusively upon the grace of God)
2) Eternal (from Millennium through eternity)
3) Internal (renewing of mind and heart through the Holy Spirit - Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:27)
4) External (a literal kingdom to Israel - Isa. 11:6-9; Ezek. 37:26-27)
5) Universal ("they all shall know Me" - Jer. 31:34)
6) Doxological (all glory will go to God, who will personally bring in the kingdom and fulfill all of the specific covenant promises - 1 Cor. 15:24-28)

In Jeremiah 31:31-34, it is very clear that this promised new covenant with its benefits is with the nation of Israel and is future (to be realized in the Millennium). However, the New Testament speaks of a new covenant as having been aleady provided by the death of Christ and benefitted of by the church. Questions now arise such as:

1) How many "new covenants" are there?
2) Is there a separate covenant for Israel and a separate one for the church?
3) Is the new covenant promised to Israel fulfilled in the church?

At this point it is important to note that amillennialists use the New Testament references to the new covenant (promised to Israel through Jeremiah) to prove that the church has replaced Old Testament Israel and is fulfilling ("spiritually") the promises of that covenant; hence there is no need for a future literal millennial kingdom. This view is erroneously arrived at as a result of improper hermeneutics (not interpreting the Bible literally). In a reaction against this view, some dispensationalists (in guarding their system of theology) have arrived at the belief in two distinct "new covenants" - one for the church and one for Israel.

I believe that there is and will be only one "new covenant," and that this covenant promised to Israel (Jer. 31:31) is to Israel and is not fulfilled by the church, nor is it even partially fulfilled by the church. However, the New Testament does teach that **the church is an indirect beneficiary of the soteriological benefits of the provision of the new covenant.**

The basis for this belief is found in the fact that the necessary shedding of blood (to make a covenant) has been provided by Christ and is (present tense) applied or appropriated eternally to all believers in this dispensation.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic and illustrative memorial of these truths (Mt. 26:28; 1 Cor. 11:25). It is true that Christ came for "the lost sheep of Israel" and died for this "elect nation" (to shed the blood necessary for a new covenant), but He also died for the world (1 Jn. 2:2).

Because of Israel's rejection (Rom. 11:11)--pre-known by the foreknowledge of God--the whole world has been given the offer of becoming recipients of the spiritual, soteriological benefits of the death of Christ (Gal. 3:13-14). Therefore, the church (saved Jews and Gentiles) are benefitting because the new covenant has been provided for.

Israel as a nation (because of unbelief) has not yet received the literal fulfilled benefits of this new covenant (which will include more than salvation). Israel will see total fulfillment of the promised "new covenant" when Christ Himself ushers in the millennial kingdom (Rev. 20:1-6).

The Apostle Paul said that *". . . blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be [future] saved: as it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins"* (Rom. 11:25-27).

Though God did provide the new covenant with the "once for all" sacrifice of His Son, He was not under compulsion to immediately fulfill the promises that come with it. On the contrary, God could not do so because of Israel's unbelief. The fulfillment to Israel has been postponed. Postponed fulfillment does not annual the covenant.

Therefore, one should not spiritualize Scripture to find the fulfillments promised to Israel in the church. The Davidic covenant is an example of postponed fulfillment (until the Millennium), because God said, "I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever" (2 Sam. 7:13). Either the "forever" is true and to be literally realized, or God is a liar. The Abrahamic covenant also has future fulfillment because God said to Abraham: ". . . in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). In the New Testament, God gives clear indication that Abraham did not receive the promises but that one day he would (Heb. 11:13). "God is able to graft them (Israel) in again" (Rom. 11:23) and one day He will. Though the new covenant has begun in the sense that the basis for it has been provided by the one sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 8 - 10), the fulfillment of the promises made by God through Jeremiah to Israel have not begun.

The writer of Hebrews in chapters 8 - 10, though mentioning the "new covenant," is not saying that it has been fulfilled but rather that:

1) there was a need for it;
2) that it has been provided for (by Christ's sacrifice);
and 3) that it is better (superior) than the old covenant.

The direct quoting of the "new covenant" from Jeremiah 31:31-34 in Hebrews 8:8-12 was to demonstrate that Jesus is the mediator of that new, superior covenant (verse 6-7), and that the old covenant was obsolete and vanishing away (verse 13). The point is that the Mosaic covenant is <u>not</u> eternal; the point is not that the promises to Israel of the "new" are being fulfilled.

The foundation has been laid, the provisions have been met (by the spotless Lamb of God), and the new covenant has been introduced in this transitory dispensation of the church. Through the grace of God Gentiles are eternally saved in this age while Christ "waits for His enemies to be made his footstool" (Heb. 10:13). After this waiting period of Christ, He will return and literally fulfill God's new covenant promises to Israel. The Lord Jesus when instituting the Lord's Supper said: *"This is my blood of the New Testament (covenant) which is shed for many for the remission of sins. <u>But</u> I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it <u>new</u> with you <u>in my Father's kingdom"</u>* (Mt. 26:28).

V. Dispensationalism as it relates to Ultra-Dispensationalism

The term "Ultra-dispenationalism" or "Hyper-dispensationalism" simply refers to a system of theology with takes a dispensational view of Scripture to an extreme (an unBiblical extreme which leads the Bible interpreter to arrive at erroneous conclusions and actually affects both one's preaching of the N.T. and Practice).

A. A Succinct Look at What Ultradispensationalists Believe:

1. Ultradispensationalists believe that **the Church did NOT begin** on the day of **Pentecost**

    - E.W. Bullinger* (1837-1913) (who some call the originator of ultradispensationalism) put the Gospels and the book of Acts under the Dispensation of the Law and commenced the Church Age with the ministry of Paul in Acts 28:28.
    - Other ultradispensationalists* place the origin of the Church at Acts 9 (Paul's conversion) or Acts 13 (Paul's turning to the Gentiles)
    - Many others believe the Church started sometime after Pentecost, but are unsure when.
    - Others teach that a "church of the Jews" began at Pentecost and a distinct Church ("church of the Gentiles"/Body of Christ) started when the "mystery" of the grace of God was revealed to Paul.

    *Note: Not all ultradispensationalists follow the details of Bullinger on every point. Some of the proponents of this position include: Cornelius Stam (author of: "Things that differ"); Charles Baker, and Robert Brock.
    *It should also be noted that no ultradispensationalist calls himself an ultradispensationalist. They would prefer to refer to themselves as Pauline Dispensationalists.

2. Ultradispensationalists believe that the "church" Jesus mentioned in Matthew 16:18 and Matthew 18:17 is **NOT the Church of this Age**.

    Mt 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
    Mt 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

3. Ultradispensationalists believe that "the Great Commission" in the Gospels (ex. Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15) is the Kingdom commission which has been temporarily set aside until God resumes His program with Israel. **It is not our great Commission**. Our Great Commission is in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 and in Ephesians 3:9.

4. Ultradispensationalists believe that no one but God knew anything about the Church of this Age until after **Paul** was saved and **the "Mystery" was revealed to him**.

   This understanding is based primarily on these Scriptures:
   And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of **the mystery** (which is Jew and Gentile together in one body), which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:
   Ephesians 3:9 (KJV)

   Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to **my gospel**, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was **kept secret** since the world began,
   Romans 16:25 (KJV)

5. Ultradispensationalists believe that just as the Church was a mystery, the promised **"Rapture"** (for the Church only) is a mystery. It can **only be found in Paul's epistles**, to whom God revealed the Mystery.

   They would contend that these Scriptures do NOT refer to the Rapture of the Church:
   John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.
   Matthew 24:31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (cp. Mk. 13:27)
   Matthew 24:40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

6. Ultradispensationalists believe that **Paul is our Apostle** of the Body of Christ, and that only in Paul's epistles can we find the Doctrine of Today's Church.

   This would mean that we (the Church) cannot preach verses like John 3:16 etc. because that was a "Kingdom Gospel" not intended for the church to preach.

7. Ultradispensationalists believe that **water baptism has no place** at all in this present dispensation.

B. A Refutation of Ultradispensationalism

1. Christ prepared for the Church

a. The life of Christ as recorded in the gospels covers a period of <u>transition</u> from the Dispensation of Law to the Church Age

- John 1:17 - "the law came by Moses but grace and truth by Jesus Christ" (cp. Rom. 6:14)
- Mt. 5 - "It was said. . . but I say unto you"
- Lk. 5:36-39 - new teaching cannot be contained in the old forms of the Law
- Mt. 5:17 - Jesus fulfilled or completed the Law and brought it to an end (Rom. 10:4)

b. Mt. 16:18 - "I will build" - future tense (universal church)
Mt. 18:17 - "Take it to the church" (local church)

2. The Cross made the Church possible

Eph. 2:11-20 - God has accepted Jews and Gentiles into one Body ever since the cross

3. Pentecost began the Church

a. No reason why the Church should have been delayed after the four age-transforming events took place:

- Christ's death
- Christ's resurrection
- Christ's ascension to become the church's Head
- The Holy Spirit's advent

Note: Absolutely none of Joel 2:28-32 was fulfilled at Pentecost, and tongues were never mentioned in Joel.

b. Acts 2:47 - "The Lord added to the church daily" Also: Acts 5:11, 14

THE LIFELINE OF THE CHURCH





THE O.T. | **THE NEW TESTAMENT GOSPELS** *(A Time of Transition)* [**THE CHURCH AGE**]

1) The Church in **"Seed"** form

2) The Church is **"Conceived"** by means of the Cross

3) The Church is ***"Born"*** at Pentecost

4) The Church **"Matures"** throughout the Book of Acts (ch. 3ff)

5) The Church is **"Taken away"** at the Rapture --"The Dead in Christ rise first"

***Preparation**
For the Church by John the Baptist (Mt. 11:12-13; Lk. 16:16)

***Prediction**
Of the Church by Jesus Christ (Mt. 16:18; 18:15-17)

***Provision**
The Church is made possible by the death and resurrection of Christ (Eph. 2:13-16)

***Initiation**
The Church begins with the advent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2; 11:15; I Cor. 12:13)

***Development**
The Church grows to maturity through the Word of God (Eph. 4:11-16)

***Departure**
The Church is caught away (I Th. 4:13-18)

NOTE: The Church was eternally in the plan of God (Eph. 3:11) but did not begin until Pentecost. Ever since Pentecost, the Lord has "added to the Church daily" (Acts 2:47; 5:11, 14).

4. Paul persecuted the Church

a. He was a member of the same church that he once tried to destroy
b. Also called "the way" (Acts 9:2, 19:23, 22:4, 24:14)
c. Gal. 1:13 - Paul once persecuted the church to destroy it; Gal. 1:23 - Paul now preached the faith he once tried to destroy
d. 1 Cor. 15:1-11; *v. 9, *v. 11
e. Phil. 3:6; cp. Acts 8:3

5. The Apostles *(Not just Paul)* were the Foundation layers of the Church
(1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20)

6. Israel was rejected (laid aside as a nation) before the book of Acts
(Rom. 11:17-24)

When was Israel cast aside temporarily?

a. In God's mind, before Babylonian captivity (Dan. 9:20-27)
b. Midway through Christ's ministry, Jesus demonstrated Israel's rejection
   1) By speaking in parables (Mt. 13:10-15)
   2) By His message in the parables (Mt. 21:33-45)
      (rejected stone-cornerstone - Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:7)
c. When the middle wall of partition was broken down (Eph. 2:13-14) and when God made no difference between the Jew and the Greek (Rom. 10:12; Acts 15:9; Col. 3:11) -- which occurred at the cross
d. The gift of tongues was the sign of God's judgment on Israel (1 Cor. 14:22)

7. Peter was made aware that God had accepted Gentiles

a. Should have occurred at Great Commission
   "All nations" (Lk. 24:47; Mt. 28); "every creature" (Mk. 16); "unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).
   Jesus even said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold" (Jn. 10:16-17; cp. Eph. 2:16-17 - "one flock"/ "one shepherd")

b. But did not occur until direct revelation from God - Acts 10
   Acts 11:17 - "What was I that I could withstand God"
   Acts 15:7-9 - "No difference" - same definition as "mystery"

c. When Peter compromised, he was openly rebuked because he already knew better (Gal. 2:11-14)

8. Paul's message was exactly the same as Peter's

a. Paul's message:
- Death, burial and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-4)
- Salvation is in Christ alone (Rom. 6:23)
- Salvation aspects of the kingdom (Acts 28:31; 1 Th. 2:12; Col. 1:13)
- Jews and Gentiles are accepted without partiality and are equally united by having the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:14-18)
  *This mystery was revealed to Paul by direct revelation (Gal. 1:12)

b. Peter's message:
- Death, burial and resurrection (Acts 2:31,35; 3:15; 4:33, etc.)
- Salvation is in Christ alone (Acts 4:12)
- Salvation aspects of the kingdom (2 Pet. 1:11)
- Jews and Gentiles are accepted without partiality and are equally united by having the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:8-9)

*This mystery was revealed to Peter by direct revelation (Acts 10)
Note: Anyone who preached another Gospel was to be accursed (Gal. 1:8)

9. The Mystery is revealed

a. Was kept secret (Rom. 16:25)

b. Hid in God (Eph. 3:9)

c. Definition: Eph. 3:6 - Gentiles should be fellow heirs
1) Mystery - blindness to Israel (Rom. 11:25)
2) Mystery - the Gospel (Eph. 6:19; Col. 1:27)
3) Mystery - relationship between Bride and Christ (Eph. 5:22-33)
4) Mystery - Rapture-Resurrection and change from corruption to incorruption (1 Cor. 15:51-57)

The "Mystery" was given but in a concealed fashion in the O.T. It was revealed in the N.T. It was not merely revealed to and through Paul. He was one of the revealers of the Mystery, but not the exclusive one.

Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,
But now is made manifest, and **by the scriptures of the prophets**, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:
Romans 16:25-26 (KJV)

10. Paul received direct revelation but no distinctive message

a. Paul did not receive his teaching from the apostles (Gal. 1:12)
b. He went to Jerusalem to make sure he had been preaching the same thing they were (Gal. 2:2)
c. Stewardship given to Paul (1 Cor. 9:17; Col. 1:25)
d. Direct revelation of mystery - Eph. 3:3 - emphasis is on <u>revelation</u> not <u>me</u>

*God revealed to ALL apostles (Eph. 3:5)

11. Paul's mission was to the Gentiles

a. Gal. 2:7 - "to Gentiles" *v. 8, 9 "unto"
b. Not two different Gospels but two recipients - cp. Acts 26:16-18
c. Paul did not want anyone to say "I am of Paul" or "I am of Cephas" (1 Cor. 1:12)

12. God gave apostles for the Body of Christ

a. They knew the mystery (cp. 1 Cor. 3:22 with 1 Cor. 4:1; Eph. 3:5)
b. They were given by God to equip the saints so that the Body of Christ might be edified (Eph. 4:11-12)

13. The Spirit baptism which began at Pentecost forms the Church

a. Prophesied by John the Baptist (Mt. 3:11)
b. Promised by Jesus Christ (Acts 1:5)
    1) Jesus Christ is the only One mentioned to baptize <u>with</u> the Holy Spirit (note 1 Cor. 12:13) "By" is the Greek word "*en*" which primarily means "in" or "into." Same word is in both Mt. 3:11 and Acts 1:5.
    2) 1 Cor. 12:13b - Believers were caused to drink (aorist passive) into one Spirit (cp. Jn. 7:37-39 for same imagery)
    3) Spirit was promised to be "in" believers (Jn. 14:17), which would cause believers to be "in Christ" (v. 20)
c. Fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2)
d. Continued throughout the book of Acts with signs (tongues) accompanying (Acts 8:14-17; 10:44-48; 19:1-6)
e. Restated and defined by Paul (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:5)

14. The Principle of the "New Testament" or "New Covenant" like a modern will, does into effect right after the death of the testator (the one who made the will).

It's benefits are shared in right after Christ died!

For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.
For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

Hebrews 9:16-17 (KJV)

After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.
1 Corinthians 11:25 (KJV)

Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.
Luke 22:20 (KJV)

Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.
2 Corinthians 3:6 (KJV)

15. Being "in Christ" a Church Age concept, included saints who were converted before Paul was.

Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were **in Christ before me**.
Romans 16:7 (KJV)

16. Water baptism continues through the Church Age

a. Ordinance was to be perpetual "unto the end of the age" (Mt. 28:20)
b. Ordinance followed "belief" in Acts 2:41
c. Water baptism should follow Spirit baptism (Acts 8:36-37; 10:47-48; 19:5) because it pictures our union into Christ's death, burial and resurrection, which occurs when we are immersed into the Holy Spirit at salvation (Rom. 6:1-14)
    1) John's baptism pictured a future spirit baptism (Mt. 3:11, 16)
    2) Believer's baptism in this dispensation pictures a past Spirit baptism (Acts 10:47-48; Rom. 6:1-5)
d. Was practiced by Paul (Acts 19:5-6; 1 Cor. 1:14-16), though he often delegated this ordinance as did Christ (Jn. 4:1-2) and Peter (Acts 10:48)
e. Why didn't Paul command baptism in his epistles?
    1) He only wrote to believers, who had already been baptized
    2) Baptism was such a well-known, distinguishing feature and practice of believers at that time in history that he did not have to command it
    3) Paul had a practice of not teaching over and over that which Jesus Christ had already clearly explained (cp. 1 Cor. 7:6, 10, 12)
    4) By his very example, Paul demonstrated the necessity for water baptism in obedience to the Lord's command (Acts 9:18; 16:14-15; 16:33; 19:5; 1 Cor. 1:14-16)

VI. Dispensationalism as it relates to Salvation

In every dispensation Salvation has never been based on man's works, but always on God's grace.

A. God's Means of Justification by grace, through faith is Not New News

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; *Romans 3:21 (KJV)*

"The righteousness of God" = the righteousness that God gives; the righteousness that comes from God.

This message is not a new discovery ont he part of Paul. This good news is not a novelty exclusive to Paul (as ultradispensationalists would hold).

Paul is saying that his message is not new. The Law itself spoke of a righteousness that came to man not by law-keeping but from God. The prophets foretold the same (cp. Ro. 1:2; Acts 10:43).

- "**Noah** found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8).
- **Abraham** "believed in the LORD, and He (the LORD) counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6; cp. Ro. 4:3; Gal. 3:6).
- Even **Moses** was not justified by the Law which he delivered to Israel, but he also found grace in God (Ex. 33:17).
- King **David** on numerous occasions said that he was justified by the mercy of God (Ps. 130:2, 3; Ps. 51:1f)

  Ps. 51:1 - "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions."

  Rom. 4:6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works
- **Isaiah** said, "Surely . . . in the LORD have I righteousness" (Is. 45:24).

  Is. 45:25 - "In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

  Is. 53:11 - "He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."

Obviously, a righteousness that came apart from the Law had to exist, because the Law was not given until 1400 B.C. If righteousness only came by the Mosaic Law, everyone who died previous to the giving of that Law would be in Hell now!

The Law revealed its own inadequacy to justify. It showed that sin could not be taken away permanently by the need of continual sacrifices (Heb. 10).

Jesus is the only Savior for All Ages

*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of **sins that are past**, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, **at this time** his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*
Romans 3:25-26 (KJV)

That which Christ accomplished on the cross met the righteous demands of God both for those who lived in the "past" (B.C. - v. 25b) and present ("this time" - the now season - A.D. - v. 26a).

The question would naturally come to mind, if Christ died in the first century A.D. for sinners, what was the means of forgiveness for the O.T. saints? How could God declare them righteous (EX: Abraham) when Christ had not paid for their sins yet?

How could God remit (pass over) the sins committed previously? How could God forbear?

ANSWER: God saved the O.T. saint because of the payment His Son would make in the future.

They were **saved "on credit"**

EX: How many people can purchase things without having actual cash on hand. The credit card company trusts you to cover the expense at a later time.

God could forgive and justify Old Testament saints because in His mind payment was as good as already made. Christ was so certain to die that He is called: "The lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8).

Peter said that we are redeemed with . . . "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.

God's only means of salvation for all time periods is Christ!

How could God pronounce the unrighteous "righteous" and still be just? How can God justify the ungodly? Rom. 4:5

Payment had to be made! The question is, Who would pay? Could man pay? NO!

God would be guilty of injustice if He ever allowed a lawbreaker to go free ("off the hook") without the crime being paid for. Since His Law declares: "the soul that sinneth it shall die"; "the wages of sin is death" (Ro. 6:23); sin had to be paid for before it could be forgiven.

B. God's Means of Justification is Consistent with His Law

Is he the God of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:
Seeing *it is* one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.
Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.
Romans 3:29-31 (KJV)

V. 29
If justification was by the works of the Law, then only those who had a copy of the Law and lived in or near Israel (the Temple) could be saved.
Salvation is not only for Jews but for Gentiles as well. God is their creator and Savior as well.
V. 31
If justification is not by the keeping of the Mosaic Law, does this mean the Law is worthless? No. Rather, justification by faith holds up the Law. It makes the Law stand up even more powerfully. The purpose of the O.T. Law (v. 20) was to show man the need for justification apart from itself.

Salvation by grace through faith actually allows the Law to fulfill God's intention when He gave it - namely, to condemn man so he would cry out to God for His grace.

Those who believed in salvation by the works of the Law are the ones who actually tear down the Law.

They must re-define and change the true intention of God's commands in order to convince themselves that they are keeping His Law.

Salvation has always been ...
- by grace alone
- through faith alone
- based on Christ's sacrifice alone!

Galatians 1:8
"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

VII. Dispensationalism as it relates to Israel

"No one who neglects the Jews can understand the plan of God in history, either that part of it which is realized, or that which is to be." (William Graham Scroggie, Prophecy and History, p.39)

"If we want to know our place in chronology, our position in the march of events, look at Israel." (William Blackstone, Jesus is Coming, p. 234)

To properly understand Scripture, especially when it comes to the distinctions between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, it is vital to see God's unique dealings with O.T. Israel as contrasted with His dealings with the N.T. Church.

Consistent use of a literal or normal interpretation of Scripture "leads dispensationalism to distinguish God's program for Israel from His program for the church. Thus the church did not begin in the Old Testament but on the day of Pentecost, and the church is not presently fulfilling promises made to Israel in the Old Testament that have not yet been fulfilled. The church is not seen as the replacement or the fulfillment of Israel." (David Burggraff, A Growing Difficulty for Modern Dispensationalism, A Workshop, CBTS, Lansdale, PA, p.3)

The distinction between O.T. Israel and the N.T. Church:

O.T. ISRAEL	N.T. CHURCH
• **Earthly Blessings** (A Land on Earth) (Gen.12:1; Dt. 8:7-9) • Principles of **Conduct** (Unique Civil & Ceremonial Laws) • **Unique Worship** 1. One Place (the Temple) 2. Human Priests 3. Animal Sacrifices	• **Spiritual Blessings** (in Heaven) (Phil. 3:20; Mt. 5:39) • Principles of **Conduct** (the Royal Law of Love) • **Unique Worship** 1. In Spirit (Jn. 4:24) 2. One High Priest (One Mediator - 1 Tim.2:5) 3. One Sacrifice (Heb.10:4, 9-14)

An Exposition of Romans 11

A. Romans 11:1-10

After describing God's turning to the Gentiles (Rom. 10:19-20) and Israel's rejection of God (v. 21), the question comes: "Hath God cast away His people?"

It would seem that if what Paul has been saying in chapters 9 & 10 is true, then God is through with Israel.

Paul addresses this question in chapter 11 by proving that:

1) the rejection of Israel is not total, but partial

and 2) even this partial rejection of Israel is not final, but only temporary (v. 25-26) (MacClain, p. 195)

1. God's dealings with Israel teach us that: HE IS FAITHFUL (v. 1-5a)

V. 1

"Hath God cast away His people?" - Lit. "God has not cast away His people, has He?" Expecting the answer "No."

"Cast away" = to reject something by pushing it away; to repel from one's self.
"God forbid" - lit. May it never be! Such a thought is unthinkable.
God has not cast away His people (Israel). Two illustrative proofs:

a. The salvation of Paul (v. 1-2a)

V. 2

"God hath not cast away His people" - Samuel testified: "For the Lord will not forsake His peole for His great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people" (I Sam. 12:22).

Two obvious reasons why God does not forsake His people:

1) His reputation is at stake (Because of "His great name's sake") (Moses appeals to God's reputation - Ex. 32:12-13)

2) He receives pleasure in having a people who belong to Him ("The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the earth" - Dt. 7:6)

God said to Solomon: "I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel" (I Ki. 6:13).

The psalmist proclaimed: "For the Lord will not cast off His people, neither will He forsake His inheritance" (Ps. 94:14).

"For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not His saints; they are preserved forever: but the seek of the wicked shall be cut off." (Ps. 37:28)

Among Moses' last words were these: "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." (Dt. 31:6)

This promise applies to believers today since it is reiterated to us in Heb. 13:5.

God is true to His Word. He is faithful to His promises. He keeps His covenants.

"Whom He foreknew" -

--God foreknew that He would choose Israel to be a nation to bear His name.

--God foreknew that He would preserve Israel to be a nation to occupy a future kingdom.

SEE Jeremiah 31:31-37
"The permanence of the cycle of nature (vv. 35-36) and the immeasurable heaven and earth (v. 37) guarantee the survival of the Hebrew people" (Ryrie note)

*God foreknew those whom He would redeem among Israel to have everlasting life (this point is the emphasis in context).

b. The remnant of 7,000 in Elijah's day (v. 2b-5a)

2. God's dealings with Israel teach us that: HE IS <u>GRACIOUS</u> (v. 5-6)

a. Grace is God's only means of salvation (v. 5)

b. Grace and works don't mix for salvation (v. 6)

3. God's dealings with Israel teach us that: HE IS <u>JUST</u> (v. 7-10)

a. God is just (right) to:
Reject those who don't come to Him on His terms (v. 7)

The reason Israel (as a whole) did not receive ("obtain") salvation is because they were <u>not</u> looking to receive it God's way but their own way (Rom. 9:31-32).

". . . the election hath obtained it" - a chosen minority of Jews and Gentiles who are being saved today.

b. God is just (right) to:
Harden those who harden themselves against Him (v.7b-8)

B. Romans 11:11-24

Obadiah prophesied about the doom and destruction of Edom because she laughed at Israel's calamity (SEE book of Obadiah).

As in past history, there is a danger today of Gentiles despising Jews, and forgetting the source and channel of their own spiritual blessings (Thomas, p. 298).

What should our attitude be toward fallen Israel?

1. GRATITUDE for the WISDOM of God (v. 11-16)

We should be grateful for two reasons:

a. God in His wisdom turned Israel's rejection into riches for the Gentile world (v. 11-14)

b. God in His wisdom turned Israel's rejection into reconciliation for the Gentile world (v. 15-16)

2. HUMILITY because of the WORK of God (v. 17-20)
(Don't think you were really something superior for God to save ("graft") you)

3. FEAR because of the WARNING of God (v. 20b-22)

4. FAITH in the WONDER-WORKING POWER of God (v. 23-24)

C. Romans 11:25-36

1. Israel's Restoration Begins with God's SALVATION (v. 25b-27)

2. Israel's Restoration is Based on God's FAITHFULNESS (loving loyalty) (v. 28-29)

a. Israel - God's enemy, yet God's beloved (v. 28)

b. Israel - She failed, but God's promises cannot (v. 29)

3. Israel's Restoration is Possible Because of God's MERCY (v. 30-32)

4. Israel's Restoration is Incomprehensible, But it is God's WISDOM (v. 33-36)

VIII. Dispensationalism as it Relates to <u>Covenant Theology</u>

A. Definition:

1. A system of viewing the entire Scripture comprising three overall covenants.

2. It is a system of thought which affirms that God's redemptive dealings with men are governed by certain covenants between (1) the persons of the Godhead and (2) the Godhead and men.

3. The chief exponents of this system of theology have been found in the Reformed tradition

B. History

1. 1570 - Olivanus developed a theological system in which he dealt with a determinative covenant within the Godhead.

2. 1648 - Cocceius really put the system together

3. In the 1640's, this idea of covenants was placed into the Westminster Confession of Faith.

4. 1685 - Witsius enlarged, systematized, and developed and clarified the system

5. In the 1980's, Harold Camping began promoting Covenant Theology on Family Radio

C. Tenants (beliefs)

1. Covenant of Redemption

   a. In eternity past, God made a covenant with Christ. God decided who would be the elect (and this covenant <u>bound</u> them).

   b. This covenant obligated God to provide for the incarnation of Christ, the vicarious death, victorious resurrection, and efficacious drawing (by grace) of the Holy Spirit for the elect.

   c. This was called a "determinative covenant" (Eph. 1:4).

2. Covenant of Works

    a. God entered into a covenant relationship with Adam and promised eternal life if he obeyed and eternal death if he disobeyed.

    b. Life was promised for perfect obedience.

3. Covenant of Grace

    a. God and Christ offered salvation to man

    b. The sinner must accept the agreement by believing in Jesus Christ.

    c. Genesis 3:16 reveals this covenant in embryo form

    d. All other covenants are just part of this Covenant of Grace. All believers of all ages are in a "community."

D. A Refutation of Covenant Theology

1. It applies a dual hermeneutic
    a. Literal at some points
    b. Allegorical in passages of prophecy (but remember, prophets and apostles viewed Scripture literally)

2. It utilizes an improper division of Scripture (three covenants are not in the Bible)

3. It views all Biblical covenants as varying expressions of the Covenant of Grace

4. It makes the Church the fulfillment of Israel (artificial, typological interpretation - allegory)

5. It portrays an improper connection between circumcision and infant baptism (leading to an unregenerate church membership)

6. It interprets the Old Testament <u>by</u> the New Testament (it reads the New Testament back into the Old Testament)

7. It employs artificial exegesis (the hermeneutic is faulty as it constantly allows for the subjectivity of the interpreter)

8. Its origin is reason

E. The Key Difference between Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism:

1. Dispensationalism emphasizes progress of revelation in stages - unity of purpose yet diversity in unfolding it.

2. Covenant Theology emphasizes complete unity - does not permit diversity

Opposition to Dispensationalism

A. Liberalism

1. Progressive revelation is senseless to them

2. They hold that there is no absolute, final and infallible revelation from God

3. They believe that there is a spark of divinity in all men

4. They deny the truth that man is a fallen creature

5. The lesson of the ages that proves the utter failure of man under all tests is of no interest to them

6. They deny inspiration

B. Amillennialism

1. Sarcastic in its attack

2. Glories in the creedal declaration of its church, with a marked unwillingness to subject its views to a direct test of Scripture. They interpret Scripture by their creeds.

3. Outlook tends to be philosophical and logical. Sometimes this colors the consideration of the Word of God as the only court of appeal.

4. It rejects the truth of a definite actual place in God's future plan for Israel (believes that the Church fulfills and replaces Israel; Israel & Church are interchangeable terms; baptism replaces circumcision)

5. It views no unique place for the church in God's program

IX. Dispensationalism as it Relates to Hermeneutics

A. Hermeneutics is that science which furnishes the principle of interpretation. These principles guide and govern anybody's system of theology.

B. Ryrie suggests using the term "normal interpretation" or "plain interpretation" for "literal interpretation," so that no one receives the mistaken notion that literal principle rules out figures of speech.

C. Literal interpretation must be accepted because:

1. God is the originator of language and wants to convey a literal message to be understood by all.

2. The Bible prophecies were literally fulfilled

3. Without the use of the plain, normal, or literal method of interpretation, all objectivity is lost.

4. The unifying principle of Covenant Theology is God's plan of redemption.

5. The unifying principle of dispensationalism is seeing the various dispensations as successive manifestations of God's purpose and progressive manifestations of it.

6. Ryrie's three proofs that the unifying principle of the Bible is doxological (God's glory):

a. Salvation is for God's glory, and redemption is one of the means to the end of glorifying God.

b. God has a plan for the angels which will result in glory going to God, not in their salvation.

c. God's purpose for the Kingdom involves salvation but is not confined to redemption.

7. Hermenteutical Guidelines regarding Dispensationalism's Continuing Principles

   a. Continuing principles may:

      - stabilize - remain unchanged (ex: marriage)
      - terminate (ex: ceremonial law)
      - adjust, alter (ex: Sabbath & Lord's day)

   b. Continuing principles may be discerned by:

      - New Testament sanctioning continuance (Rom. 13)
      - No theological conflict in New Testament (Revelation)

   c. Continuing principles may be classified as:

      - ordinances
      - judgments
      - principles

   d. Continuing principles may terminate as necessary but continue as:

      - tradition (ex: Paul's purification Acts 21)
      - commemoration (sacrifices in Millennium)

   e. Continuing principles may have been kept (foreshadowed) before being commanded in the new dispensation. Examples:

      - Sabbath
      - government
      - tithing
      - Passover

Guidelines for Interpreting the Bible

"Hermeneutics" - the science and art of interpreting the Bible. Comes from the Greek name "Hermes," who was an interpreter for Jupiter (a Greek idol).

A. Why have principles or laws of interpreting

1. We are commanded to "keep" the Word (2 Tim. 1:13, 14)

2. We are commanded to "commit" the Word to others (2 Tim. 2:2)

3. We are commanded to "rightly divide" the Word (2 Tim. 2:15)

4. We are commanded to "continue" in the Word (2 Tim. 3:14)

5. Every word of Scripture written by Moses up to John was breathed out of the very mouth of God (2 Tim. 3:16a)

6. All Scripture is "profitable" (when understood as God intended it to be understood) (2 Tim. 3:16b)

7. We are commanded to "preach the Word. . . with doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2)

8. Cults are started by not interpreting Scripture properly (2 Pet. 3:15, 16)

9. There is a curse on anyone who adds to or takes away from scripture (Rev. 22:18, 19)

B. How not to Interpret

1. Don't allegorize (spiritualize).

2. Don't interpret according to your experiences (ex: people say, "You can't tell me tongues aren't for today - I've experienced it!").

3. Don't use parallel passage approach only (context comes first).

4. Don't find types (predicted foreshadowings) in every minute detail of the Old Testament (discover types, don't create them).

5. Don't reject truths in the Bible just because you can't totally understand them.

6. Don't press your ideas (beliefs) into scripture where there is no clear Scripture to support your belief.

7. Don't argue from silence or reason improperly (ex: "All dogs have tails; a cat is not a dog; therefore, a cat does not have a tail.").

C. How to Interpret

1. By submitting o the Holy Spirit (for understanding and wisdom) (Ps. 119:18).

- Begin with prayer
- Be willing to change your opinion where Scripture clearly contradicts what you think
- Be open for God to speak to your heart (read to <u>obey</u> - not just to get knowledge)

2. By studying the <u>context</u> - the flow of author's thought before the verse or verses you are studying and after the verse or verses you are studying.

   a. To understand a <u>word</u> you must understand the verse which the word is in

   b. To understand a <u>verse</u> you must understand the paragraph which the verse is in

   c. To understand a <u>paragraph</u> you must understand the entire book which the paragraph is in

3. By interpreting Scripture literally (normally). Read it at face value, except where there is an obvious figure of speech being used. Ex: when Jesus said, "I am the door" - He was not an actual door. Some figures of speech are:

- comparisons (Jer. 23:29)
- substitutions (Lk. 13:32)
- exaggerations to emphasize (Jn. 21:25)
- understatements (1 Th. 2:15)
- personifications (Rom. 6:12)

**Seek the natural and obvious meaning of Scripture. "Let God say what He does say, instead of making Him say what you think He should have said." Pull out the meaning of the text ("exegete") rather than introducing a meaning into it ("eisogete"). "If the normal sense makes good sense, seek no other sense, or you will have nonsense!"

4. By asking yourself, "What significance did this passage have to the ones to whom it was originally written?"

5. By remembering that our English version is a translation of the original Greek and Hebrew. English does not always give us the clearest translation of the total meaning of a word or phrase (so you may want to compare various translations).

6. By realizing that verse numbers and paragraph divisions were not inspired (they were not added until the 14th century).

7. By remembering that God revealed His Word gradually and progressively (Heb. 1:1-4) (ex: the early church in the book of Acts only had the Old Testament for their Scripture).

8. By knowing that written historical events are not necessarily the normal experience for us living today (ex: Paul's vision on the road to Damascus)

9. By comparing Scripture with Scripture (but do so by knowing the context of each passage).

10. By realizing that there is only one correct interpretation of every passage of Scripture (two different people cannot hold two different views about one portion of Scripture and both be correct).

11. By knowing that interpretation is different from application of Scripture (you must properly interpret before you can know how it applies to you).

X. Dispensationalism as it Relates to Prophecy

A. Should the Tribulation be considered a dispensation?

Three views:

1. View 1: A Revival of the Mosaic Economy of Law

Reasons:

1) Mosaic system partially restored - temple, sacrifices, Sabbath

2) The same "Gospel of Kingdom" will be preached that was taught by John, Jesus, and the disciples in their early ministry ("Repent!")

3) God will deal specifically with Israel (as a nation)

4) 70th Week (69 weeks were fulfilled in Mosaic Economy, so must the 70th)

5) Holy Spirit ministry similar to the Mosaic economy (2 Thes. 2:6, 7)

6) Old Testaments to the Tribulation as a judgment for Israel's sins committed under the Law

Objections:

1) No dispensation ever comes back into existence again.

2) It stops the idea of progressive revelation.

3) The partial restoration of Jews in Tribulation is apostate - They don't really turn to Christ until the end of the "Tribulation" (70th week).

2) View 2: It is a <u>New</u> Dispensation

Reasons:

1) It is a time of "wrath" never before seen. (Assumed to be God's wrath, but in actuality it is Satan's wrath - Rev. 12:12)

   Emphasis on <u>judgment</u> in this dispensation rather than grace

2) Church is absent from the earth (an assumption)

3) Gospel of the Kingdom preached, in contrast to the Gospel of grace

4) Sabbath observed

5) Holy Spirit is removed (an assumption, based on 2 Thess.2:7)
   Some view the restrainer who is removed as referring to Michael the Archangel and not the Holy Spirit (Marvin Rosenthal)
   Compare Daniel 12 with Revelaton 12.

6) It is designated the 70th week, which is a reference to a specific new stewardship

Objections:

1) It is also a time of grace (Rev. 7:9); many Jews and Gentiles come to Christ

2) Sabbath & Rebuilt Temple - not necessarily instituted by God but by a self-will of the Jews

3) Gospel of the Kingdom was also preached by Christ, so it is not a new Gospel

4) God is not turning His attention to Israel <u>exclusively</u> during this time; Gentiles will still be saved

* **3) View 3: It is a <u>Transition</u> between the Church age and the Millennial Age**

It occurs at the end of the economy of the church age. It acts as a specific <u>cumulative</u> climatic judgment for man's rejection of God. Thus, it can be looked upon in one sense as the judgment of the church age, but also judgment for all previous disobedience to God.

> *1Peter 4:17 - For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*

It is wrong to assume that God is going to revert back to His Old Covenant as He deals with Israel in the Tribulation. Since He will not, there is no compelling dispensational reason to break the Church Age off from the 70th week.

The Tribulation is not a new dispensation, but a transition from this age to the golden age of the Millennium. During times of transition, God's expectations for His people was that they would function under the expectations of the previous dispensation.
(For Example: During the times of the Gospels (Jesus ministry on earth), people were expected to follow the Law of Moses (Mt. 8:4; Lk.17:14). However, the Lord Jesus Christ introduced Revelation that would apply to the church age to follow - Mt 16:18; Mt. 18:17)

Beware of letting a theological system (like Dispensationalism) formulate your interpretation of Scripture. Exegesis always takes precedence over a Theological System. Beware of filtering Scripture through a presupposed grid.

Assumptions of Dispensationalist Thinkers Regarding Israel & the Church and the Tribulation Period:

<u>Israel</u> is distinct from the <u>Church</u> - TRUE
Yes, there is a distinction regarding God's dealings with Old Testament Israel and the Church. However, it is wrong to assume that just because

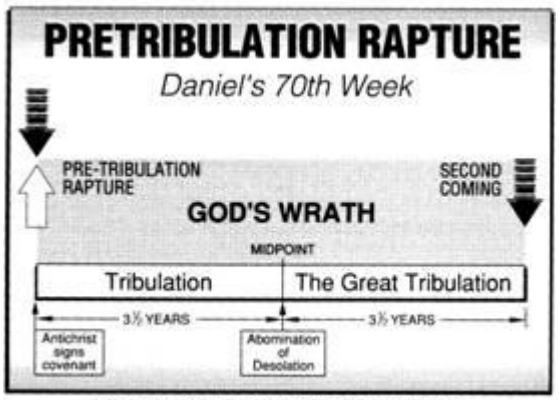
The nature of the Tribulation describes God's dealings with Israel, not the church - NOT ENTIRELY TRUE
Yes, God deals with Israel during the days of the Tribulation Period, but He will do so under the New Covenant expectations. God will not revert back to the Old Covenant when He deals with Israel again in the Tribulation Period.

Pretribulationalism holds that since the church was not in the first 69 weeks; how could she be in the 70th week? (Dan. 9:27)

B. The various views about the <u>timing</u> of the Rapture (held to by Dispensationalists):

1. The <u>Pre-Tribulation</u> Rapture View

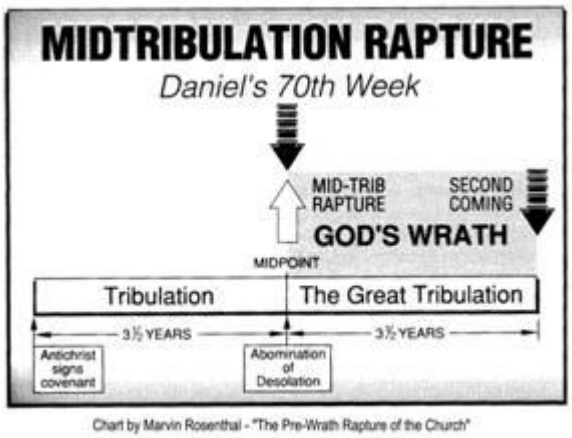
a. The <u>Position</u>:



b. The <u>Proponents</u>:
This view was --
--<u>originated</u> by the writings of J. N. Darby (1830)
--<u>popularized</u> by the footnotes in the Scofield Bible
--<u>systematized</u> by the faculty of Dallas Seminary
(Charles C. Ryrie, John F. Walvoord, Dwight Pentecost)

2. The <u>Mid-Tribulation</u> Rapture View

a. The <u>Position</u>:



b. The <u>Proponents</u>: J. Oliver Buswell Jr. (*A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*); Gleason L. Archer

3. The <u>Post-Tribulation</u> Rapture View

a. The <u>Position</u>:

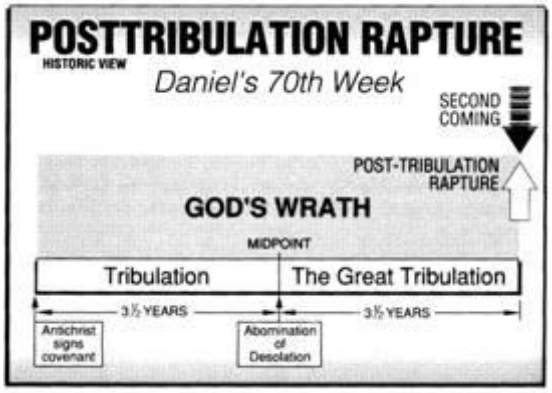


Chart by Marvin Rosenthal - "The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church"

b. The <u>Proponents</u>:
*Dr. Robert Gundry – Author of *First, The Antichrist*
--W.E. Blackstone *Jesus Is Coming*
--George E. Ladd
--Alexander Reese
--Roland Rasmussen *The Post-trib, Pre-wrath Rapture*

4. The <u>Pre-Wrath</u> (Pre-Day of the LORD) Rapture View

a. The <u>Position</u>:

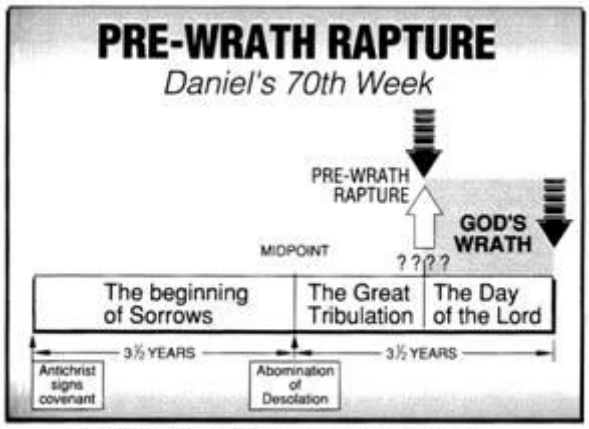


Chart by Marvin Rosenthal - "The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church"

b. The <u>Proponents</u>

J.C. Ryle
C.H. Spurgeon (A continuation of Spurgeon's viewpoints are being published by Banner Ministries Box 23, Belpur, Derbys DE561QR UK. recently published an article titled: "A Fearless Look at the Rapture Debate," which shows that Spurgeon held to many tenants of the Pre-wrath view)

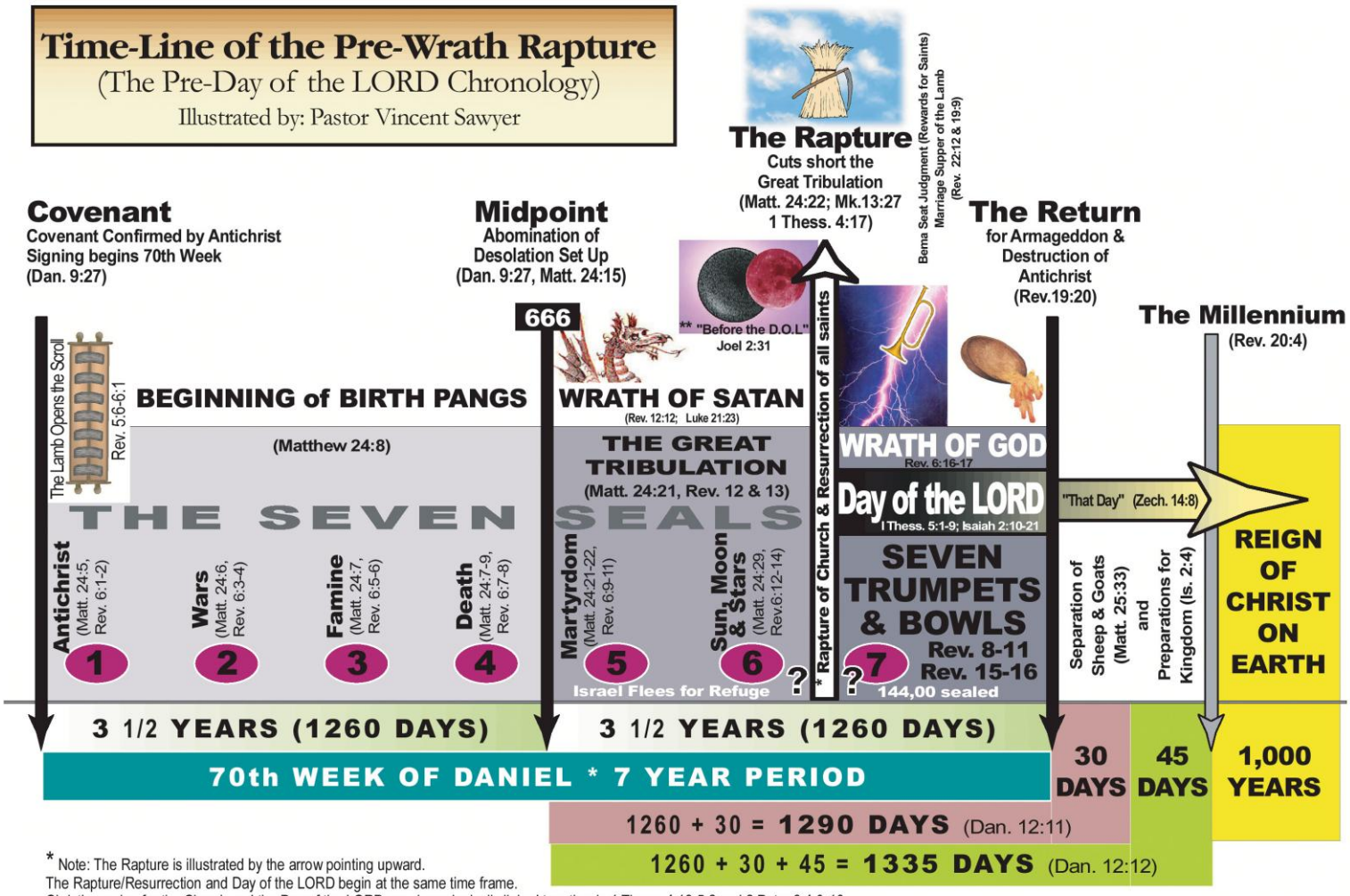
This view has been largely systematized by Marvin J. Rosenthal (Author of the Book - *The Pre-wrath Rapture of the Church* Nelson Pub.)
Robert VanKampen – Author of *The Sign* and *The Prewrath Rapture Position Examined*

Note: The PreWrath Rapture position regarding the Day of the LORD

This position views the **"Day of the Lord"** as occurring toward the **END** of the 70th week and that it does <u>not</u> have its start at the beginning of the 70th week.

This position holds that the **"Great Tribulation"** begins at the **<u>mid-point</u>** of the 70th Week and NOT at the beginning.

PreWrath Chart:



* Note: The Rapture is illustrated by the arrow pointing upward.
The Rapture/Resurrection and Day of the LORD begin at the same time frame.
Christ's coming for the Church and the Day of the LORD are chronologically linked together in 1 Thess. 4:13-5:2 and 2 Peter 3:4 & 10.
As in the days of Noah & Lot, God's outpouring of His wrath begins immediately on the "same day" He removes His elect Church (Luke 17:26-30, 34-36).
The Arrow is placed on the time-line to indicate the sequence of events surrounding the Rapture. The Arrow is NOT a time indicator.
The exact "Day & Hour" of the Rapture / D.O.L. is unknown (Mt.24:36) and will catch the unsaved world as "a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:2-3; 2 Pet. 3:10).
True believers will not be overtaken as by a "thief" (1 Thess. 5:4). God's Church will "see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

** The Day of the LORD is indicated by D.O.L. *"The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood BEFORE the great and the terrible day of the LORD come"* (Joel 2:31; cp. with Mt.24:29-31 & Rev. 6:12-17).

Is there a separate Resurrection of O.T. saints or do they arise at the same time as N.T. saints. (Many Dispensationalists hold to separate resurrections for the O.T. & N.T. saint)

*It is true that the first Resurrection will occur in stages. But these stages ("order" of resurrections) are specifically outlined by Paul in I Cor. 15:22-24.

Stage # 1 - "Christ, the first fruits"

Stage # 2 - "Afterward ("*epeita*") they that are Christ's at His coming" [The Rapture]

Stage # 3 - "Then ("*eita*") . . . the end ("*telos*")
[The final Resurrection of the just at the end of the Millennium. This resurrection will evidently involve those who died between the Rapture and return of Christ, and those who died during the Millennium.

Ryrie's observation is correct: "The order of resurrections is as follows: first, Christ's; then that of believers at His coming (I Thes. 4:13-18); and finally, the resurrection at the end of the Millennial kingdom." ((Ryrie's KJV Study Bible, p. 1641).

*To force the Scripture to allow for any other general "resurrection of the just" is to go beyond the clearly stated and detailed text of Paul. I Corinthians 15 would have been the most convenient and obvious place to state <u>two</u> Resurrections <u>prior</u> to the beginning of the Millennium, if indeed such two did exist.

On Resurrection Day, who goes up?
Answer: Raptured church age saints and Resurrected O.T. & N.T. Saints.

Are there different groups in Heaven? Are Old Testament saints segregated away from New Testament saints? NO

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him:
Ephesians 1:10 (KJV)

The Timing of our United Gathering - *"Fullness of times"*

"That" = so that, in order that

"The dispensation of the fullness of times" - God's end-time plan
*The Rapture and Resurrection

The Participants in our United Gathering - *"All. . . in heaven and on earth" (Eph. 1:10)*

"Gather together" - SEE: Col. 1:20-21

"In one all things in Christ" -

In one" = in one unity; there will be one flock and one shepherd
John 10:16 - And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

"All things" = all people (O.T. and N.T. saints; those who have died ("in Heaven") and those
who are still living when he returns ("On earth")

C. Dispensationalism and <u>PreMillennialism</u>

Dispensationalists believe in a literal 1,000 year Kingdom on Earth (A Literal Millennium)

The time period of the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:1-7)
The word "millennium" is the Latin derivative from the Greek word "chilia" which means 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-7)

3 views of the Millennium:

1. **<u>Post-Millennialism</u>** - (social gospel view) Man through social effort will usher in a utopian period of peace on earth, after which time Christ will return

2. **<u>A-Millennialism</u>** - (covenant theology view) There is <u>no</u> 1,000 year kingdom. The 1,000 years of Rev. 20:1-7 are only figurative. They symbolize the time period from the cross until the imminent return of Christ (According to this view, there is no literal 7 year Tribulation either). At the cross Jesus defeated Satan and he has been bound ever since.

* 3. **<u>Pre-Millennialism</u>** - (dispensational view) Christ will literally return for judgment and then will establish he promised, long-awaited Messianic Kingdom.

PreMillennialism is the natural development of a Biblical Hermeneutic which involves a literal or normal interpretation of Scripture and particularly of Prophetic Scripture.

Proofs for the literal establishment of the Millennial Kingdom:

a. The Scriptures **<u>teach</u>** it (Rev. 20:1-7)

b. God **<u>detailed</u>** it (Is. 11, etc.)

c. Christ **<u>promised</u>** it (Mt. 26:29)

d. The Apostles **<u>expected</u>** it (Acts 1:6-7)

e. Creation **<u>awaits</u>** it (Rom. 8:19-22)

f. We are expected to **<u>pray</u>** for it to come (implying that it hasn't come yet-Mt. 6:10)

[Important Note: The Millennium (1,000 year Kingdom) will be the <u>first phase</u> of Christ's <u>eternal</u> kingdom - Dan. 2:44; Ezek. 37:24-28.]

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MILLENNIUM (in general)

The 1,000 year Kingdom will be a time of:

1. **Christ's sovereign reign** (Rev. 20:4-7; Zech. 14:9; Haggai 2:7; Is. 9:6-7, 11:1-5, 10)
2. **Believers reigning with Christ** (Rev. 20:4-7; Obad. 21)
3. **Holiness & righteousness** (Zech. 8:3, 14:20; Is. 32:1-5)
4. **Justice & peace** (Is. 2:1-4, 9:6-7; Micah 4:1-5)
5. **Longevity of mortal life** (Zech. 8:4)
6. **Worship via a new temple** (Haggai 2:7-8; Ezek. 40)
   (sacrifices will be memorials of Christ's finished work)
7. **Peace, spirituality, & prosperity** (Micah 4:4-8; Is. 60:17-20; Joel 2:18-27)
8. **Rejuvenated water** (Ezek. 47:1-12)
9. **Storms & rain** (Is. 4:6; Zech. 14:18-19)
10. **No external temptation or deception** (Rev. 20:1-3)
11. **No violence or destruction** (Is. 11:6-10)
12. **Spiritual blessing** (Is. 32:15-19)
13. **Renovated land and desert** (Is. 40:3,4; Is. 35:1-8)
14. **Gentile & Jewish inhabitance** (Is. 60:14-16)

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MILLENNIUM (specifically related to Israel)

For Israel, the 1,000 year Kingdom will be a time of:

1. **Unity** (among the tribes of Israel) (Is. 11:13; Ezek. 37:15-22; Jer. 3:19)
2. **Comfort & joy** (Is. 12:1-6; 40:1ff)
3. **Rest** (Is. 14:3, 7-8)
4. **Respect** (by other nations) (Zech. 8:23; Is. 60:14-16)
5. **Much land** (Obad. 19-20)

Events to follow the Millennium:

1. Final Rebellion (Rev. 20:7-9; Ezek. 38-39 *38:8-16)
2. Dissolution of Heavens and earth (II Peter 3:12-13; Rev. 20:11)
3. Resurrection of the wicked (the "second Resurrection") (Rev. 20:5, 6; 20:13)
4. The Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15)

Some may argue that the doctrinal system of Covenant Theology is in a certain sense, Anti-Semitic. Dispensationalism as a system of Theology with an optimistic view regarding God's future dealings with Israel is the best friend Israel has. God has literal promises to be fulfilled regarding the people of Israel. For this reason, and others, Satan hates Prophesy and particularly the Dispensationalist's interpretation of Prophesy because of its optimistic view regarding Israel (Rev. 7, 12) and its mention of Satan's defeat & doom (Rev.20).

Dispensationalists are <u>not</u> against all Types/Analogies/Metaphors when it comes to Prophecy!

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

AND THEIR PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

Leviticus 23

HISTORY (These Events have been fulfilled by Christ)				PROPHECY (These events are yet to be fulfilled)		
PASSOVER (v.4-5; cp. Ex.12:1-13)	**UNLEAVENED BREAD** (v.6-8)	**FIRSTFRUITS** (v.9-14)	**PENTECOST** (v.15-22)	**TRUMPETS** (v.23-25)	**DAY OF ATONEMENT** (v.26-32)	**TABERNACLES** (v.33-44)
REDEMPTION	INCORRUPTION	RESURRECTION	ORIGINATION	RECEPTION	REPENTANCE	REST&PROVISION
Typifies the **death** of Christ (Jn.1:29; Mt.26:17-29; I Cor.5:7)	Typifies the **Burial** of Christ (Acts 2:27)	Typifies the **Resurrection** of Christ (I Cor.15:20)	Typifies the beginning of the **Church** of Christ (Acts 2:1-f)	Typifies the **Rapture** by Christ (I Cor.15:52; I Th.4:13)	Typifies **Israel's Atonement** by Christ when they repent (Rom.11:25-26; Zech.12:13,14)	Typifies the **Millennial Rest** & **Eternal kingdom** when Christ "tabernacles" among us (Zech.14:16-19; Rev.20:4-6; 21:3)
Christ our <u>Passover</u> (Lamb) is sacrificed for us (I Cor.5:7)	Christ experienced <u>No Corruption</u> (Symbolized by leaven) (Acts 2:27)	Christ is the <u>Firstfruits</u> from the dead (I Cor.15:20)	Christ began His <u>Ingathering</u> of His great Harvest Field on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)	Christ will summon His bride to himself & will then send judgment on the Earth. In the O.T. trumpets were blown on 2 occassions: 1) When God wanted to summon His people to His presence. 2) Whenever God was to go to war on behalf of Israel.	Yom Kippur is a <u>Nationally</u> celebrated time. Israel as a Nation will repent at the end of the 70th. Week.	God will tabernacle (dwell) among His people again!

XI. Dispensationalism as it Relates to "Progressive Dispensationalism"

Proponents of this view: Darrell L. Bock of Dallas Theological Seminary
Craig A. Blaising (formerly of Dallas Theological Seminary)
Robert L. Saucy of Talbot Theological Seminary

Definition:

Views the dispensations "not simply as different arrangements between God and humankind, but as successive arrangements in the progressive revelation and accomplishment of REDEMPTION."

The theme of redemption is the link throughout all of human history (According to Progressive Dispensationalists).

Progressive Dispensationalists:

1. Advocate a holistic and unified view of eternal salvation (all the redeemed share the same salvation with respect to justification and sanctification)

2. Church is not viewed as a separate category (as "Israel" or "Gentiles" would be); rather, the church is all of redeemed humanity in this present dispensation (True).

   The "Mystery" of the church does not imply that the church was unrevealed in the Old Testament, but only that it was unrealized.

   "A Jew who becomes a Christian today does not lose his or her relationship to Israel's future promises." (whereas, normal Dispensationalists see a distinction between the future heavenly promises for Jewish Christians and the earthly promises for national Israel in the Millennium, but progressives do not).

3. The promises of the Abrahamic, Davidic and New Covenants are already inaugurated and beginning to be fulfilled.

   Christ is already reigning in heaven on the throne of David (thus merging the Church with the Davidic Covenant & kingdom). This is the error of allowing the New Testament to introduce changes and additions to Old Testament revelation, in the effort to make the overall purpose of God to be redemptive.

Basic Tenets:

1) Kingdom of God is the unifying theme of biblical history

The Church is called a "sneak preview" of the kingdom and an "outpost" of the God's heavenly kingdom.

2) Four dispensational eras

THE DISPENSIONS OF PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM

PATRIARCHAL	MOSAIC	ECCLESIAL	ZIONIC	
Adam to Sinai	**Sinai to Ascension of Messiah**	**Ascension to Second Coming**	**Part 1: Millennium**	**Part 2: Eternal State**

Note: To lump pre-Fall conditions, post-Fall conditions, and the Abrahamic covenant under a common stewardship or dispensation is perhaps artificial.

3) Christ has <u>already</u> inaugurated the Davidic reign in heaven (not on earth until the Millennium)

Progressive dispensationalists use the "Already/Not Yet" method in their reasoning.

i.e. - Christ is "already" reigning in regard to salvation but "not yet" reigining literally on earth (not until Millennium)

"Right hand of the throne of God" = the throne of David in heaven (Acts 2 - 3; Ps. 132:11; Acts 2:30; Psalm 110)

> The Lord hath sworn *in* truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.
> *Psalms 132:11 (KJV)*

> Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;
> *Acts 2:30 (KJV)*

Because Christ is at the "right hand of the throne of God," this must mean that He is now reigning in fulfillment of the Davidic covenant

4) The New Covenant has already been inaugurated, although the blessings will not be fully realized until the Millennium

The New Covenant is already inaugurated by Christ, although not all provisions are fully realized yet.

Acts 3:19 - 21 - "times of refreshing" and "restoration of all things":

"Times of refreshing" refers to the present time ("already"); "restoration of all things" refers to the future return of Christ ("not yet").

We would say that the New Covenant definitely has already been paid for (on the cross), but has not yet been fulfilled or inaugurated.

5) The Church should not be kept completely distinct from Israel; the idea of two purposes and two peoples of God is invalid

6) The New Testament makes complementary changes to Old Testament promises without eliminating the original promises (thus, they advocate a "complementary" hermeneutic alongside a literal hermeneutic).

7) There is one divine plan of holistic redemption for all people.

This professor sees Progressive Dispensationalism as an attempt to bring balance between Dispensationalism and the whole of Scripture. It does not fall into the trap of artificially dividing up Scripture to the point of making unwarranted lines of demarcation. I do not think that they are seeking to compromise with Covenant Theology as a whole.