

Dispensationalism- Lecture 1

Introduction

We agree with the following statement by Charles Ryrie: “If plain or normal interpretation is the only _____ hermeneutical principle and if it is consistently applied, it will cause one to be a dispensationalist. As basic as one believes normal interpretation to be, and as consistently as he uses it in interpreting Scripture, to that extent he will of necessity become a dispensationalist”

The normal _____ method of interpretation is the only proper method. On the opposite end of the spectrum there are those who are committed to Reformed theology and its allegorical method of interpretation, which despises dispensationalism.

I. What Is Dispensationalism?

Dispensationalism refers to the fact that Bible history can be divided into distinct periods of time during which God works out His purposes. Dispensationalism is:

- 1- based on a _____ interpretation of the Bible
- 2- based on a clear distinction between _____ and the Church.

I. Several words have reference to Dispensationalism

A. The Bible uses the word _____ in Ephesians 1:10.
It refers to a period of _____ during which God is doing some particular work.

B. Another Bible word for this is _____.
In Acts 1:7 we find the phrase “the times,” referring to God’s plan. These are also called “the seasons.” It refers to the time on God’s great calendar. The Bible speaks of the “times of the Gentiles” (Lk. 21:24), the “times of the restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21), and “this present time” (Rom. 11:5).

C. Another Bible word for this is _____. The Bible refers to “ages past” (Eph. 3:5), “ages to come” (Eph. 2:7), and “all ages” (Eph. 3:21).

D. Another Bible word for this is _____.
“the day of the Lord” (Isa. 2:12)
“the last day” (Jn. 6:54)
“the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Co. 1:8; Ph. 1:10; 2:16; 2 Th. 2:2).

The Bible teaches that there are great periods of time during which God works out His eternal plan. These periods are called “dispensations,” “ages,” “times,” and “days.”

II. Definitions of Dispensationalism

Following are some definitions of dispensationalism based on the previous terms. These are taken from our textbook written by Charles Ryrie.

Charles Ryrie: "Dispensationalism views the world as a _____ run by God. In His household-world God is dispensing or administering its affairs according to His own will and in various stages of revelation in the passage of time. These various stages mark off the distinguishably different economies in the outworking of His total purpose, and these different economies constitute the dispensations".

These are found in the textbook.

B. W. Graham Scroggie:

C. Harry Ironside:

D. Clarence Mason, Jr.:

E. Paul Nevin

III. What Are the Various Dispensations?

Scofield said, "Each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new _____ of the natural man, and each ends in _____, marking his utter _____ in every dispensation." He mentions seven. That is one way that the ages of God can be explained and divided; but there are other ways to look at them, and the number seven is not necessary.

The important point is that there have been various periods during which God has worked out His _____, and during these periods God has related to men in different ways and has required different things of him. Personally, I believe it is profitable to divide the ages into nine categories as follows:

1. Man Innocent: Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1-3). This age extended from the creation of Adam to the expulsion from Eden. Adam and Eve were created sinless and innocent and they were given only one commandment, not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

When they sinned, that age of innocence ended. We do not know how long Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden before they sinned, but we do know that they had no children until after the Fall.

2. Man Under Conscience: From Adam's Fall to the Flood (Genesis 4-8). During this period, God left man to his own devices. There was no law, but there were prophets sent by God, such as Abel, Enoch, and Noah. The result was that man corrupted the earth and had to be destroyed in the flood, with only Noah and his family being saved to continue the human race. This period lasted roughly 1,600 years.

3. Man Under Human Government: From after the Flood to the Tower of

Babel (Genesis 9-11). After the flood, God gave Noah and his children new commandments. He told them to replenish the earth (Gen. 9:1). He gave them the flesh of animals for food (Gen. 9:3-4). He commanded them to put murderers to death (Gen. 9:5-6). He established his covenant that He would never again destroy the world with water (Gen. 9:8-17). Instead of going to the ends of the earth, though, and replenishing it, the grandsons of Noah united together and attempted to exalt themselves against God at the Tower of Babel. This period lasted roughly 400 years.

4. Man Under Promise: From Abraham to the Giving of the Law (Genesis 12-50). During this period, God was building the nation of Israel in preparation for the giving of the law. He raised up Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob, then the 12 sons of Jacob, and he carried them down into Egypt. This period lasted roughly 430 years.

5. The Law: From Moses to the Coming of Christ (Exodus to the end of the Old Testament). During this period, God put Israel under the Mosaic Law to prepare for the coming of Christ. The law does this in two ways: (1) It shows man his sinful condition and his need of salvation.

(2) It foreshadows Christ by many types. It is important to understand that men were never saved by keeping the law. Salvation has always been by grace through faith in God's Word (Romans 4:1-8). The law was given to reveal sin not to save men from sin. This period lasted roughly 1,500 years.

6. The Age of Grace (Church): From Christ to the end of the Church Age (Acts to Jude). The church age actually began during the earthly ministry of Christ; at least the foundation was being laid during those years; but for the purposes of this study, we can simplify things and begin it with the book of Acts. During this period, God is calling out a special body of people from among all nations of the earth. So far this period has lasted almost 2,000 years.

7. Man Under God's Judgment: The Great Tribulation (Revelation 3-18). During this period, God will prepare Israel and the world for the _____ of Christ. (1) Through judgments upon sinful men. (2) Through judgments upon Israel which will cause her finally to awaken from her spiritual blindness and to turn to Christ. This period will last seven years.

8. Man Under the Personal Reign of Christ: The Millennium (Revelation 19-20). The second coming and millennial reign of Christ (Rev. 19-20). During this period, God will establish a _____ on earth and the nations will be ruled with a rod of iron. This period will last _____ years.

9. Man in the New Heaven and New Earth (Rev. 21-22).

From this point on, God will continue to work out His plans from age to age throughout eternity, but the Bible does not reveal any further details

IV. Benefits of Dispensationalism

1. Dispensational theology exalts a consistent method of throughout the Scripture.

Dispensationalism is the _____ that uses the normal-literal method of interpretation consistently throughout Scripture.

2. Dispensational theology helps us to study the Bible within its proper _____ context.

Ezekiel 18:21-24

Genesis 4:9-12

Matthew 10:5-15

Revelation 13:10

Revelation 13:10

3. Dispensationalism makes a clear distinction between Israel and the Church.

1 Corinthians 10:32 states that there are three categories of people in the world today -- the JEWS, the GENTILES, and the CHURCH. Obviously, then, Israel is not the same as the church.

Some of the most common errors in theology have occurred through confusing the church with Israel. This is called “_____ Theology.”

This is also one of the errors of PROTESTANTISM. By this, I am referring especially to Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Reformed, and Lutheran denominations.

They teach that Israel was _____ rejected by God and _____ with the church. They do not believe that the Old Testament promises and prophecies pertaining to Israel will be _____ fulfilled.

Most of the CULTS also claim to be a continuation of Israel in one form or the other. For example, the Worldwide Church of God, founded by Herbert W. Armstrong, claimed that 10 of the tribes of Israel had been lost and had re-surfaced today in England and America and had been restored in his cult.

Jehovah’s Witnesses apply things from the book of Revelation that are for Israel directly to itself, such as _____ from the 12 tribes in Revelation.

Seventh-day Adventists claim that New Testament believers are obligated to keep the _____ and keep Old Testament _____ restrictions.

God’s promises to Israel have not failed. God warned that if Israel rejected His Law she would be judged and evicted from her land and scattered among the nations

(Deuteronomy 28:15, 25, 37, 64-67), but God also promised to restore Israel (Deut. 30:1-9). This is summarized in the prophecy of Hosea 3:4-5.

God's covenants with Israel (other than the Mosaic covenant) are unconditional, _____, and _____.

All of God's promises to Israel in the Old Testament will be literally fulfilled.

FOR INSTANCE:

- a. Israel will be _____ to the land (Zech. 10:6-12).
- b. Israel will be brought through _____ during the Great Tribulation and one third of the Jews will call upon God's name (Zech. 13:8-9).
- c. Israel will repent and will be _____ (Zech. 12:10 - 13:1).
- d. Messiah will return and _____ Israel's enemies and rule from Jerusalem (Zech. 14:1-21).

Ephesians 3:4-6

Romans 11:25-29

Israel has been blinded because of her _____ against God. During the Church Age, God is calling out people from among all nations to form the Church. Acts 15:13-18

When God is finished with this work, the Church, believers will be _____ out of the world and God will turn His attention back to fulfilling His covenants with Israel.