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**Appendix: Dispensational Theology**

Question: From the OT saints perspective what is the object of faith in regards to salvation and the means of salvation? That's a good question and I planned to discuss that next week but let me give a quick answer here to prep you for the more lengthy reply. The question is spawned out of a statement I made that Covenant theologians insist that Abraham believed in Jesus Christ the same way we do today while Dispensationalists disagree. They disagree because it's unsupportable from Scripture. The Covenant people are trying to do a good thing by keeping the unity of salvation, but it's just not there and it's not necessary. There are four terms you want to be aware of whenever you talk about these issues. Two of them are mentioned in your question, the object of faith and the means of salvation. The other two are the basis of salvation and the content of faith which might be looked upon as the same thing as the object but probably not. So, looking at the object of faith, the object is always God, that never changes, God is the one who saves and everyone admits to this. Second, the means of salvation and the means is always by faith. Faith is an instrument through which God saves and that is always the same, nobody is ever saved by works. Third, the basis and the basis is what? Grace or the cross, people argue nuances here, the bottom line is they are inseparable, all grace comes from the cross, so I like to say the basis of salvation is the cross work of Jesus Christ. Is anyone going to be saved apart from the cross of Christ? Take Isaiah, Isaiah lived before the cross of Christ. Was Isaiah saved by the cross of Christ? Absolutely. How? It was counted to Isaiah in an anticipatory fashion. So everyone is saved on the basis of the cross of Christ. The fourth one is the content and this is where the confusion is. What is the content a person has to believe in order to be saved? Is it always the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross? How could that be? That's not even revealed until the NT. Well, what did an OT saint have to believe? The promises of God available to him. He was trusting that

God would solve the sin problem in the Messiah. But he didn't know about Jesus Christ and the cross and the resurrection and all of that. That wasn't revealed yet. So they had different content to the gospel in their time than we have in ours. Now the cross and resurrection have occurred and so that becomes the content of the gospel we have to believe today. So that's the short answer, we'll show more next time.

We're going to show Dispensational theology and by way of introduction, so we know why we're doing all this, we've looked at the NT events. We came to the ascension and session of Jesus Christ. We spent weeks on the ascension and session of Jesus Christ, and we're coming to the next event in the NT, which is the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. From that we're going to develop the role of the Church. But in order to do that, the moment we start doing this, differences between the Covenant and Dispensational views start cropping up. For example, in the session, if you are of Covenant persuasion and you have your idea of fulfillment then Christ is now seated on David's throne fulfilling that covenant; however, if you're Dispensational then you're going to see that the Lord Jesus Christ is seated on the Father's throne and this is not a fulfillment of the OT promises to David.

“To sum up the last two or three weeks, “Reformed theology utilizing the concept of a covenant structure ‘behind’ history not only has frozen the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century level of theology into permanent creeds but has also established its own unique rules of Bible interpretation. It therefore centers upon soteriology, the doctrine that was central to the Reformation era, and a very close relationship between the state and the church.” Keep in mind, for example, the Reformed Church in Holland, Switzerland, in Germany the Lutheran Church, the Anglican Church in England, the church-state. “It views with deep suspicion any further extension of the *sola Scriptura* principle in reforming theology.”

What we're saying is that Dispensationalism simply carries the Protestant Reformation forward one more step, into the area of eschatology. It's an 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century development. So let's look at Dispensational theology and we're going to look at Biblical covenants in the OT. We'll get to the Scriptures but I want to give you some background.

“Dispensationalism developed within Protestant circles after Reformation theology of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. They focused on soteriology and hardened up their positions in the creeds that are still with us today, including the confusion of church and state. This confusion led to less than admirable spiritual conditions in the churches. New questions arose in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that began to cleave the church and state apart so as to revitalize the spiritual conditions in the churches. These centuries focused on eschatology. So you can see there are different centuries involved and different issues involved. The Reformed theologians of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century are dealing with soteriology and it got systematized in Covenant Theology. The Reformed theologians of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century are dealing with eschatology and it got systematized in Dispensational Theology. In spite of different theological issues, however, history shows clearly that dispensationalism arose within Calvinist circles.” This grates on the mind of some strict Calvinist people today, but it’s a matter of historical fact that the early dispensationalist teachers were all of Calvinist persuasion. I mentioned John Nelson Darby last week, he was clearly a Calvinist, defended it in the halls of debate. Louis Sperry Chafer, founder of Dallas Theological Seminary was a Presbyterian Calvinist. Dr John Walvoord was a Presbyterian Calvinist who held to a covenant of grace till the end of his life. So the lead guys in establishing the top seminary of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were both Presbyterian Calvinists. The point is that it’s false to argue that Dispensationalism developed outside of Reformed theology. No it didn’t, it came right out of the Reformed community.

Here’s how it happened. We’re going to go through a little history here. And there are two major doctrines that came along that historically gave rise to Dispensationalism. One is ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church and the other is authority, the issue of final authority. These were things that surfaced in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. First let’s look at ecclesiology. The church we said was tied to the state and this came anytime an organized religious group is so dominated by the State it gets fat and lazy. It always has been this way and that’s why the Puritans were named the Puritans because they were trying to do what? They were trying to purify the Anglican Church of England. So the Puritans were people who reacted against the State church. They were Reformed people; they were going to these churches with state sponsored liturgy and it was lifeless, spiritually it was dead. They

wanted a little bit more spiritual life going on. So by the 18<sup>th</sup> century people had gotten to the point where hey, look, my spirituality is not really getting going by all this liturgy, form and tradition. So the Puritans, tried to create a spiritual renewal and yet they had all this theology and they held to the arbitrary covenant of grace we talked about last week. So they had this one grand covenant made with all the elect and that means there is only one people of God and so no distinction between Israel and the Church. The Church replaced Israel. So to create a new vibrant spirituality they “tried to create a modern counterpart of ancient Israel.” Go back and read Stonewall Jackson in the Civil War. Jackson was a strong Reformed Presbyterian. And in his eyes the Yankees were the Amalekites. You say, the Amalekites, the northerners were the Amalekites? Yeah, they were the apostates. They were Unitarian apostates. So while Puritanism was godly in many areas it had some serious theological weaknesses. One of the things the Puritans never seemed to be able to do was to evangelize the next generation, partly because they believed in infant baptism and if you have the infant baptized the baby is somehow going to automatically believe so you don’t have that strong evangelization of young children. The result was that the Puritans never reproduced themselves. That was the sad thing. To fill the void the Unitarians took over most of New England. This provided fertile ground for Liberal theology to grow and increasingly the methods of higher criticism were used to dismantle the Bible. What is higher criticism? We’ve talked about it before. It is holding to a pagan worldview and then trying to absorb the bible and interpret it inside your pagan worldview. So it’s interpreting the Bible in a framework of unbelief. The Puritan attempt to create a modern counterpart of ancient Israel failed to precipitate a vibrant spirituality.

So in that failure questions remained which demanded answers. “What was God’s will for the church? Increase the political power of the organized visible church? Try once again to bring OT Israel’s cultural forms into present society as some groups of Puritans had nearly succeeded at doing? Or regroup as a community distinct from any state structure as the early church had done?” That was the answer certain people like John Nelson Darby were coming to? We’ve got to separate from the State and form a new community. This is where terminology like the visible church and the invisible church arose from. Why the difference? The visible church is the outward form, it’s the state authorized liturgy. The invisible church is the inward reality; it’s the real believers wherever they might be, whether they be at home, at work,

at church. This terminology came to distinguish between the State and the Church as separate entities.

Then the Church began to ask, if we are not the State then our function is not political. What is our function? Evangelism, discipleship. And they began to realize, hey, what should the church do about the newly discovered, culturally-diverse peoples throughout the continents, all without a gospel witness?" Remember what had gone on in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries that was now well-known in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>? Exploration of the continents; Columbus, Vasco de Gama, all of a sudden gee, there are people on all these other continents. In North America there were a lot of Indians, are these people believers? How does God call the elect out of the American Indians? So all of a sudden we've got hmm, what's the church's mission to these people?

"Dispensational theology arose out of concerted Bible study that sought answers to these questions. The Church, it was discovered, was a lot more distinct from Israel than classical Protestantism had assumed. Ecclesiology became a distinct area of study that led to Dispensationalism.

Dispensationalism has a distinct view of the church and we'll get into that. Dispensational theology was a dominating force in the modern missionary movement." That is a historical fact. Modern missionary movement largely has been impelled, motivated and guided by people who were dispensationally oriented. That's one issue that came up, what is the role of the Church in evangelizing these people?

The second doctrine is in the realm of authority. What is the ultimate authority in interpreting history, art, music, etc...? Let me show you how this took place. Here's another set of questions that arose in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. How did history take shape and give rise to the present state of affairs? How did the people groups who lived far from Europe and Protestantism get there? How do we reconcile the short ages of the biblical timescale with the vast ages claimed by modern scientists like geologist's Hutton and Lyell? Where do the artifacts discovered by archaeology fit in the historical scheme? People began to wonder how does all of this fit together. What was ancient history like that led to the present state of affairs?

Unbelief took the lead by explaining that history developed by means of natural forces. This non-miraculous, naturally evolving history quickly took

root because classical Protestantism had not emphasized that the Bible was the sole authority in earthly things. They had only emphasized that the Bible was the authority in heavenly things. Since classical Protestantism had not provided specific interpretive standards from the Bible to deal with earthly matters the secular world took over such study and began to claim vast ages starting with simpler forms evolving in a progress of history according to an evolutionary mechanism. This model of universal history began to take root and reign supreme. In response to this Protestantism tried to solve the discrepancy between the short ages assigned by a straightforward reading of the Bible and the vast ages assigned by historical scientists. This answer was already at hand since such accommodating trends were found in some of Calvin's writings. Here's a key. Calvin talked about common grace, he talked about the idea that you could study nature independently of the Scripture and make sense of it. Let's think about this because this was something Calvin brought over from Medieval theology. One of the things that came over was that you have reason over here and reason wasn't fallen and so for earthly things we can use reason to study nature. Then over here when it comes to spiritual truths and the Bible, that we need revelation for, we can't know that apart from revelation. So there was this split that came over how we know things. The Bible was the authority in heavenly things but human reason was the authority in earthly things. That's still the case in Roman Catholicism and most of Protestantism today. And if you listen to apologists of this persuasion you'll hear them say from the standpoint of reason and they'll build their case on reason, independent of the Bible, that's what they call knowledge. Then when they come over to something spiritual they'll say revelation takes over and we need the Bible for that and that's what they call faith. So they have this dichotomy going on so far as what we can know vs. what we take on faith and they fluctuate between reason and revelation.

This is why I personally am a presuppositional apologist of the faith, why I believe that you start with the Scriptures and then you go to science, you start with Scriptures and then you go to history, you start with the Scriptures and then you go to the arts, etc. You don't just go talking about math and history as if they're autonomous things and then over here we talk about God. You should never teach any subject or learn any subject independent from God. You start with God as the Creator of the structures that exist and then you talk about them in that frame. That way every discussion gets back to who God is, what His structures mean, what lessons

are embedded in nature, otherwise you cut people off from that, and frankly I'm convinced that's a tactic of Satan to block us from the revelation that is going on always and everywhere around us, smacking us upside the head about God. But our secular training has wiped all that out and all we talk about now is this structure and that structure and this mechanism and that mechanism. It has become a mechanistic and impersonal process. Never, almost never do you hear any of these disciplines being discussed in a personal way that invokes the personal God behind the structures, behind the mechanics.

Let's learn from the mistakes of the Christian men and women who went before us. If you grant one area out here, whether it is history, science, the arts, whatever it is, if you grant that the natural man can truly understand these things apart from the God of the Scriptures you've opened up the city gates to a Trojan Horse, and it will eat you up every time. And it did the Church! Once people think they can stand on the foundation of reason where are they no longer standing? On the word of God. So now we're going to stand on human reason and use it to attack the Scriptures and rip it to shreds. And that's exactly what happened. The church began to accommodate to the claims of historical science. I've taken you through some of the data. John Hannah of Dallas Seminary did a search years ago on how the church was handling the details of Gen 1-11 by going back to the oldest journal in America, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, and he found in 1846 that the church was accommodating, that they were taking the assured results of science, coming back to the Bible and reinterpreting it to fit. That was the game that was played from the early 1800's all the way to the 1950's. The church tried this for 150 years.

Why? Because they were facing the tension over the question, do natural forces explain the Bible or does the Bible explain the natural forces? In other words, which one comes first so far as an interpretive key? Since dispensationalists had developed a scheme of history worked out in successive stages this provided a clear biblical framework for interpreting natural forces in terms of it and not the other way around.

Here's what we mean. Dispensationalism argues that human history goes through a series of stages and that there are ages to history. In fact, if you've been here through the years you've seen this. We went from Creation to the

Fall, from the Fall to the Flood, from the Flood to the Call of Abraham. From Abraham to Mt Sinai on through the kingdom of Israel, and now we're right at the end with the Cross of Jesus Christ. Dispensationalism argues that God moves forward, but He moves forward with certain administrations. He has administration number one, administration number two, administration number three, He administers world history in a certain way that goes through these historical ages. You've got to respect that and you've got to interpret the Bible into the times in which it was written. Therefore dispensationalists saw that accommodating to the conclusions of historical science was contradictory to the dispensational scheme of history. Therefore where do you think the modern creationist movement came out of? It didn't come out of Covenant Theology. It came out of Dispensational Theology. Henry Morris and John Whitcomb were both dispensationalists and John Whitcomb is a presuppositional apologist.

What dispensational theology did was provide a scheme that explained natural and human history from a clear biblical framework. One historian calls the dispensational view of history 'anti-humanist and anti-developmental' and 'a negative parallel to secular concepts of progress...' in a nutshell that's why so many people are upset with Dispensationalism. We are upsetting people by being so directly confrontational with the secular view of history. Can't we just all get along? What is wrong with you people? Why can't you just gloss over the evolution thing and go straight to Jesus? By the way, do you know what the simple answer is to that? Why can't you go straight to Jesus? Because which Jesus do you end up talking about? The Jesus of Creation or the Jesus who evolved and was the highest enlightened being in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD? It's the nature of Jesus that's at stake. And once you've avoided creation you've avoided the true nature of Jesus Christ and you've confused the true nature of the gospel. It's that simple. The logic flows.

So now I want to go into the structural components of Dispensationalism. "The three components of classical dispensational theology are emphasis upon a literal interpretative approach to biblical covenants," that's number one; number two, "a doxological ultimate purpose to history," and number three, "separate identities for Israel and the Church." That's the hallmark. Wherever you go, you can tell by how people handle those questions whether they're dispensationalists or not. You'll never meet a dispensationalist that doesn't go down that track; they'll always have those features.



We'll spend the rest of our time on #1, "A Literal Interpretative Approach to Biblical Covenants." Let's go to a Biblical covenant. Turn to Gen 12:1; it's funny that dispensationalists spend more time talking about covenants than Covenant theologians talk about covenants. There are several Biblical covenants that we've covered. We've gone through Biblical history, we've gone through the Call of Abraham, this was 2000 BC, this was the first Jew. He was called out and this set off exclusivity in history, from this point on everybody started fussing at God about His new dispensation. Prior to Abraham God ran history differently. Prior to Abraham God had Melchizedek's in the various people groups that went out. He had a prophet here, He had a prophet in China, He had prophets in Europe, and He had prophets in Africa.

But the people apostatized from those prophets and the Word of God was in danger of being eradicated from history, so God decided He'd start a new thing and beginning with Abraham is a new dispensation, meaning that from this point on God is going to channel revelation only through Israel, not through anybody else. People still can't get used to that. That's why even today, oh well, you Christians are bigots, you say you're the only.... We didn't say we're the only ones, Jesus said that, go argue with Him. I didn't say that, take it to Jesus, He'll give you a good argument. "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father but by Me." Is that being nasty? That's not being nasty? If you understand why that dispensation started, it started because the previous dispensation exposed human failure.

One of the other features of dispensationalism is that every one of them ends in human failure. Every dispensation proves man's sin; it proves that men sin against whatever light they have. People say it'd be fairer if God raised up people in every culture. He did. And all during the time between the Flood and Abraham, that was the procedure. And what did people do? They turned away from Him. Well, I think God ought to have a special nation. He did, and what happened to the special nation when the Lord Jesus Christ called it to be ready for the Kingdom? They crucified Him. They sinned. So every dispensation teaches a lesson, that's another feature. Over and over He teaches that no matter what conditions I give you people you screw it up. So don't blame Me, I gave you every opportunity and you still blew it.

I want to look at the literal interpretive approach to covenants. Gen 12 is the first covenant, so we'll take number one, this is the Abrahamic Covenant. Another word that you can use if this sounds too theological is to use the word "contract." That's what a covenant is, just like a business contract, a mortgage, whatever, employment contract. By the way, the only nation on earth that God ever made contracts with is Israel. In Gen 12 here are the big three promises. This is the *modus operandi* of history from 2000 BC all the way to the end of history. This is the drive train of history and without this you cannot understand and interpret history correctly.

Verse 2, "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; so you shall be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." There's the universality of the Abrahamic Covenant. Is it universal? Yes it is. "All the nations" are going to be blessed through this rich root of the olive tree Israel. Now what has Israel contributed to world history? What you're holding in your lap, this is a Jewish book, the Gentiles didn't write this, Jews wrote it. Was Jesus a Jew? So that's part of the blessing, not all, because world peace will not happen in the future until Israel says yes to the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what's holding up world peace. That's part of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Go forward to Gen 15 and we find more details about this covenant. Notice this covenant is not made with the Church, it's made with Abraham. It's made with those who come out of Abraham, Jewish people. In Gen 15:5, "And He took him outside and said, 'Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' [6] Then he believed in the LORD; and He trusted [reckoned] it to him as righteousness." Then on down in the passage, verse 15, "And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace," talking to Abraham, "you shall be buried at a good old age. [16] Then in the fourth generation they shall return here," where's "here?" To Palestine, "they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete. [17] And it came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark," etc. and we have the covenant signing. And then in verse 18, "on that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.'" You

check that out on a world map, that's a big area, a lot bigger than the modern state of Israel.

So in the Abrahamic Covenant you have three things. Abraham is promised a seed which becomes the Lord Jesus Christ; he is promised a land; and he is promised that he will be a worldwide blessing. There's a land promise in here with specific boundaries. You can't spiritualize these things. This is not given to the Church. The Church lived between the river of Egypt and the River Euphrates? Obviously not. So the only way you can get the Church in here is to say well, it's not really land, it's just kind of a word for heaven. See what we're doing, now we're getting greasy on the way we interpret this contract. My point is that dispensationalists refuse to get greasy when it comes to the details of the contract. The contract clearly says there's real estate involved here and it's real estate for Israel and not for anybody else. That is a literal interpretation of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Let's go to the Land Covenant, turn to Deut 30, this amplifies provision number two in the Abrahamic Covenant, the land. In verse 1 look what it says, "So it shall become when all of these things have come upon you," who's the "you?" Who is Moses talking to? The twelve tribes. "So it shall become when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you," there's the dispersion of Israel, it occurred in 586 BC and then it occurred again in AD 70 when Israel was thrown out of the land again, and Jerusalem was destroyed. Verse 2, "and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, [3] then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you," etc. What's that saying? It's saying that in the future she'll be regathered when she becomes obedient again to the God of the Bible, who is the Lord Jesus Christ. And it says that God will gather "you," that's not the Church, that's Israel. "I will gather Israel," Israel's been the one that's been kicked out into the nations so it's Israel that will be called back; back to where? Back to the land. So here again we have a literalness in these Biblical covenants.

Go to the Davidic Covenant in 2 Sam. Each one of these covenants expands on the original Abrahamic Covenant. The land covenant expands on provision number two and now the Davidic Covenant is going to expand on provision number one, the seed. This was in 1000 BC, so it's ten centuries later; after the Abrahamic Covenant and we have the 2 Sam 7 covenant given. God says He's going to bless him, He says verse 10, "I will also appoint a place for My people, Israel," notice He doesn't say the Church, "appoint a place for My people, *Israel*, and will plant *them*, that *they* may live in *their own place* and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly, [11] even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you. [12] When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers," when he dies "I will raise up your descendant after you who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. [13] He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. [14] I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, [15] but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him," as it did from Saul. Notice verse 16, final conclusion to the Davidic Covenant where it says, "And your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me" how long? "forever; your throne shall be established forever." What throne? David's throne. Where was David's throne? In Jerusalem. That's what the contract says. Either we interpret it contractually or we get greasy and try to say well it doesn't really mean that. Yes it does mean that or God's a covenant breaker. We won't have time but if you want David's own interpretation of 2 Sam 7 you might want to look at Psalm 89:19-37 because that gives you David's own ideas about what he thought 2 Sam 7 meant. It's clear if you do that study you'll see that very definitely it's literal.

Then we come to another covenant in the OT called the New Covenant. Turn to Jer 31. This one amplifies provision number three of blessing. This happened toward the end of the nation Israel, when it was totally collapsing, and it came at a very interesting time. Jer 31 answers a fundamental question about the OT. Here's the dilemma. If God is holy, if God is righteous and He says that Israel is My kingdom, I'm righteous, and I've got to have a righteous Kingdom, how do you get a sinful nation into a righteous kingdom? That's the problem. Israel knew what the standards of righteousness were because the Mosaic Law said what the standards were. God sent the prophets

and they reiterated, this is the Law. The problem was they didn't have the power to live to that standard. The kings didn't have the power, the leaders of the people, and the people didn't have the power. So you have a refutation of both the idea of socialism and fascism refuted, politically. The Bible has a lot to say politically. All political theories are really repudiated at this point. Democracy is repudiated in the Scripture and the reason is because man is fallen. 51% of the people can vote wrongly; 51% of the people can vote in a very perverted way, that doesn't make it right.

So by this time there was a need for an answer of how are we going to get to this point in history if we have sinful leaders and sinful men. Here's Jeremiah declaring what the Lord said. Jer 31:31, "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant" does it say with the Church? No, the Church didn't exist then. "Behold, days are coming...when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, [32] not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them" declares the LORD. [33] "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD," now here's the answer, here is why Israel can one day receive the kingdom of God, and with that fact you will have worldwide peace. It will come because "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

People always like to say oh, well, that's being fulfilled in the Church today. Keep reading the next verse, what does the next verse say. Verse 34, "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them" declares the LORD," is that true today? No, it's saying there's going to be no need for evangelism in the millennial kingdom because everybody knows the Lord. At least in Israel everybody knows the Lord. Excuse me, but how do you get that to apply to the Church. So again we see why dispensationalists, to make the first point, what characterizes a dispensationalist? A literal interpretation of the Biblical covenants. They were made to Israel and you have to take have them fulfilled literally to Israel.

Let me sum up some language issues here. “Two vital implications for the science of interpretation (hermeneutics) follow.” Just think about this, this is not a terribly difficult theological concept. If you’ve ever signed a mortgage note, if you’ve ever bought an automobile and signed a loan agreement, if you’ve ever gone to your boss and signed an employment contract, you know this intuitively. This is easily understood. First, *the meaning of contract terminology must be conserved for the duration of the contract from origin to fulfillment*. Doesn’t it? How else are you going to tell if the contract’s being fulfilled or not. The thing has to have the meaning when you write it that it has when the contract’s fulfilled. It would be chaos in the business world if this weren’t true. Second, *only literal meanings can be verified or falsified against the enforcement criteria or standards*. How do you determine whether the person’s breached the contract or not if you don’t have literal meanings for the contractual terms. “Two key figures in the rise and spread of Dispensational theology, John Nelson Darby and C. I. Scofield, both studied law in their early years, so they certainly were aware of the hermeneutics of contract law.” If you want to think of it this way here’s an example of why I mean literal interpretation of the contracts.

“These implications are so obvious it is hard to understand how biblical interpreters could have overlooked them for centuries. Imagine an insurance company telling Mr. Jones and his surviving family, after a tornado destroyed his house, that the policy covered his ‘home’ the ‘real meaning’ of which is his *family*, not the *building* they lived in. Everyone would agree that changing the meaning of the original wording from its literal meaning to a metaphorical one amounts to contract fraud.” Yet theologians do this again and again with these OT contracts, and dispensationalists are people that refuse to do that. We’re the hard-noses. We interpret this as contractual language that doesn’t change. If it’s made to Israel, it’s made to Israel. If it’s made about land boundaries, it means land boundaries, a real radical thought here. But this is the essence of the dispensationalist position.

Last time I went into the fulfillment idea; I showed how Jer 31 is not a fulfillment in Matt 2 of a contractual terminology. And finally, summarizing the whole thing. Dispensational theology instead of starting with the NT and trying to work backward to the OT, starts with the OT and works forward. If a biblical covenant is not fulfilled in the NT, then it speaks to events yet future. The dispensational approach insists upon the conservative nature of

covenant terms throughout historical time. In this manner it preserves a straightforward, objective method of verifying fulfillment of covenant promises.”

That’s what dispensationalism is all about. You remember when we were discussing Covenant theology, they’re worried about this abstract covenant of grace and they start with the NT and try to argue that every time you see the word “fulfill” that must mean it’s all fulfilled in the NT, it’s all fulfilled! Well, if it’s all fulfilled, then we’ve got to change the meaning of the OT lexicon because we don’t have anybody in the land. There’s the difference. Next week we’ll finish this up and go forward into Pentecost. There are lots of things going on at Pentecost, involving both Church and Israel. Acts 2 is one of the toughest chapters in the entire NT.

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