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Appendix: The Resolution

We're looking at the end of an appendix on Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism. The reason we're doing this now is because we're coming up on Pentecost and that's where these two divide. And there are important differences that surface the farther out you push the division. At the same time don't be too hard on them, it can be tempting to lambast these people and there's no lack of books written by them that lambast us. But both views share a Reformation Heritage, both views share a Calvinistic Heritage, both agree that salvation is by grace through faith, both agree the Scriptures are inerrant, but we do have different interpretations of the mission, the nature and destiny of the Church. We have covered some of those differences, we've covered Covenant Theology and last week we began Dispensational theology.

One of the issues that Dispensationalism is known for is literal interpretation of the covenant language in the Scriptures. The covenants must be interpreted literally. That is important because Covenants in Scripture are akin to contracts today. No man in his right mind signs a mortgage agreement, signs a loan/lease agreement, or enters into any other kind of a written contract and have the other party interpret it metaphorically. That would be cool if you could interpret a loan agreement metaphorically. But you don't, and the point is that God has made contracts down through history with man. We went over those contracts; last time we went through the Abrahamic Covenant given in Gen 12, 13, 15, 17, 19 and 22. We went through the Land Covenant, Deut 30. We went through the Davidic Covenant, 2 Sam 7, interpreted by David in Psalm 89. We went through the New Covenant in Jer 31.

What did we say of every one of those covenants? Were those contracts made with the Church or were they made with the nation Israel? They were all

made with the nation Israel; the Church didn't even exist then. Therefore the fulfillment of those covenants is going to be to the nation Israel. How, if that is true, do we participate as Christians in the benefits that we participate in if the contracts aren't made with us. The answer is because of our union with Jesus Christ; that's the basis. He is part and parcel because He's a Jew, because He is of the seed of Abraham physically as well as spiritually. He benefits from them and He can share certain benefits with us. But we're grafted in; that's the language of Rom 11 and it's humbling to understand that. We aren't taker over's of Israel's promises. We get access and into some of the blessings through our union with Christ but Israel is the final recipient of the fulfillments.

When we went through this we talked about literal interpretation, and when we went through Covenant theology I showed how one of their hang-ups is when they see the formula X fulfills Y, and that formula occurs again and again in the NT, they interpret that to mean that X, some NT event, X is always some NT event, and Y is some OT passage, when they see that formula they automatically say that's it, even if it has major differences with the OT passage we should expect no future fulfillment. We gave an illustration that a classic counter point to that argument in Jer 31 versus Matt 2, wherein Matt 2 when the babies are killed in the genocide, two years and younger every male baby was killed by Herod. When that happened Matthew records the event and then he adds, "and thus it was fulfilled that Rachel was weeping in Ramah." That was a reference to Jer 31, and it was not even a prophecy, although Matthew says it's fulfilled.

This is the question: how do we interpret this verb? That's the issue. It doesn't always mean to fulfill prophecy. For the simple reason that the passage in Jeremiah isn't a prophecy, it's a historical description of the captives rendezvousing at Ramah before the long march over into the Tigris-Euphrates River Valley when the southern kingdom went into Exile. Here you have a historical observation in a town called Ramah, north of Jerusalem, and Matthew comes along and he applies the passage to Bethlehem, which is south of Jerusalem. Jeremiah is captive men walking away alive, Matthew is babies being killed. So you don't have the right place, you don't have the right people. In what sense then does Matthew use the verb "fulfill?" He uses the verb "fulfill" as a pattern or an analogy. We have to

be careful when we see that word “fulfill” and I’m going to take you to another one to prove the point.

Turn to Matt 2:15 and in the OT to Hosea 11:1; hold both passages so you can flip between them. If you have a study Bible you should see a letter or number in Matt 2:15 that should take you to the marginal reference; in the marginal reference you should see Hosea 11:1 referred to. Let’s look at the context of Matt 2, in verse 13: Joseph was warned in a dream to get baby Jesus out of there, there was going to be a genocide, and in order to survive physically Joseph and Mary had to take Jesus somewhere. This is not Christmas, this is a year or so after, some time has elapsed, and where did they get the money for the trip? You know where he got the money - the wise men who came gave them this expensive stuff, so it’s really how the Lord provided for that trip. In verse 14 “And he arose and took the Child and his mother by night, and departed for Egypt.” Verse 15, “and was there until the death of Herod; that what was spoken by the Lord though the prophet might be” and there’s the verb again, “fulfilled, saying, ‘Out of Egypt did I call My Son.’”

Flip over to Hosea 11:1 here’s another example of how Matthew uses the verb. This is why when you study the Scriptures you have got to study text after text after text; you can’t just go zipping into a passage of Scripture and think you know what you’re reading. It doesn’t work that way. Some passages are easy, they’re obvious. When you get into this kind of stuff you don’t look at a concordance two and a half minutes and then conclude that you know what the passage means. This takes some study and it takes some systematic study and approach to the whole thing. Some times you have to go back to the original languages; if you don’t know the original languages you have to go back to tools that do use the original languages. That’s just the name of the game. This is Scripture written historically and in certain languages. But most of the time the problems are that we don’t spend time looking at usage. Word meanings are determined in Scripture by usage, and you can’t find usage until you find verse after verse after verse of usage. That’s what we’re doing with this verb “fulfill.”

Hosea 11:1 says “When Israel was a youth” now is that talking about the Messiah or is that talking about the nation. The Messiah isn’t even in here, this is Israel, this is the nation. “When Israel was a youth I loved him, and

out of Egypt I called My son.” Now in terms of the nation, Israel, what does the passage mean in Hosea? Think about this. Any Jew would know immediately what that passage meant. Go back to the OT events. When did God call Israel out of Egypt? The Exodus, so this is talking about the Exodus. Is this a prophecy? It’s not a prophecy, there’s no prophecy in this verse; this is a description, just like the passage in Jeremiah, of a portion of Israel’s history. It refers to something past, not something future. “Out of Egypt I called My son.”

Now we come into the NT and we see Joseph take baby Jesus down to Egypt and now Herod is dead so they’re called back, then Matthew uses the formula X fulfills Y, Matt 2 fulfills Hos 11. But Hosea was not a prophecy. So how do we explain the verb “fulfill” in verse 15? The verb “fulfill” must refer in some sense to an analogy and we have here one of Matthew’s techniques of presenting Jesus Christ. Matthew is going to say if you take the history of Israel and you take the history of the Messiah and you match them up, lo and behold there is parallel after parallel after parallel after parallel, as goes Israel, so goes Israel’s Messiah. And part of his argument is to authenticate Jesus Christ as the Messiah by arguing that this man’s life parallels the nation Israel. Israel was in the desert for forty years; Jesus Christ was tempted for forty days. Israel came out of Egypt; Jesus Christ came out of Egypt, etc. etc. etc.

So when he says “fulfill” we might use a different verb that’s what he means. Instead of using the verb “fulfill” we would probably say Israel typifies the Messiah. The nation Israel’s life typified the Messiah’s life, or the Messiah’s life is authenticated by reflecting the history of the nation Israel. That’s the meaning of it. Once you are careful and you build meaning out of the text, the study of the text, then you can divide things up and say, okay, over here when we’re dealing with the covenants, legal language, that’s where we believe in literal fulfillment of prophecy and over here where we’re seeing these kinds of things like analogy going on, that’s some kind of typology going on but that doesn’t have any bearing on the theological debate at hand. Actually all these passages are irrelevant to the real issue.

The real issue is how are the OT covenants to be fulfilled? Where was Jesus born? Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Why was Jesus born in Bethlehem? It’s part of the terms of the seed branch of the Abrahamic Covenant? Was He

born in a literal Bethlehem or in Hebron or Jerusalem or something? It was a literal Bethlehem. That passage was fulfilled literally. That's what we mean when we say that if God made a covenant in the OT and the covenant has terms in it, how else are you going to tell that the covenant has been fulfilled if you don't interpret it literally? You can't do it, and that's what we have a problem with when Covenant Theologians go into the text and correct it. You can't do that because then how do you tell whether God was faithful to what He promised or not. You can only measure performance by literal meaning of words. Enough said on that point about Dispensationalism.

The second point about Dispensationalism. What is a dispensationalist? A dispensationalist is one who believes in a literal fulfillment of the covenants of the OT. Number two, they believe that the purpose of history is doxological. Let me explain. The ultimate purpose of history according to Covenant Theology is the salvation of man. Covenant theology is very admirable in saying that the salvation of man is important, very admirable. The problem is that they got so fixated on salvation it became everything. Why were they so fixated on it? The historical reason behind it was the Reformation had occurred and the debate between the Reformers and Rome was a debate about how a man is saved. That was the debate. Salvation was the center of this turmoil in the 16th and 17th centuries. They were fixed on this, so they have come down in history to say that the real reason for history is to show God's grace, show God's character, by salvation. That's not false, that's a true statement.

However, we would argue that if a circle represents the purpose of history, redemption is part of that circle but not all of that circle. There are two reasons why Jesus Christ is praised in the book of Revelation. One is because "You have created things" and the other one is because "You have redeemed us." So 50% of the praise is not for redemption; 50% of the praise is for being creative. This goes back to good/evil diagram that summarizes lots of truth. There's a lot of stuff packed in this diagram. It looks on the surface just like a few lines, but behind that diagram is a lot of heavy ideology and very offensive ideology if you learn how to read the diagram right because it is exclusivistic, it is saying outside of the gospel of Jesus Christ you do not have any hope, without God, without hope in the world, and that there is no solution to all of life's problems outside of Christ. Here's why? Because in the

pagan position good and evil have no beginning and good and evil have no end, it's just a mix that goes on forever and ever and ever.

In the Bible we have the beginning, then the Fall, and we have an end or a terminus. What does that mean? It means that evil in the Bible is bracketed; evil is boxed in to a finite section of history. So the question we want to look at is after this point of judgment, after good and after evil are permanently separated and history has been resolved because the mess that was created at the fall is finally cleaned up, when that point is reached if the ultimate purpose of history was redemption, what's the purpose of living afterwards? The point is, it goes back to the idea—why are you saved? Well, I'm saved to grow in order to win other people to Christ, who are then saved to grow to win other people to Christ who are saved to grow to win other people to Christ, and then history ends and what do we do in heaven? We all know that the book of Revelation that looks beyond has us worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ and dwelling in the eternal state, etc.

Here's a quote by Dr. Pilkey and he's speaking in terms of the book of Revelation but I'm taking it in a larger context, to the end of history, "It furnishes an authoritative context larger than the Gospel of salvation and larger than salvation itself. . . .As mortals, we remain in various kinds of trouble; and salvation strikes us as an all-consuming, universal concern." This is a classic sentence that starts here, I love this sentence. "Yet the angels of heaven have never been saved; the demons cannot be saved; and the redeemed in heaven have nothing from which to be saved. If life in the resurrected state has a purpose, goals must exist beyond salvation. Because the book of Revelation has been given to us in our present mortal condition, we are able to anticipate these goals despite our natural preoccupation with personal salvation."

That's all Dispensationalism is saying; the purpose of history is larger than salvation. The purpose of history involves angels. The purpose in history involves resurrected people who will never fall for billions and billions of years, forever, in resurrected bodies who will never be subject to death, no more sorrow, no more tears, etc. What are they doing? Surely the purpose of history hasn't come to an end with the final judgment. There's an eternal existence; what's the purpose of that? In one sense it's history, the progress of time because we're creatures and we dwell in time.

That's the point about the ultimate purpose of history is doxological. What do we mean by that word? We mean it's to praise God. "Doxological" means the purpose of history is to reveal God to His creatures, to know Him ever more perfectly and know Him more and more and more. The neat thing is that we will never be bored, there will always be some new depth to God's character that we've never seen before; lots of surprises forever and ever, very pleasant surprises, to understand the nature of God and reflect back someday upon this life, which we will then consider to be a very, very brief moment in our long-term existence.

What this viewpoint does, it starts to trivialize what we make big issues out of. We tend, because we're concerned with the moment, right now, right here, because this is where the pain is, we get bent out of shape and we blow up these problems to immense proportions. What God does in the Scriptures is He cuts them down to atom size by saying look, don't focus on this, there's an eternity out here in the future and it goes on forever, millions and millions of times more than any short-term pain, etc.

That's why Paul could say in the NT I count it all joy, etc., because the sufferings of the present time I consider insignificant. How could he ever say that? Is he saying that he denies pain? No, Paul had pain, the guy got beat up, he got stoned, he got thrown in jail, Paul knew what pain was, he went through all this. That's not what he's saying. He's saying that if you have the eternal perspective, then the little problems get eaten up by the eternal perspective; it gets encircled and encased in an eternal perspective. And that eternal perspective is for what purpose? To know God. This argues that the ultimate purpose of everything, *everything*, whether it's salvation or hell, everything has as its purpose the glory of God.

There's another feature to history that we've covered before that emerges in all this discussion. Turn to Matt 11; here we have an aspect of history that strikes often to some proponents of Covenant Theology. This sort of passage becomes very difficult for them to accept emotionally. The reason is that it seems to teach that history is contingent. Verse 14, "And if you care to accept *it*," the "it" isn't the original so we have to figure out what the object of the verb "accept" is, "If you care to accept, He Himself is Elijah, who was to come." Again you should have a note in your study margin where it says "who was to come" and it should show you the reference of where that comes out of

the Bible, which is Malachi 4, an OT book. The idea was that before... I want to show this because when we get to Pentecost if you don't have this background you're going to lose it, believe me. Pentecost is a very complicated event because Israel is involved, the Church is involved, half of prophecy is involved, half of prophecy is not involved, there's something that happens at Pentecost that wasn't prophesied ever, and all these elements are mixed together. So we're going to have slow going through Pentecost.

What we want to notice is in the OT the picture was that time was going to go on, the Messiah was going to come, and when the Messiah came there would be various judgments that would happen, the kingdom would come, which was kind of conjoined with the eternal state. That's the OT picture. In that OT picture prior to the Messiah, Elijah was to come. Elijah was one of the great OT prophets and he was to show up in time with the Messiah as an announcer to the nation Israel that the kingdom was near. That's the OT prophecy.

So the question comes up, when Jesus Christ came it wasn't Elijah, it was John the Baptist. The disciples are saying if you be the Christ, if you be the Messiah promised in the OT, then where's Elijah? What Jesus is arguing for here is if you accept this gospel, if you accept the gospel of the Kingdom that I'm offering you, the Kingdom can come and John is Elijah. We know in fact that Jesus Christ is not going to be accepted, so what happens historically is this. You have the OT, you have the Messiah come, the Messiah was rejected, nationally speaking, and we know now that there's an inter-advent period followed by a Second Coming of the Messiah and in between we have the Church Age, the inter-advent age. Was this foreseen in the OT? No. You can say something didn't seem right, because there are pictures of the suffering Messiah and pictures of the glorious Messiah. How do you get these two Messiah's together? That didn't make any sense. They couldn't solve it and they kept talking about two Messiahs because they couldn't figure out how this all could happen to one guy. Well, it turned out it's one guy coming in two different moments of history.

The point is that when Jesus Christ came this whole picture was not seen. This wasn't seen in Matt 3 when John was preaching "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." What's he saying? He's saying that the kingdom is at hand; the OT kingdom is at hand. Watch this because this is where..., if

you follow this you'll see why I'm saying Dispensational and Covenant theology have some profound differences on how they interpret this thing. If you look at the top diagram, it doesn't look like there's any room for the cross. When Jesus Christ came, in other words, what would have happened had the nation accepted Him as the Messiah? There would have been no rejection and you can only speculate as to well, gosh, you can't have the kingdom without salvation, you can't have salvation without the cross, you can't have forgiveness without blood atonement, how does the blood atonement get involved? I don't know. The best suggestion I've heard is that if they accepted Jesus as the Messiah they would have done like Abraham did with Isaac, they would have reasoned that if Jesus is sacrificed then God will raise Him from the dead and that would have opened up a clear path into the kingdom. But we know historically what happened. Jesus Christ came, He offered Himself, the kingdom was near, it's an imminent Kingdom, it's all possible Israel if you just receive your Messiah, world peace can come, the culmination of history could come; that's the idea that is being preached. So if that were to be the case, and Elijah has to precede the Messiah, then John the Baptist has to be Elijah. That's why Jesus says "if you care to accept," if you as a nation were to accept Me, if you were to accept the message of the Kingdom, then John the Baptist is Elijah. And it does turn out, by the way, that both these guys have a very similar spirit or personality. Both of them were ascetics, both of them were guys that had absolute courage to go up against anybody in their day, both of them could care less what anybody thought about them, and they went on teaching the word of God, and both of them were not very successful humanly speaking; they didn't turn the nation around. Elijah didn't and John the Baptist didn't. They were both fanatics, they were both extremists, they were both guys that were just really both out of the mainstream. So there's kind of a spooky relationship going on between these two guys. And yet you can read in the Gospels when the men come up to John they say John, are you Elijah? He says no, so John didn't see himself as Elijah.

There's a whole bunch of mystery here and the only way you can synthesize all the Scripture is to say that there was a genuine offer here. This isn't just theater, there was a genuine offer that was going on here. John is in a position to fulfill the prophecy of Elijah, but the nation rejected. So now we have the suffering part of the Messiah's prophecy fulfilled in the cross because He's rejected by the nation, and then we have this strange inter-

advent age, and then we have the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The First Coming and Second Coming are split apart.

Where Covenant theology really has a problem with this goes back to this point that we just made. What did we say is the ultimate purpose of history? It's doxological. What did we say that the Covenant theologian believes is the ultimate purpose of history? Redemptive. Can you imagine, if you were a Covenant theologian and you believed passionately, with all your heart, that all of history is focused on the cross of Christ and redemption, and you hear somebody say what I'm saying, it sounds like the primary plan failed and now God is resorting to a secondary plan. If you see their whole approach to one simple sovereign plan that goes on, and bam, you get involved in this kind of a mess, and you're saying oh man, it can't be that way. So in order to resolve it from their point of view, what they say is that this was a wrong picture, that changes in the OT lexicon have to happen so we can see these fulfillments, and this was actually true all along, and so now this inter-advent age called the Church is the fulfillment of all those kingdom promises; it's the kingdom of God because they want a nice smooth approach.

The second purpose of dispensationalism is it's doxological; the ultimate purpose of history is doxological. Why? Because there are lots of things that go on in history and they're all part of this bigger purpose.

Finally, the third thing is the separation of the Church and Israel. Dispensational theology insists on this distinction and Covenant theology insists against it. Dispensationalism says there are two different groups of people. Why do we say two different groups of people? Because the saints in Israel were related to God through the Covenants. The Church is not related to God through the Covenants, the Church is related to God through Christ who is related to the Covenants. Moreover, there are actually three peoples of God. Can you guess what the third people are; the third group of people who are redeemed in history, not Jews and not Christians in the Church Age? Go back to OT history again and think of the flow of history. Who is the first Jew? Abraham. Were there believers before Abraham? Where are those guys? Were they related to God through the Biblical Covenants made with Israel? No, so who are they? They're Gentiles. So now we've got three peoples of God. We have Gentiles, we have Israel and we have the Church.

What happens when this is taught? Covenant people say, well you're saying there are three ways of salvation; this is the point. I give an endnote if you want to see a quote from John Gerstner, one of the Covenant guys saying this.¹ Gerstner argues that dispensationalists have to allow for multiple ways of salvation because a change in the content of the gospel is a change in the means by which people are saved. Let's think about this. Does a change in the content of the gospel require a change in the means by which people are saved? I have never figured out how you go logically from different content of the gospel message to different means by which people are saved. Why can't the content be changing as the revelation regarding the gospel is unfolding down through history and yet the means by which people are saved, faith in that content, be the same? I have never seen anyone show a logical contradiction there. I know where they're coming from; they're concerned that we're saying OT saints get into heaven without the cross of Christ. I mean, if the cross isn't the message then you're saying people get into heaven apart from the cross. Is that what we're saying? No, all we're saying is that the actual cross work hadn't happened yet and so its benefits that were certainly to come were being counted to them anticipatorily, before the fact through faith. But if you had an interview with Abraham could he tell you the details of how Jesus would be crucified outside of the city of Jerusalem and raised on the third day? I don't think so. The content of their faith in the OT probably did not include what we consider to be the gospel.

Were they saved by means of grace through faith? You bet - nobody's saved by works. How could they be saved by faith and have a different content of the gospel than we have? Because the content of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ hadn't been given yet. The content they had was less than ours. They had less content to the gospel than we have to the gospel, so they had a different content to believe. What was the content they had to believe? The promise of God of a Messiah that would somehow solve the sin problem. That doesn't mean there are three different ways to be saved. Think of Adam, think of the Gentiles that came from him. What do they know about the cross? Probably nothing. David is the first to reveal something of the cross and we don't even know how much of that David understood. How much did Peter understand before the cross? Remember how Peter responded when Jesus said He had to die and be in the grave three days, etc... May it never be! Now is Peter an unbeliever when he says that? Surely not. So here's a case where you have an OT saint, Peter, and what did he believe that was

sufficient for salvation? That Jesus was the Son of God. That's all Peter believed. I think enough said. The point is there are three different peoples brought to salvation by grace through faith alone, but with a different content to the gospel that they had to trust.

Objectively and legally, as far as the basis of salvation is concerned, this never changes. Were OT people saved by the finished work of Christ? Absolutely! The work of Christ on the cross was applied to all three peoples; none of them are ever saved apart from the objective work of Jesus Christ on the cross. The basis is always the same. It's just that the application of the cross work of Jesus Christ came through differing degrees of content in the gospel, three different levels of revelation. That's all we're saying when we argue there's separate identities for Israel and the Church and we should actually say there's a separate identity for the Gentiles.

We're not saying there are two or three different ways of salvation, we're just simply saying that God has multiple parts in His overall plan, just like a theatre production has different acts, just like plans have different parts, just like an artist's painting uses different colors. That's all we're saying. We don't have to get all jolted by the fact that dispensationalists have separate identities for Israel and the Church.

Let's make a few closing remarks as we end this appendix. Dispensational theology, therefore, recognizes multiple peoples of God. Salvation is always the same in this view, by substitutionary blood atonement, but those who are saved do not form one homogeneous elect people of God. God has separate identities for ancient Gentile nations (addressed nation by nation in the OT prophets), for OT Jews, and for NT Christians. Each group fits within the one doxological purpose of God without conflict. Why have I made such a big point about this? The distinction between Israel and the Church will be discussed more and more in the framework series. It is important" and here's the key, here's where it practically impacts your life, "It is important to clarify the different mode of life given to each group for daily living in obedience to God. There's a different will of God for your life, a different way of life, or mode of living for your life in the NT Church than there would be if you were an OT Israelite. If you really believe there's only one people of God you'd better go to the Temple in Jerusalem and bring some sheep because God says to the Israelites you're supposed to worship in a Temple and you're supposed to slaughter sheep for your sin. Do you do that? No. Do you see any

Covenant theologian doing that? No. Why? It was God's will for those people, wasn't it? Well, that's ceremonial, they put that away. But if they put the ceremonial away you have to put the moral away, you have to put the whole law code away. You can't hold on to pieces, the law is a whole unit, not a piece here and a piece there. How did James express it? If you break one law you've broken them all. The OT law is a unit that hangs or falls together.

The issue here is that it's the OT will of God is in one compartment and the NT will of God is in another compartment. Are there some things that are similar? Yeah, the OT saints were taught not to steal, are we taught *to* steal? No. Well, why are there these similarities? Is this just a carryover of the moral law? Why do we find crossovers? Because one and the same God gave the two laws. There's no carryover. The idea here is that the same God is behind the two laws. So yeah, there are many similarities.

Are there differences? Just as surely. Did any of the OT saints pray to God in the name of Jesus Christ? Oops, different mode of life. Does any NT businessmen forgive loans in the year of Jubilee, every seventh year? No. Was any OT saint indwelt with the Holy Spirit like the NT saints? No, Jesus said the Holy Spirit was *with* you, preposition, and He will be *in* you, two different prepositions, two different modes of living, two different operations of the Holy Spirit. What OT saint was disciplined by the Holy Spirit sent from Jesus Christ down to planet earth? Most OT saints in their discipline, they had personal discipline of course, the book of Proverbs, but they also had discipline at the hands of nations.

We could go on and on with that but my point is that there are differences here that can't be glossed over. And now that Christ is resurrected and ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father we're going to see Him send the Holy Spirit. When He sends the Holy Spirit the nation Israel is going to get one last opportunity. Peter, in Acts 2, is going to preach, not to the Church, he's preaching to Israel, and the message is a kingdom offer message, it adds the new content of the cross and resurrection, but the central message is still the kingdom. If you read carefully the text of Acts 2, you will notice startling similarities with John the Baptist's preaching in Matt 3, startling similarities with Jesus' preaching in Matt 4. So we have this peculiar kingdom preaching that happens in Acts. It's all Israel centered, Israel centered, Israel centered, then what happens as you go through the

book of Acts? Now all of a sudden more and more we hear about the Church, we hear more about the Church, we hear more about the Church, and then finally at the end of Acts Jesus hasn't come back, the kingdom hasn't come to Israel, and the Church is there. Where did the Church get started in all this? We're going to see how it got started at Pentecost but nobody recognized what was going on there. Acts is a book of transition between Israel and the Church. This is why you have all sorts of kooky people running around the Church Age that try to go back to the book of Acts and derive procedures. You can't do that, the book of Acts is a transition document moving from one mode of life to another mode of life. That's what makes it so complicated. Acts is one of the most difficult books in all the Bible because you've got two simultaneous things going on in God's plan.

“Dispensational theology expressed another reformational wave in Church history that expanded the authority of Scripture, especially in defining the nature and mission of the Church. Dispensationalism, by separating the Church from both ancient nation Israel and modern national states, became the home of the modern missionary movement...” Look at that, do you know where missions really got going? Among dispensationalists. Don't believe me? Go do a survey and you'll see who started the big mission outfits. They were dispensationalists. If we're such a group of cultic kooks, like Covenant theology likes to think of us, isn't it funny that this kookery spawned the largest expanse of missions in the history of the Church? How did kooks do that?

The second thing to notice is that fundamentalism in America was largely a product of Dispensational theology. The Scofield Reference Bible had tremendous impact in protecting orthodoxy against the Liberal assaults being made from the pulpit in the 1920's and 30's.

Third, it has lent sympathetic hearing to the emergence of the modern state of Israel and to the cause of Jewish missions. Who do you think wrote the Balfour declaration over in England that secured Israel's interest in the land? Lord Balfour. Who was he? An Englishman who was a dispensationalist, saw that God had a future plan for Israel in the land and he wrote it into the Balfour Charter. Do you think the Covenant guys are interested in the Jews that survived Nazi Germany? Not really, it's more of a bother to them.

And fourth, its literal method of interpreting the biblical text has also spawned most of the modern creationist movement. We showed that. I've given you four historical points about Dispensational theology. What are they: #1, mission minded; #2, fundamental in theology; #3, sympathetic with the modern state of Israel; #4, creationism. Those are four important historical fruits of dispensationalism. Next time read Acts 2, we're going to get into Pentecost.

ⁱ John Gerstner's accusation that dispensationalism teaches two ways of salvation grows out of his premise as a Covenant theologian that "the faith of Old Testament believers . . . can be meaningfully described as faith in Jesus Christ" (p. 164, *Wrongly Dividing the Worth of Truth: A Critique of Dispensationalism*).

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