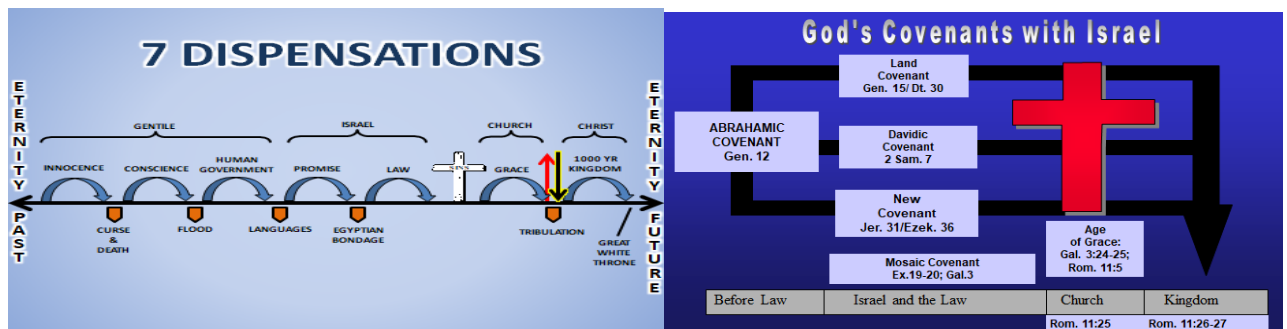


THE IMPORTANCE OF A DISPENSATIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIBLE Pt. 2 (And What are the Ramifications When You Don't?)

A. The WHAT of A Dispensational Understanding of the Bible.

1. The word “dispensation” is a _____ word/term, found ___X in the NT, which literally means _____. The central idea in the word “dispensation” is that of _____ the affairs of a household. (Eph. 1:10, 3:2)
2. The need to _____ the Word of God is a biblical concept that we are commanded to accurately do when studying the Bible. (2 Tim. 2:15)
3. The recognition that “all the Bible is _____ us, but not all the Bible is _____ us” is an important principle to remember, while recognizing _____ principles & practices vs. temporary principles & practices. (2 Timothy 3:16; Romans 15:4; 1 Cor.10:11)
4. The foundation for a dispensational understanding of the Bible is to _____ study the Bible by utilizing a _____, _____, _____, _____ method of interpretation. Dispensationalism is not a theological overlay or construct derived from eisegesis but is the by-product of consistent and careful exegesis.
5. The primary opposing viewpoint to a dispensational understanding of the Bible is that of _____ theology which employs a _____ and _____ hermeneutic, resulting in several elements of theological and practical confusion. For example:
 - Israel vs. the Church. (1 Cor. 10:32; Eph. 2:11-18)
 - Law vs. Grace. (Rom. 6:14; 8:2-6)
 - The Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ. (1 Thess. 4:13 - 5:11)
6. The classic dispensational perspective normally recognizes that there are ___ dispensations in God’s plan of the ages, while also interpreting literally the biblical _____. While the dispensations _____ the plan of God over the ages, the biblical covenants _____ the plan of God in many respects to find its ultimate fulfillment in the future reign of Jesus Christ in the eternal Kingdom of God involving the Millennium, New Heavens & New Earth (Rev.20-22).



- _____ % of the Bible deals with 3 dispensations—Law, Grace, & Kingdom. What other theological, dispensational views are there?

7. The *basic features* of each dispensation include: There is a particular _____ . (Oftentimes the specific dispensation is named after this.) There are particular _____ to carry out. There is particular new _____ to respond to. There is a particular _____ to determine man's obedience. There is a particular _____ allotted to comply. There is a particular _____ by man. There is a particular _____ by God.
8. The *outcome* of each dispensation demonstrates that God is _____, and that _____ is a spiritual flop and failure under all conditions apart from the _____ of God. Yet, one can please God if they respond to His _____ revelation and _____ by _____. (Heb.11:6)
9. The *condition for eternal salvation* in every dispensation is solely by God's _____ alone through _____ alone in the _____ alone, apart from works, rituals, and law. (Rom. 4:1-12) The dispensations are not different ways of salvation.
10. The *doctrinal ramifications* of failing to rightly divide the Word of God affect every basic area of _____, along with having numerous _____ ramifications as well.

What are some of these? (Keep in mind that these are generalizations as there are exceptions, as some do not consistently hold to their theological system. Abbreviations: CT (Covenant Theology); RC (Roman Catholic); PD (Progressive Dispensationalism); CD (Classical Dispensationalism); HD (Hyper-dispensationalism); Seventh Day Adventist (SDA); Jehovah Witness (JW); Liberation Theology (LT); Preterism (P)

When a person does not arrive at a classic dispensational understanding of the WOG, there are such ramifications as ...

1) Regarding the Interpretation of the Bible (used from Dr. C. Cone)

- While CD seeks to interpret through the lens of exegesis, CT interprets through the lens of theology (eisegesis), especially in the prophetic parts of Scripture
- While CD uses a consistent literal hermeneutic, CT sometimes employs a non-literal (allegorical – spiritual) hermeneutic
- While CD defaults to exegesis over historical theology, RC and sometimes CT defaults to historical theology over exegesis (look at all there quotes by Augustine or Calvin).
- While CD believes the Church began at Pentecost after the death of Christ, CT believes it began in the OT; thus, CT views the teachings of the synoptic Gospels as directed to the Church, while CD distinguishes Law / Kingdom teachings from Grace doctrine, though recognizing the trans-dispensational nature of various biblical principles or promises.
- While CD reads the OT as critical in understanding the plan of God for the ages, setting the theological & historical contexts for the NT, as well as having many permanent principles & character study encouragements for the believer today, CT tends to read NT theology back into the OT.

2) Regarding the Gospel of the Grace of God

- There is a failure to understand the finished work of Christ as the last sacrifice for sins (Heb.10:10-14) by still offering daily atoning sacrifices (RC).
- The Gospel of the Kingdom is supposedly still being preached (JW – and even now they don't get this Gospel right) instead of the Gospel of the grace of God – compare Matt.10:5-7 with 1 Cor.15:3-4.
- The false Prosperity Gospel is preached primarily from OT verses as being available now.

- The Gospel of grace is now being replaced by the political liberation gospel (LT) or the uniting of Church and State to promote Christianity like in the Crusades (RC), though Jesus Christ will not change the political structures of the world until He returns and defeats the armies of the world at Armageddon.
- The preaching of the Gospel of grace is now being replaced or changed by the social gospel, of holistic redemption as the mission of the church supposedly is to change social structures through social justice efforts. This will not happen till Christ returns and rules with a rod of iron.
- CT - The vicarious Law-keeping of Christ during His life is viewed as part of the saving work of the Gospel – 1 Cor.15:3-4.
- CT normally teaches that Christ died only for the elect, instead that He died for all (1 John 2:2; 1Tim.2:4-6). Thus, you cannot honestly tell an unbeliever that Christ died for them because if they are not elect, He didn't!
- CT, which is often wedded with Calvinism, teaches that regeneration precedes faith, while John 3 makes it clear that you must believe in Christ in order to have eternal life.
- Sign gifts (that have ceased) are now viewed as an important part of “power-evangelism”, involving the “already/not yet” manifestation of the Kingdom of God now on earth.

3) Regarding Positional truth and the Believer's Sanctification

- There is a failure to recognize the priesthood of every believer (1 Pet. 2:9) by having a select and separate priesthood and laity system (RC)
- CT - The believer's sanctification now supposedly involves OT Law practices such as Sabbath-keeping, tithing, fasting, etc. as spiritual disciplines or binding upon Church-age believers today
- CT - There is the robbing of the believer's blessed hope being the imminent return of Jesus Christ, and the down play, or even disdain, of prophetic teaching.
- CT / PD - With placing the New Covenant upon the Church (Jer.31) instead of for Israel, there is the denial of a sin nature in the believer (replaced by one-naturism), as well as a denial of the carnal Christian (1 Cor.3:1-4), leading to a version of Lordship Salvation.
- CT – falsely accuses that CD teaches different ways of salvation, or are Arminian or antinomian, instead of correctly understanding Romans 5-8 and the believer's liberty from sin and law in order to live a holy life by faith in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. They falsely accuse CD of teaching non-Lordship theology because CD believes one is saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone apart from works, ritual, law, repentance from sin, surrender, commitments, promises, pledges, etc.
- CT – denies the uniqueness of the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.12:12-13) beginning at Pentecost (Acts 1:5) placing believers into the Church since they believe the Church began in the OT

4) Regarding the Beginning, Nature, Mission and Practice of the Church

- CT - The Church is viewed as “spiritual Israel” instead of distinct (Eph.2 & 3) and the covenantal promises made to Israel in the OT (though ironically not its punishments) are allegedly being spiritually fulfilled in the Church today. (CT) Thus, the nation of Israel has no special place in God's future prophetic plan, and anti-Israelism or anti- Semitism are fostered or practiced.
- CT - The Church then began with Adam or Abraham and not on the Day of Pentecost (consider Matt.16:18).

- CT - Infant baptism has supposedly replaced circumcision as the sign of entrance into the covenanted community, though there are no examples of infant baptism in the Scriptures. This then results in catechizing children instead of evangelizing them.
- HD - Water Baptism (and in some cases even the Lord's Supper) are viewed as part of the "Jewish Church" but not to be practiced by the Church which is His Body.
- The dietary aspects of the Law are viewed as binding on the Church (SDA); compare 1Tim.4:1-5; Col. 2:16)
- "Holy days" are supposedly now to be observed like they were under Law in contrast to the clear NT teachings of Col.2:16 & Gal. 4:9-10
- CT - The purposes of the Church involve seeking to redeem society and bring the culture under the Lordship of Christ instead of glorifying God, preaching the Gospel (evangelism), edifying & equipping the saints, and exalting the Savior in worship, etc.
- The promised OT earthly Kingdom of God is now preached as a spiritual kingdom that is present in the believer's heart.
- The heavenly orientation & blessings of the Church and its pilgrim character is replaced by an earthly one.
- Non-biblical ecumenical alliances are now formed by the Church with unbelievers in order to bring about social and political changes in society, contrary to the biblical teaching of doctrinal and ministry separation.

5) Regarding the Prophetic Future

- CT - There is no future Rapture of the Church & Tribulation period, nor literal, premillennial return of Christ to set up the Millennium
- CT - There is no distinction between the Judgment Seat of Christ and the Great White Throne Judgment, and in some cases there is no distinction between salvation and rewards (final justification view)
- CT / Preterism believes most prophecies were fulfilled in 70 AD (P)
- CT believes that Christ is ruling as King now instead of in the future (Rev.19 & 20)
- CT / PD believes that Christ is on the throne of David now, instead of in the future
- The belief that the Kingdom promises fulfillment have started already but are not yet fully fulfilled (already – not yet)
- CT - There is a shift away from a biblical understanding of the place of nationalism to globalism, which ultimately finds fulfillment in the building of the kingdom of the Anti-Christ.

6) Regarding the Purpose of God in the Ages

- With CT, the purpose of God is solely soteriological, i.e. the salvation of the elect to the glory of God vs. CD which views God glorifying Himself by having a plan for Israel, the Church, all mankind, angels, demons, etc.