

# Covenantalism and Dispensationalism

---

## Lesson Outline

### Session 1 (12/4/2013)

- a. Terms and definitions
- b. History
- c. Covenant Theology
- d. Covenantalism Adherents

### Session 2 (19/4/2013)

- a. Quiz
- b. Terms and definitions
- c. History
- d. Dispensational Theology
- e. Dispensationalism Adherents
- f. Doctrinal differences of the 2 Systems
- g. Implications

### Session 3 (3/5/2013)

- a. Quiz
- b. Calvinism
- c. TULIP

### Session 4 (10/5/2013)

- a. Quiz
- b. Current trends
- c. Bible Presbyterian Distinctive

# Covenantalism and Dispensationalism

---

## Terms

### Dispensation

- Latin *dispensation*, Greek *oikonomia*, English *economy*
- *Oikos* = house and *nemo* = dispense, manage or hold sway
- The primary idea is the administration or management of a household's affairs by a steward or manager (Crutchfield, *Dispensationalism*, 23).

## Definition

### Dispensationalism

- A period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some *specific* revelation of the will of God (C.I. Scofield, *Scofield Reference Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917), 5).
- A stage in the progressive revelation of God constituting a distinctive stewardship or rule of life (Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Major Bible Themes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 126).
- Dispensationalism views the world as a household 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. The understanding of God's differing economies is essential to a proper interpretation of His revelation within those various economies. (Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), 28-9)
- ... dispensations are stewardships by which God administers His purpose on the earth under varying responsibilities. We believe that the changes in the dispensational dealings of God with man depend on changed conditions or situations which man is successively found with relation to God, and that these changes are the result of the failures of man and the judgments of God. We believe that different administrative responsibilities of this character are manifest in the biblical record, that they span the entire history of mankind, and that each ends in the failure of man under the respective test and in an ensuing judgment from God. (Dallas Theological Seminary 1995-6 Catalog, 138).

## History

Dispensationalism may be traced to J.N. Darby (1800-1882) who was an ordained minister of the Church of England. Darby, however, was dissatisfied with the strict clericalism found in that Church, and joined a group of likeminded men who did not see the need for a trained, and an ordained ministry. Everyone was a "pastor" and could preach and teach the Word regardless of whether he was equipped to do so or not. He became one of the important leaders of the Plymouth Brethren movement. He interpreted the Bible in terms of a series of dispensations.

C.I. Scofield (1843-1921) was closely associated with the Plymouth Brethren, and through them he received Darby's teachings. Scofield was so enamoured with Darby's dispensationalism that he systematized his theology. In 1909, he published his Reference Bible which promoted and

# Covenantalism and Dispensationalism

popularized dispensational theology. He compartmentalized the Scriptures into neat dispensational sections. This made it an extremely attractive study Bible.

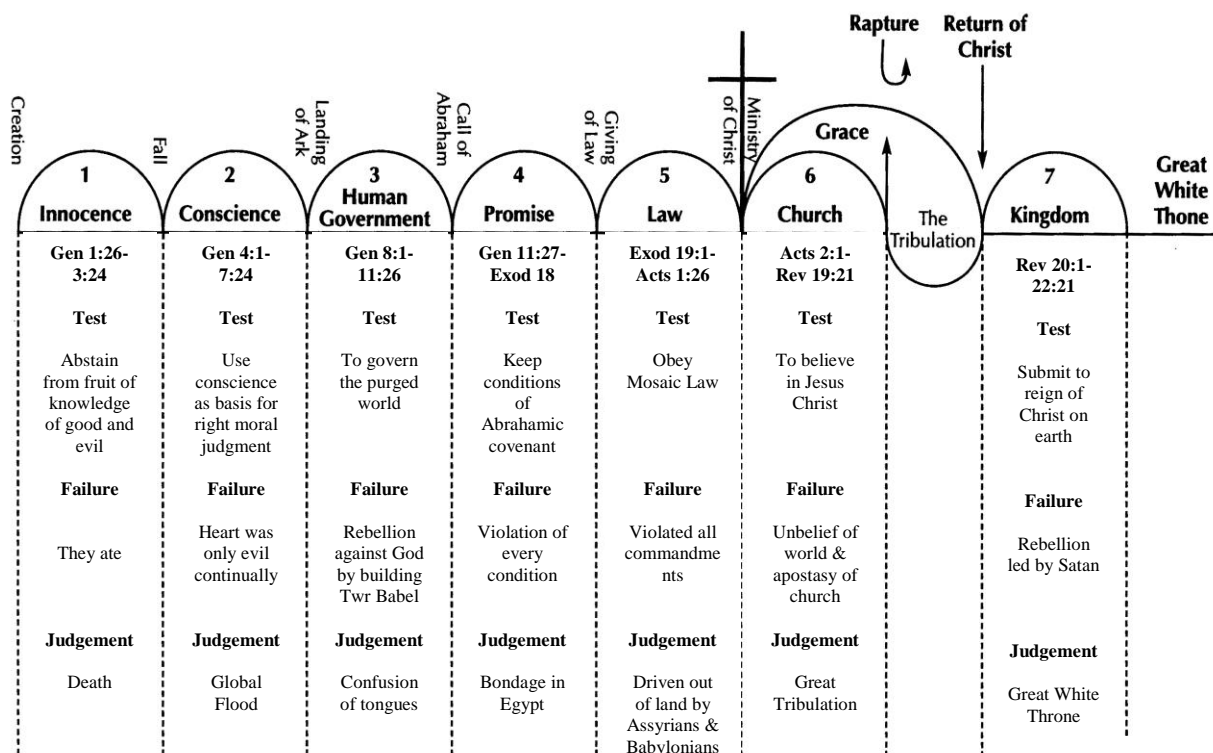
Dallas Theological Seminary, under its founder Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871-1952) became *the* School to champion dispensational theology. Till today, it is unashamedly dispensational. Its dispensational distinctive is clearly spelled out under Article V of its doctrinal constitution where covenant theology is unequivocally rejected. (Jeffrey Khoo, "Dispensationalism Examined," *The Burning Bush* [July. 1994]: 1-3)

## Dispensational Theology

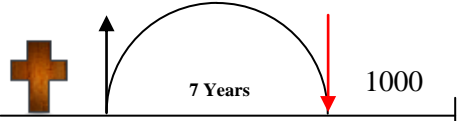
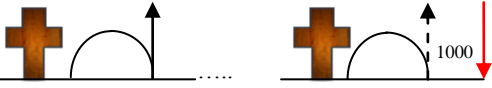
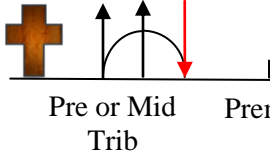
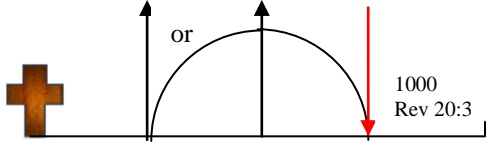
- 1) Believes that 2 Tim 2:15 speaks of dividing the time from the creation of Adam to the "new heaven and a new earth" into 7 unequal periods, each considered as a dispensation.
- 2) Each period is marked by a change in God's method of dealing with man with respect to sin and man's responsibility
- 3) Each dispensation is thus
  - a. a new test
  - b. man's utter failure of the test, and
  - c. each dispensation ending in God's judgment.
- 4) 5 dispensations or periods of time are past.
- 5) We are now living at the close of the sixth.
- 6) The last dispensation is the millennium

### (The Dispensations)

"A dispensation is a distinguishable economy in God's master plan whereby God tests mankind."



# Covenantalism and Dispensationalism

	Dispensationalism	Covenantalism	BP – Reformed Premill
Eschatology - End Times	 <p>Pretribulation Rapture      Premill Return of CHrist</p>	 <p>Amill      Post Mill–Post Trib</p>  <p>Pre or Mid Trib      Premill</p>	 <p>PreTrib or Mid Trib (1Thess 5:9)      Premill (1Thess 4:16-17)</p>
Ecclesiology - Church and Israel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Israel ≠ Church</li> <li>• Church = NT after Pentecost = Body of Christ</li> <li>• OT saints not part of body of Christ</li> <li>• 2 people: Israel is earthly, Church is Heavenly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church replaced Israel because of Jer 31:31</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Israel and Church are distinct</li> <li>• Jer 31:31 refers to Israel - Rom 11:25-32</li> <li>• Church did not replace Israel</li> <li>• Universal church = All saints - From Adam till Christ's return</li> <li>• Local church - OT= Nation of Israel (Acts 7:38) - NT= Jesus &amp; Gentiles all over the world</li> </ul>
Soteriology – Salvation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 4 point Calvinism (TUIP)</li> <li>2. Non salvific ministry of Holy Spirit in OT.</li> <li>3. Moral law (10 commandments) is not applicable</li> <li>4. Non lordship salvation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5 point Calvinism (TULIP)</li> <li>2. Salvific ministry of Holy Spirit in OT Rom 8:9 (because of continuity of covenant)</li> <li>3. Applicability of Moral Law (10 commandments) Matt 5:17, Rom 3:31               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Law is Sword (Rom 3:19-20) Rod (Gal 3:24) Lamp (Ps 119:105)</li> <li>b. Saving faith = Knowing God's Word Agreeing to God's Word Willingness to obey</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5 point Calvinism (TULIP)</li> <li>2. Salvific ministry of Holy Spirit in OT Rom 8:9 (because of continuity of covenant)</li> <li>3. Applicability of Moral Law (10 commandments) Matt 5:17, Rom 3:31               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Law is Sword (Rom 3:19-20) Rod (Gal 3:24) Lamp (Ps 119:105)</li> <li>b. Saving faith = Knowing God's Word Agreeing to God's Word Willingness to obey</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

# Covenantalism and Dispensationalism

---

		4. Salvation is NOT (Faith + Works = Salvation) NOT (Faith = Salvation - Works) BUT (Faith = Salvation + Works)	4. Salvation is NOT (Faith + Works = Salvation) NOT (Faith = Salvation - Works) BUT (Faith = Salvation + Works)
--	--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

# Covenantalism and Dispensationalism

---

## Adherents

Well known Dispensationalist theologians and Bible commentators include

- Lewis Sperry Chafer
- C.I. Scofield
- Charles Ryrie
- John MacArthur
- John Walvoord

Well known Dispensationalist Seminaries include

- Dallas Theological Seminary
- Moody Bible Institutes
- The Master's Seminary
- Bob Jones University

## Other Remarks

Scofield Bible (page 1115, note 2) : In contrasting the dispensation of law with that of grace. "The point of testing is no longer legal obedience as the condition of salvation, but acceptance or rejection of Christ..."

The seventy-second Psalm, which was universally received by them as a description of the kingdom, was full of this. For these reasons, the Sermon on the Mount in its primary application gives neither the privilege nor the duty of the Church. These are found in the Epistles. Under the law of the kingdom, for example, no one may hope for forgiveness who has not first forgiven. Matthew 6:12 Matthew 6:14 Matthew 6:15 . Under grace the Christian is exhorted to forgive because he is already forgiven. Ephesians 4:30-32 .

S. D. Gordon (1859-1936) Quiet Talks About Jesus, titled, "The Plan for Jesus' Coming: Like a lower minor strain running through some great piece of music are the few indications of what God foreknew, though He did not foreplan, would happen to Jesus. A sharp line must always be drawn between what God plans and what He knows will happen (2003, 58).

Why did Jesus die? . . . It can be said at once that His dying was not God's own plan. It was a plan conceived somewhere else, and yielded to by God (2003, 85).

Gordon further explains that that God's original plan for human salvation was in the sacrificial animal offerings given in the Old Testament - "That plan was given in the old Hebrew code."

# Covenantalism and Dispensationalism

---

## Why we uphold the Reformed Covenantalist Premill faith

Covenant Theology :

- 1) Upholds a consistent interpretation of Scriptures
  - a. The Covenant of Grace is specifically and consistently taught in the Bible.  
There is no basis for the purported 7 dispensations that God administers upon man.
  - b. Tangible promises to physical nation of Israel (Is 66:7-9) consistent with Covenant keeping God (Rom 11)
  - c. Bible interpretation is the analogy of Scripture –  
“It is a principle of biblical interpretation that in setting forth any doctrine we must take into consideration all portions of Scripture bearing upon the subject. Generally speaking, no one passage of Scripture gives the whole of any doctrine with all its qualifications and ramifications.” (Buswell, *Systematic Theology*, 1:388)  
  
Covenant Theology sees the continuity and unity of Scripture, thus its interpretation takes into account all Scripture.
  
- 2) Upholds the unity of the Scripture
  - a. The Unchanging God – He cannot lie, and His plans are foreordained
  - b. The Unfolding of the seamless plan of God’s Redemption for man  
- 1<sup>st</sup> Gospel in Gen 3:15, Promise to Abraham Gen 17; Promise fulfilled Lk 2:30-32  
- Christ is declared in the OT (Lk 24:44; Jn 1:45)  
- Abraham was saved by faith in Christ (Jn 8:56; Rom 4:20-25; Jn 3:9,10)
  - c. The Moral law is a condition for the blessings to believers under the Covenant, not for salvation. (Gal 3:17)  
- Same for OT and NT (Rom 4:20-25)
  - d. Stresses the importance of *all* of Scripture; Not only the NT “*Gospel of Grace*”  
- If the 5 dispensations in the OT are over, then the OT has little or no relevance for Christians today.  
- However, Christ came to fulfil both the law and the prophets (Mtt 5:17)
  
- 3) Magnifies God
  - a. The Faithful covenant keeping God
  - b. The Promise keeping God working out His Redemption plan as pledged
  - c. The glory of God displayed in His singular and seamless outworking of His decrees
  
- 4) Is consistent with the historic beliefs of the Christian Church fathers
  - a. Westminster Confession of Faith (1646)

## Why this is important

- 1) Allows you to explain and understand God’s plan regardless of which part of Scripture you read
- 2) Tangible promises to physical nation of Israel consistent with Covenant keeping God